

MTO - ACEC-ONTARIO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

Date: February 11, 2026
Time: 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Location: MS Teams

Chair Susan Nichol (MTO)
Tanya Cross (Dillion)

Attendees

ACEC - Ontario

Sunil Kothari (AtkinsRéalis)
Tanya Cross (Dillon)
Steve Pilgrim (EGIS)
Bernard James (Parsons)
Andrew Hurd (ACEC-Ontario)

MTO

Susan Nichol (MTO)
Michelle Pasqua (MTO)
Michelle McGrath (MTO)
Bruce Cane (MTO)
Michelle Proietti (MTO)
Nikki Fortner (MTO)
Erika Varga (MTO)
Ed Marcon (MTO)
Gustavo Rojas (MTO)
Stephanie Sura (MTO)

Regrets

ACEC - Ontario

Duane Girard (GHD)

MTO

Eric Doidge (MTO)
Alain Beaulieu (MTO)
Malvika Rudra (MTO)
Megan Chochla (MTO)
Brandy Duhaime (MTO)
Jenn Meleschuk (MTO)

1. INTRODUCTION / ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Erika Varga and Ed Marcon are attending behalf Jenn Meleschuk
- Alain Beaulieu and Eric Doidge both send their regrets
- Gustavo Rojas is attending on behalf of Malvika Rudra

OPEN ITEMS

Lead

2. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS) – UPDATE

**MTO
(ERIKA)**

- Engineering Training for CMS will be held on February 24. Invitations were sent out in early February.
- Contract Administrator (CA) and Contractor training to be held closer to the construction season.
- CMS team explored including maintenance into CMS for CA and basic reporting functionality.
- All applications with CMS are currently functioning normally with no major bugs or issues.

DISCUSSION:

- ACEC requested more information on when the training invitations had been sent out. MTO confirmed they were sent out 1-2 weeks before this meeting.
- A question was raised about if the training would be open to anyone or is intended specifically for engineering. At this time, the focus is on a smaller group for engineering components of a contract, CA group training has not yet been planned.
- MTO requested clarification on the issues previously flagged by ACEC regarding Change Orders in CMS. The issue was that invoices could not be submitted for payment until the Change Order was fully approved in the system. ACEC reported that they have found a workaround, and it is no longer an issue.

ACTION:

- MTO posted the CMS training on RAQS to ensure all Service Provider contacts were informed. MTO to consider making this a regular process for training available to ACEC members.

3. UPDATE ON THE CAPITAL PROGRAM, TENDERING ACTIVITY AND PROJECT PIPELINE

**MTO
(MICHELLE
PASQUA
AND
MICHELLE
MCGRATH)**

Quarterly Tendering Forecast for Construction Contracts

- MTO is projecting that between 81-90 major capital tenders will have been advertised this year, valued at between \$1.6-1.7B. This is within the range of our initial projections for 2025/26 last April.

Contract Administration Pipeline

- The pipeline was completed and updated mid-January and provided to ACEC through the CA subcommittee on February 4, 2026.

**ACEC-O
(STEVE)**

Construction Spring Update Planning

- MTO is planning five meetings to be held between the last two weeks of April and the first two weeks of May.

- The intent is to include an interactive workshop to explore barriers to decision making at the field level, identify pain points in CA roles, and determine the measures that could support CA practitioners enhance performance.

DISCUSSION:

- ACEC appreciated the updated pipeline.
- MTO is encouraging staff to hold face-to-face meetings in the field to help with relationship building and to facilitate decision making.
- ACEC inquired about the design component cost of the advertisement totals for discussion purposes. Design cost alone is not separated; however, the cost of design and property was approximately \$1B.
- MTO confirmed they do not intend to limit the number of attendees at the CA training and that MTO is in the process of organizing this event.

Upcoming Projects Postings

- Central
 - Detail design assignment for QEW/Highway 403 widening in the vicinity of the Oakville Ford Assembly Plant
 - Detail design assignment for Highway 400 widening in Simcoe from Highway 9 to Highway 425 (Bradford Bypass) - Delivery model not yet confirmed
 - Preliminary Design/Environmental Assessment for QEW widening in Hamilton and Niagara from the Burlington Bay Skyway to Highway 406
 - Detail design QEW expansion from Winston Churchill Boulevard to Trafalgar and Highway 403 from Highway 407 to the QEW
 - East
 - Detail design for Highway 17/417 twinning from Arnprior to Renfrew
 - Detail design for Highway 401 expansion
 - Northwest
 - Nothing significant upcoming, smaller RFPs and RFQ
 - Previously posted RFP for four-laning of Highway 11/17 from Stillwater Creek to First Street
 - Highway 11/17 Thunder Bay Expressway Expansion
 - West
 - Marden Bypass Planning Study
 - PDR/EA New Highway 7 Elmira Road to Woodland Road
 - PDR/EA Highway 6 (Hanlon Expressway) upgrade to freeway Wellington Street to Woodlawn Road
 - Detail design Woodlawn Interchange
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- Options were discussed regarding the frequency of available updates on the pipeline. ACEC expressed an interest in receiving updates more frequently than annually.

ACTION:

- Presentation deck regarding tendering statistics to be circulated after the meeting
- MTO will provide an update on providing an updated pipeline list in advance of the fall update.

4. Accelerated Capital Program Delivery

- MTO is advancing accelerated delivery of the capital program to reduce end-to-end timelines while maintaining safety, quality, and accountability.
- Acceleration efforts are integrated across design, procurement, and construction.

Key Initiatives

- **Vendor Management Review (VMR):** Reviewing end-to-end vendor, procurement, and oversight processes to identify timeline reductions.
- **Highway Design Process Lean Review:** Targeting reductions in design cycle time, rework, and handoffs.
- **Road Building Strategies Review:** Jurisdictional scans and research reviews to identify policy, technical, and delivery innovations that enable faster construction.

DISCUSSION:

- MTO is in the recruitment process for a procurement lead position in each program area. The intention of the position is to support the interactions between MTO and Service Providers.
- ACEC has conducted a survey of their members to receive feedback on this topic.

ACTION:

- ACEC will share the results of their member survey once they are received.

5. MTO DEBRIEFS

- ACEC expressed concern with the current procedure where Service Providers are unable to receive feedback on their submissions during the procurement process until the assignment has been awarded. This prevents Service Providers from applying the feedback on other submissions they compete in the meantime. These concerns apply to both engineering and CA assignments.

DISCUSSION:

- MTO confirmed that work is underway to review the timeline/process of providing debriefs. The general intent of the debrief process is to provide as much information in a timely manner. Further assessment is needed to determine how MTO might provide debriefs between Phase 1 and 2 and this could serve as an interim solution.

**ACEC-
ONTARIO
(STEVE/
ANDREW)
/
MTO
(SUSAN/
ERIKA)**

**ACEC-O
(SUNIL)**

- ACEC noted that other jurisdictions (i.e. city of Mississauga, York Region, and City of Toronto) are providing debriefs to Service Providers after Phase 1 and including information about scores and ranking.
- MTO is co-chairing a volunteer project working group under the TAC Construction Committee. The Project is focussed on Best Practices for Procuring Engineering and Construction Administration Service Providers. ACEC is encouraged to participate in the volunteer group.

ACTION:

- ACEC to provide information on the information they receive during debriefs from other jurisdictions.
- MTO to review how debriefs could occur between Phases 1 and 2 of the procurement process.
- MTO to reach out to other jurisdictions to understand their process and their observations.

6. MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

**MTO
(GUSTAVO)**

Highway 413

- In December 2025, MTO designated Highway 413 lands as Controlled Access Highway under the Public *Transportation and Highway Improvement Act* (PTHIA)
- MTO released the draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) on December 1, 2025, and the consultation period closed on January 6, 2026. MTO is reviewing the comments received and the final EIAR is anticipated to be published in March 2026.
- Early Works projects are ongoing. The embankment at the Highway 401/407 Interchange is complete; advanced paving on Highway 10 is under construction; and new Bovaird Drive and Highway 10 underpasses are in detail design.
- The RFP for the extension of Highway 410 to Highway 413 was posted in December 2025.

Discussion:

- MTO is working on an overall Delivery Plan for the entire corridor. Phasing strategy is under development, involving the sequencing of Highway 413 mainline corridor into multiple sections for delivery. A specific timeline for any updates is unavailable currently.

Bradford Bypass

- Contracts for the Detail Design of the Central and East sections, and Project Management Consultant assignments were awarded in November 2025.
- Detail Design approaching completion for West section. A Construction Manager is onboard and construction of this section is anticipated to start later in 2026.

Discussion:

- N/A

401 Tunnel

- The Highway 401 Tunnel Feasibility and Congestion Relief study was awarded in October 2025.
- The Highway 401 Tunnel Feasibility and Congestion Relief study draft final report is expected later this year. Also expected later this year are two interim reports and fieldwork investigations.
- The Highway 401 Tunnel Feasibility and Congestion Relief study final report is expected in January 2027.
- Geotechnical investigations (boreholes) are anticipated to be begin in April 2026.

Discussion:

- N/A

Garden City Skyway

- 30% design submittal received in December 2025 and is currently under review.
- Early Works options being explored:
 - Enabling works 1: Clearing of trees prior to facilitate future enabling works
 - Enabling works 2: Grubbing, stripping, and placing granular for access roads and laydown areas.
- Public Information Centre (PIC) expected in May 2026.

Discussion:

- N/A

Ring of Fire

- In 2025, Ontario signed agreements with partners in Aroland, Marten Falls, and Webequie First Nations, and together timelines are being accelerated on construction of the Ring of Fire all-season road network spanning over 500 kilometres that will connect critical mineral resources to manufacturing hubs.
- Planning for on-reserve Early Works projects and preliminary design are underway with major contracts expected to be tendered in 2026.
- MTO is working with the federal government to support the accelerated plan to deliver the Ring of Fire roads by providing a streamlined permit and authorization approval approach.
- MTO continues to prioritize stakeholder engagement. Continued consultations with members of ACEC, municipalities, local councils, stakeholders and Indigenous communities.

DISCUSSION:

- ACEC asked who would be managing the procurement of this project. It was confirmed that MTO is leading the design and construction of the roads to the Ring of Fire.
- The contracts will include some engineering work and that the delivery models for these contracts have not yet been determined.
- ACEC inquired if the First Nation partnerships on this project will extend to the design assignments, and it was confirmed that it could.

ACTION:

- MTO to confirm the procurement details for the Ring of Fire project

7. Progressive Design Build (PDB) Update

**MTO
(GUSTAVO)**

- MTO is in the process of developing the ministry's Progressive Design Build for Highways (PDBH) model.
- A consultation session with ACEC Members was held on January 29, 2026, to present the initiative and collect initial feedback on the model development.
- Attendees expressed a strong interest in the PDBH model and provided constructive feedback on where the framework is heading. MTO has been reviewing the feedback provided.
- The deadline for the survey was extended until February 20, 2026. MTO would like to encourage all members to complete the survey or provide direct feedback by email.
- MTO thanked ACEC for their participation and thoughtful comments at the session and a big thanks to Andrew for his support organizing the session.
- Over the coming months, MTO will arrange additional sessions with ACEC members as the initiative evolves.

DISCUSSION:

- Significant effort has been made to de-risk the construction stage of the project but there is limited detail on how the engineering component will be procured.
- Concerns were raised that using a lump sum model might deter the innovation part of this type of model and may not reflect the spirit of this type of a delivery model.
- It was flagged that some components of the project cost under this approach could be higher than would be expected from a typical approach.
- It was noted that MTO continues to develop the model, explore hybrid pricing approaches and innovations, and assess all feedback. Additional information will be provided at the next session scheduled for late March/early April.

ACTION

- ACEC to provide their members with a reminder to provide feedback to MTO via the survey regarding their thoughts on the PDBH model.

8. Vendor Management Review (VMR) Update

**MTO
(BRUCE)**

- The VMR team continues to engage with ACEC.
- MTO thanked ACEC for their support with external vendor engagement through the online survey which closed on January 21, 2026, with over 150 responses. Key themes and feedback are being compiled for inclusion in VMR Discovery Work, and a high-level summary will be shared with ACEC when completed.
- Later in spring, ACEC will again be engaged for industry feedback on emerging key themes and potential changes.

DISCUSSION:

- MTO's working goal with the VMR is to achieve an average procurement timeline of six weeks. This would be defined as the time from tendering to award of an assignment. Retainers would likely not be included in the average timeline calculation, as the work item process typically requires less time and would artificially skew the results.
- MTO would like to engage with ACEC members in a facilitated workshop in the future on this topic.
- ACEC is asking their members for ideas; however, the feedback is not expected to reflect consensus among their members. A survey has been created for their member firms to provide ideas back to MTO for consideration.

ACTION:

- ACEC to provide MTO with the results of their survey.

**9. SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT UPDATE AND CREATION OF AN
MTO/ACEC-ONTARIO SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

**MTO
(ERIKA) /
ACEC
(TANYA)**

- MTO and ACEC have initiated a Succession Management Subcommittee with co-chairs Tanya Cross and Jenn Meleschuk.
- The first meeting was held on December 10, 2025, and the next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2026.
- The committee Terms of Reference and past meeting notes are posted on the Technical Consultation Portal (TCP).
- The Transportation Career Development Program enhancement and geographic consistency is being addressed. This program offers university or college students summer employment over multiple years at each of two or three organizations, MTO, an engineering firm, and a construction firm.
- Research into existing and new opportunities to support high school outreach is ongoing. MTO recently attended a TAC/American Association

of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) session for high school students in Ottawa.

- MTO has been tracking 10 engineering assignments that included revised staffing requirements to support succession management.

DISCUSSION:

- N/A

ACTION:

- MTO will report back as the engineering assignments progress.

10. ORBA's President's Tour**MTO
(MICHELLE
MCGRATH)**

- The tour was well received.
- The spring update will apply some of the lessons learned from these events.
- A trend where decision making seems to be slowing down was identified and MTO will be reviewing the factors contributing to this slowdown.
- MTO is actively encouraging more face-to-face meetings on site and more on-site presence to support quicker decisions emphasizing direct conversation and phone calls rather than emails.
- MTO is exploring ways to connect the CAs and contractors to improve relationships that will benefit project outcomes.

DISCUSSION:

- N/A

ACTION:

- N/A

11. MUNICIPAL ROAD STANDARDS HARMONIZATION**MTO
(BRUCE)**

- Legislation introduced in fall 2025 provided the Minister of Transportation additional authority over municipal work.
- MTO working on approvals and processes to reflect the authority of the minister. A regulation is expected in the coming weeks/months.
- The process to establish consistent standards is underway, and the proposal is currently posted on the Regulatory Registry.
- MTO is expecting further engagement with stakeholders on this topic, this will include conversations with municipalities.
- The harmonization is expected to be a phased implementation and will only be applied moving forward; existing contracts will not be affected.

DISCUSSION:

- N/A

ACTION:

- The broader harmonization team will reach out to ACEC on this topic in the future.

12. Rotational Roster**ACEC
(BERNARD)****Discussion**

- MTO presented the rotational roster retainer in previous meeting.
- MTO has posted a rotational retainer on RAQS for West Project Delivery.
- ACEC inquired if there are plans to expand this beyond a single assignment or if it will stay limited to this one assignment. MTO Central Project Delivery has, in the past, expressed interest in a rotational roster assignment. ACEC is seeking a line of sight and wants to ensure that consideration is given to how the industry can respond when multiple major assignments are posted simultaneously with the same deadlines.
- It was noted that MTO Project Delivery West also released an RFP that would cover construction liaison services, and indications are that the process went well.

ACTION:

- N/A

INFORMATION SHARED FOR THIS MEETING

Document Title	Shared By	Format
ACEC - MTO Capital Program Update – Sep 10 2025	MTO	PDF
ACEC – MTO Capital Program Update Feb 11 2026	MTO	PDF

NEXT MEETING

- June 3rd 2026 @ 2 pm