

May 18th, 2026 Meeting Minutes

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Meeting Location: Virtual

Welcome and Opening Comments

Tara: Welcome and thank you for joining and for your participation. We'll have updates on the STIC & EDC front towards the end of our meeting. I'll toss it over to Souzan before we get started.

Souzan: Thank you, and good afternoon, everyone. I appreciate you joining us today. I have a few quick updates. Last month, Sean McMaster announced the deployment of the Artificial Intelligence Center of Excellence, which is set to launch by September. The goal of this initiative is to provide national leadership for AI research and deployment across surface transportation. While AI tools are evolving rapidly and offer incredible opportunities to streamline projects, operating without a central focal point risks duplicated efforts and inconsistent practices. This new platform will serve as a national resource to help our transportation partners deploy trustworthy, practical AI solutions. Your input is critical to making this successful. Over the coming months, we will be reaching out for your comments and feedback. Please help us spread the word now so everyone is prepared to contribute when the feedback window opens. With that, Zach, could you please share your screen and play the video?

Video recording: US Department of Transportation logo, Federal Highway Administration. You know, when you're stuck in traffic, have you ever thought, there has to be a smarter way to manage all this? Well, it turns out the US government is thinking the exact same thing, and they're betting big on artificial intelligence to fix it. This is a huge shift in how we approach transportation. We're at a crossroads where big change is absolutely essential. They see AI as a foundational piece of the puzzle, not just for our daily commutes, but for making our roads safer, modernizing our infrastructure, and really for keeping the US a leader in mobility tech. What AI does is act like a super smart brain. It takes all that complex, messy data and translates it into clear, actionable insights. This helps officials make much better decisions on, well, everything from day-to-day operations to planning major projects for the future.

So you might be wondering, how do you actually coordinate a change this massive across the entire country?

Well, that's where the Federal Highway Administration comes in. They're setting up a new hub called the AI Center of Excellence, or AICOE. You can think of it as the central command center for this whole AI transformation on our roads. The entire foundation of this new center is about bringing everybody together. We're talking about state departments of transportation, local city agencies, tribal nations, and all those regional planning organizations. The main goal here is to help them adopt AI solutions that are trusted, that work, and that ultimately make our transportation systems safer, more mobile, and more resilient for everyone. It's about making sure partners are all on the same page with common standards, shared test beds for new tech, and a workforce that's actually ready to go. When you pool all those resources together, the impact gets so much bigger.

What's the Center of Excellence actually going to do? Well, it's designed to be a one-stop shop, a centralized toolkit that provides real practical resources for every single partner. So this breaks down what's in that toolkit. They'll have use case playbooks, which are basically step-by-step guides for common problems. They'll offer trusted example AI models that agencies can use as a starting point. There's going to be a big knowledge repository with all the latest info, and they'll provide training and create collaborative test beds so new ideas can be piloted in the real world. They're kicking things off with a national AI transportation pooled fund study. And what that really is, it's a smart way to get all the different stakeholders to chip in to pool their investments. It's a living, breathing strategy that's actually shaped by the partners who will be using this stuff every day. The whole idea is to move fast, to launch high-impact pilot projects right out of the gate and start tackling real-world transportation challenges.

In the end, it really all comes down to this one simple, powerful idea. By bringing everyone to the table, this AI center of excellence is laser-focused on one thing, turning the big promise of AI into a reality on our roads.

Souzan: Thank you, Zach. We will send out the links to the website and video after today's call so you can share them with your staff. I also want to share a quick update on the EDC-8 Summit. That is expected to take place later this fall, though details on whether it will be in person or virtual are still being finalized. In the meantime, Zach is going to drop the link to the EDC-8 website in the chat so you can explore the various innovation initiatives.

Zach: Thank you, Souzan. I just put a link to the AI Center of Excellence in the chat as well as EDC 8. I'll share my screen and walk through the innovations. You come to the website, go to EDC 8, you'll see all the new innovations that we'll have for this round. Advancing Nighttime Work Zone Safety, Beyond Bid-Build: Innovative Project Delivery Methods, Connected Corridors, Integrated Digital Project Delivery, Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE), and UAS 2.0 Innovative Infrastructure Management. On the website, you can click on each one of those, and get a little more information, explore each one, and come to us if you have any questions. That's all I have for now.

Standing Committee on Pre-Construction

Tara: Thank you, let's go ahead and get started. Jason, as usual, thank you so much for being on and being attentive. Right now, we don't have anything under the pre-construction side of the house, but maybe soon. I'll go ahead and turn it over to Matt on construction materials and maintenance.

Standing Committee on Construction, Materials, and Maintenance

EDC-7 & STIC Innovation Combined Efforts:

Matt: Thanks, Tara. I'm going to let Walt give us an update. I believe we've gotten the final report from OSU. And I'll pass it over to Walt and let him talk about it.

Enhancing Performance with Internally Cured Concrete & Pilot Internal Curing for Bridge Decks

(ODOT Champion: Matt Romero/Walt Peters/ Nairi Matevosyan-FHWA Champion: Ralph Nguyen & Waseem Fazal)

Walt: Good afternoon, everybody. Yes, we did get the final report from Dr. Lay. As always, I think he does great work. The idea of this internal curing process was to get some aggregate, some material that absorbs water internally and helps us with curing and prevents cracks and other benefits. We also tested colloidal silica, which is like adding chemicals that reduce some of the cracks. When we tested this, we had a three-span bridge and the end spans. We did the colloidal silica and we did the internal curing. The middle span, which was longer, was the control. You expect your products to give good results and get less cracking in the end spans. The end results were just the opposite. Our control did better, at least on the cracking, which is surprising. We looked at some other things too. Dr. Lay looked at this shrinkage which had reverse results. The colloidal silica did the best, the internal curing did second, and our control did the poorest. Very strange. There was also some shrinkage in the shrinking test, that was consistent with the cracking that the internal curing was second and the colloidal silica was last. We're a little disappointed in our results. I've been trying to figure out a reason that could explain this phenomenon. The one thing I noticed was that he had 130 ft span versus the end spans that were 100 ft. We had a bit more pre-stressing forces in those beams, 56% more and 50 strands versus 32. The thought is that if we get pre-stressed losses and actually have a casting link that's a little bit longer to get the desired beam lengths. When we make these pre-stress beams, there's going to be a tendency, for some shortening to take place and some pre-stress losses. I think with greater pre-stress, you have more of this compression force, which may have been a factor in closing up some of the cracks. I would recommend that we try again and redo this test. Perhaps with both the internal curing and colloidal silica and try steel spans of equal length, or at least pre-stressed strands of equal length, so that I know the pre-stressing is not a factor. The concrete pores were made at different times. That could've been a factor. Dr. Lay pointed out that the colloidal silica, one of the A1 additives, was placed. It had double the recommended dosage, which was a concern. They did a good survey with the drone and got some really good information, put a lot of work into this. It's unfortunate we didn't get results closer to what we wanted. But I do think we should give it another try. Back to you Matt.

Matt: Thanks, Walt. I appreciate all the work that everybody put into this. This was a long time coming and like Walt said, disappointed with the results we got, I don't think we should give up on it entirely. I think there were some issues that probably could've been better handled. Tara, we can move on to the next one.

Tara: Bryce, if you're online, can you go ahead and give us an update on your geotextiles?

Innovative High-Performance Geotextiles for Stabilization of Problematic Roadway Subgrades

(ODOT Champion: Bryce Hanlon - FHWA Champion: Waseem Fazal)

Bryce: I'm in POTO, the service out here is sketchy. The biggest update I have for is we did a no cost extension per OU's request. The testing that they're doing is taking longer than they had originally planned. The time it takes to do each test is extending out farther than what they originally thought. They are now wrapping the last product. They're doing tensile testing and play load testing to determine strength parameters for these different products. They had tested 6 the last time that we had a meeting. They were testing the last ones, the Mirify H2RI, which isn't necessary, but it's a product that everyone's always proposing we use. It's mainly for improving drainage and wicking capabilities, but we'll see how it compares to the other products. I believe they are now done with that and now are going to test the soil box without any reinforcement in it to have a baseline value to compare everything to. At that point, they're going to start developing the parameters and the soil improvement factors and all that kind of stuff for pavement design use. The project is now extended till September or the end of September of this year. Hopefully in the next couple of months, they'll start getting the analysis done for the results and we can start looking at that before the final report is done. So that's it, there are still no results but we're getting closer.

Tara: Thank you, Bryce, does anyone have any questions? Let's transition over to the BMD Implementation with David.

Increase Testing Capacity of Field Residencies for BMD Implementation

(ODOT Champion: David Vivanco - FHWA Champion: Waseem Fazal)

David: There's not much going on or to report against. We're just waiting on the bids to be published, after that we pick the supplier.

Tara: Any questions for David? Thank you all. Thank you, Matt. We'll transition over to safety, mobility, and technology with Alan.

Standing Committee on Safety, Mobility, and Technology

EDC-7 Innovation:

Tara: Not sure if he is on. Caitlin, are you on? Not seeing any of them. With TIMS, there weren't any updates, they're still going down the same path with pilots. We're sitting at the same point, looking forward to EDC 8 innovations that possibly they can get into. They have turned in their final report on this previously. For the most part, they're wrapped up on this.

Next-Generation Traffic Incident Management: Integrating Technology, Data, and Training

(ODOT Champion: Caitlyn Carolus & FHWA Champion: James Bui)

Tara: We'll switch over to Marty if he is on, seeing if he has any updates. I think for the most part, the same scenario and situation on the EDC front.

Nighttime Visibility for Safety

(ODOT Champion: Marty Farris & FHWA Champion: Huy Nguyen)

Marty: Largely, we've got a couple of projects that are out that have been left that are under construction and our standards are ongoing. Some of the areas that we've identified for possible new projects are outside of city limits or rural areas, generally for lighting, we do maintenance agreements with the city that's inside the limits of. We're trying to figure out if we were to do something of that nature, what cities would be able to do outside their city limits or what it would need to look like if we were to try and do lighting out there. We're trying to work through some of those types of things, but that's about where we're at.

Tara: Any questions for Marty? Alright, we'll go ahead and go to Lance on progress on the AI projects.

STIC Incentive Projects:

Transportation AI Projects Team

(ODOT Champion: Lance Underwood & Sam Coldiron & FHWA Champion: Huy Nguyen)

Lance: Absolutely. The first one on the list is our roadway image recognition effort. We've moved into the final phase over the spring into the summer. We're looking to add the remaining roadway assets to the inventory that the AI is able to capture and provide information on. We're working closely there and also developing in-house SOPs that eventually, the production usage of this tool will go towards. We've temporarily put the initiative on hold as we realign a couple of the technical resources on the back end, but we anticipate this one will spin back up as we get deeper into the summer. The hope is that we will be able to wrap things up by the fall and get this product deployed out to production so the GIS team can start using it. We'll continue to load in images and continue to let the AI do its work on those models and hopefully we'll have some production success here before the end of the year. The second item is the right of way initiative. We've partnered with a vendor named Phase Two, they're using their AI models to read all of the deeds and capture the parcel locations that are sometimes handwritten, depending on how old the deed is. We get that converted into a traverse file format that we're able to determine the exact parcel location of where that exists on the Oklahoma map. They're making good progress there, I anticipate by September, we'll have all of the AI pieces of it done and all the parcel locations mapped out. There's a potential second phase with the Phase Two vendor. That's fun and confusing. But we're still evaluating whether we're going to move forward with that. But I think by September we'll have all the data pulled from the deeds and the giant repository that goes back decades. We've made good progress on the initial milestones for this one. That's all I've got.

Tara: Any questions for Lance? Ok, Let's move on to Jenny, can you give us an update on public input for us?

Piloting a Public Involvement Software Platform for Oklahoma DOT

(ODOT Champion: Jenny Droscher – FHWA Champion: William Rowe)

Jenny: Things are moving right along. Our first website will go live on Wednesday. It's for the I-35 corridor project we're working with OTA on. We're working out all the bugs as we go. Excited to have our first project go live, but everything is going as smoothly as it can for software. We're excited to showcase in a couple of days.

Tara: Thank you, any questions for Jenny?

Souzan: That's really exciting news, and it sounds like things are progressing well. Will there be a link available once the website goes live so we can check it out and stay involved?

Jenny: It'll be linked on the ODOT public meetings and hearings page at midnight on Wednesday.

Souzan: Thank you.

Standing Committee on Special Initiatives

EDC-7:

Strategic Workforce Development & Pre-Apprenticeship Stakeholder-Focused Training Program

(ODOT Champion: Jennifer Hankins & FHWA Champion: Viplav Reddy)

Tara: Thank you, let's transition to special initiatives. I don't think I saw Jennifer on, as of right now, we are still pending the final report for this STIC initiative, so that we can wrap it up and close it out. As you know, we've done quite a bit of different activities on the workforce development front. This one is more around the CDL training from previous times, but there are a lot of different activities in that area, whether it's under the engineer portion of the house or activities with high schoolers. Trying to get them interested in transportation type jobs, holding job fairs, letting them get on the equipment, things of that nature. We're pending that final report from Jennifer to FHWA so we can get this one wrapped up and closed out. That brings us towards the end of this meeting. We've covered EDC 8 a little bit and TBD. We'll have a more in-depth conversation on that front when the time comes. Suzanne went over Center of Excellence for AI, excited about that. Souzan or Zach, do you want to comment on the STIC application

process as of right now? Have you gotten any further details from above or if we found out anything about possible deadlines or anything of that nature?

Zachary: I did reach out and I have not heard anything back. More to come and I'll definitely let you guys know as soon as I hear anything.

Tara: I would encourage ODOTers, we have revamped the intranet SharePoint for Research. A lot of you that are in the Research Steering Committee heard about this, last week. You can find STIC applications there. If you have any ideas or anything like that for the next upcoming federal fiscal year, go ahead and get something prepared. It's never too early to start. There's nothing wrong with getting it on paper, so you're ready and prepared should and when this application acceptance goes into play. Whenever that time comes and we're able to update you, you can go ahead and get it turned in. Before we wrap up, Suzanne, Zach, do you have anything else to add on this front or the future, whether it be for the July meeting or anything else?

Souzan: I want to echo what Tara said about getting an early start on applications. I always encourage teams to maintain an 'application bank'—whenever a strong idea comes up, draft it out right away so you aren't scrambling as deadlines approach.

I also want to take a moment to thank all of you for your hard work on these initiatives. Your progress in pushing them toward completion is fantastic, and I truly appreciate your efforts. I look forward to seeing what we accomplish together with EDC-8.

Closing Comments:

Tara: Thank you, I appreciate your participation as usual. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out. Otherwise, we'll see you at the next meeting in-person on July 28th. We look forward to seeing everybody in person and reach out if you all have any questions. Otherwise, we will update you all as soon as we can with the agenda for the next meeting.