On-Line Meeting Minutes taken by Davis Diggs, PE – Kisinger Campo & Associates (KCA)

* **There were 123 Participants on the call**.
* **Welcome and Introductions.**
* Lisa Samples, PE of MS Consultants, Inc. welcomed everyone and thanked ACEC-NC for setting up the online meeting.
* Lisa noted that this was to be the last meeting of the current ACEC fiscal year which ends June 30, 2021. She will rotate off the Transportation Committee. Davis Diggs of KCA will move up to Chairman. Greg Purvis of Wetherill Engineering will remain as a Vice Chair. Allen Pope of Colliers Engineering & Design is the new Vice Chair.
* Missy Pair, PE Traffic Noise & Air Quality Group Leader at NCDOT spoke and noted that they are offering training sessions for noise wall requirements.
* Lisa then introduced our guest speaker.
* **Guest speaker – Steve Hall, ACEC National Lobbyist** gave a summary of the Federal Infrastructure Bill and other bills of national interest. Topics covered included the following:
  + The US Senate version of the bill dropped over the weekend. They are making progress on accelerated packages. The left might fight it do tonight enough climate change investment.
  + The FAST Act reauthorization includes $300 Billion over five years which is approximately a 34% increase in funding.
  + FAR Credits Clause - working on making this provision not apply to CARES Act money.
  + Project earmarks making big move.
  + Jobs package is separate from Infrastructure Bill.
  + Other issues working through congress.
    - Grant program to rehab bridges.
    - Funding for resilience.
    - INFRA Grant for freight and other areas.
    - Charging stations.
    - Expand VMT pilots.
  + Senate committee vote this week. Maybe full Senate vote before July.
  + On the President’s Jobs plan, it was agreed to drop the funding request to $1.7 trillion. The president wants Republicans to agree to some of the energy components. Vertical projects are included with ACEC support. Republicans have come up 2 $800 billion. The White House has a deadline for all of this in a week or two.
  + The Senate recently passed a water infrastructure bill.
  + Questions and comments from the group… Senate Republicans are including reauthorization of the FAST Act, but the president views it as separate money in addition to the FAST Act. Our industry needs to protect higher transportation funding. However, they are dependent own general funds. Still must rely on traditional revenue. Rate of gas tax hasn't changed since 1980s.
  + When will there be a decision on PPP waiver credit? They have been working on this for a while. Congress will have to step in to limit damage or eliminate altogether.
  + With multiple funding resources how much will be the total result for NCDOT and when will we see that? It depends on the tweaks to the funding formulas. NCDOT will have to be ready as compromise comes together.
  + What can we do as an industry? Lobbying is working on the infrastructure bill and PPP issues. We need to stress the importance of both issues. When you speak with legislators give specific examples of how this impacts you and your business. Work through ACEC. Mobilize at the grassroots level.
* **ACEC/NC Lobbyist David Ferrell** gave an update on local, NC issues.
  + We are in the middle of the long session which started in January. biggest issues are the budget and congressional redistricting. North Carolina added a Congressional District (14). We just past the crossover deadline for bills to move from one house to the other. Both the House and Senate finished early. There is a lull right now while deciding on procedures. The Senate budget bill is under consideration first. Then the house will present theirs. During the last cycle the governor vetoed the budget due to Medicaid expansion not being in the bill. We are still technically operating under the 2018 budget.
  + Senate bill 172 just passed. It allocates COVID funds. North Carolina typically does not want to spend one time money own recurring expenses.
  + House bill 165 creates changes in how NCDOT handles their funds. They proposed removing the cap for Public Private Partnerships but went to 3 for NCDOT and 3 for the Turnpike Authority.
  + The legislation proposed changes to the MAP Act cap. They increased it to $300 million. This was done in order to allow enough money to finish MAP Act settlements this year.
  + The Legislature is looking at long term goals. ACEC is working with leadership. Focus will be on funding long term sources. These include possibly another bond, but likely not. Local county sales tax for transportation, also likely not. Increasing the highway use tax and fees on electric vehicles. Another possibility is to take the money from short term car rental taxes out of the general fund and move to the transportation fund. Also under consideration are sales tax on tires, wiper blades etc to be moved over time to transportation funds. We are pleased that legislative transportation committee chairman are recognizing the need for change.
  + North Carolina has decoupled from federal requirements on PPP forgiveness. Can't deduct expenses.
  + Medicaid expansion is still a sticking point.
* **Design/Build Subcommittee** report was given by Jonathan Henderson, PE of HDR Inc. The complete minutes are also available. Highlights included the following.
  + Divisions 1, 4, 5 INFRA Grants applied for. Still don’t know if funds will be approved.
  + Jonathan is rotating off the subcommittee and David Gourley of WSP will be the new Chair.
  + The industry and NCDOT are dealing with increasing material costs and supply chain issues.
* **Project Delivery Subcommittee** report was given by Paul Garrett of Vaughn & Melton. The complete minutes are available. Highlights include the following.
  + Chris Werner of NCDOT asked the subcommittee if there were any issues. None were noted.
  + PE funds have been updated.
  + Right of way Acquisition is moving forward, with utilities coming along.
  + NCDOT spend plan is due in June.
  + Project ATLAS is working with SharePoint.
  + Need to log into CRS every 30 days to keep access current.
* **Construction and Materials Subcommittee** report was given by Davis Diggs, PE of Kisinger Campo & Associates. See the complete minutes from the April 21 meeting for details.
* **Structures Subcommittee** report was given by Sam Al-Jamal, PE of Infrastructure Consulting and Engineering. See the complete minutes of May 3 for details.
* **Joint Conference Subcommittee** report was given by Jay Watson, PE of WSP. The complete minutes are available. Highlights include the following.
  + Conference registration will be available sometime in August.
  + Conference will be in person only.
  + Conference dates – October 21 with reception the night before.
* **General Questions/Answers -**
  + Any plans for an “Open Bridge” Training? Yes- but no date set at this time.
  + Steel Forum – Next year (2022)
* **Next meeting will be August 30, 2021.**
* **Subcommittee reports attached.**

Meeting was adjorned.