NEBRASKA STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION
Nebraska Department of Transportation
1500 Nebraska Parkway
Lincoln, Nebraska 68502
(402) 471-4567

8:30 a.m., Friday, August 14th, 2026
State Highway Commission Meeting Minutes

On Friday, August 14th, 2026, the Nebraska State Highway Commission convened at the Ashland Public Library at 1324 Silver Street. The agenda, a recording of the meeting, attendance sheets, and handouts relevant to the business of this meeting are a part of the permanent minutes of record and are on file at NDOT Central Headquarters. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act (Statutes 84-1407 to 84-1414) was posted in the meeting room.

MEETING NOTICE

- Notice of the regularly scheduled meeting, including the time, location, and agenda, was advertised on the Department of Transportation and the State of Nebraska's websites no less than ten days prior to the meeting.
- The agenda was emailed or mailed to commission members, NDOT staff, and interested persons no less than ten days prior to the meeting.
- A media release was emailed on Friday, August 7th, 2026.
- The meeting agenda was kept current and available to the public in the Communication Division of the Nebraska Department of Transportation, 1500 Nebraska Parkway, Lincoln, Nebraska. No changes were made to the agenda within 48 hours prior to commencement.
- Copies of the meeting agenda were posted and available to the public at the entrance to the meeting room.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

• Commissioner Richard Meginnis	District 1
• Commissioner Heath Mello	District 2
• Commissioner David Copple	District 3, Virtual
• Commissioner Matt Meister	District 4
• Commissioner Jim Hawks	District 6
• Commissioner Greg Wolford	District 7
• Chief Operating Officer, Khalil Jaber	Ex Officio

Marissa Kuehn, Nebraska State Highway Commission Secretary, was recording. A transcript of the meeting is available upon request. Nebraska State Highway Commission meetings are conducted in compliance with the statutes of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

CALL TO ORDER

- Commissioner **Meginnis** called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. at the Ashland Public Library in Ashland, Nebraska.
- The chair requested an attendance roll call. A quorum was present.
- The March 27th and May 22nd, 2026 Meeting Minutes were called for approval.
    - Motion made by Commissioner **Mello, Wolford** seconded.
    - Motion carried by unanimous rollcall vote. Commissioner **Meister** abstained.

INTRODUCTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- New Commissioner Introduction
    - Commissioner **Meister** introduced himself and shared his background in Nebraska, including his longtime residence in Kearney and experience with the Nebraska Realtors Association.

MEETING BUSINESS

Commissioner Swearing In

- **Matthew Meister** was sworn in as a new member of the Nebraska State Highway Commission.

Commissioner Welcome

- Commissioner **Meginnis** welcomed attendees to District 1 and highlighted the growth and transportation needs of southeast Nebraska.

Remarks from Chief Operating Officer, Khalil Jaber

- Federal Funding & 2027 Program
    - Khalil Jaber discussed uncertainty surrounding federal transportation funding as the current federal authorization is set to expire at the end of September.
    - The House and Senate have proposed short-term continuing resolutions extending federal government funding into December.
    - NDOT will remain cautious with the 2027 program until longer-term federal funding is established.
    - NDOT remains committed to delivering the planned 2027 program while monitoring funding availability.

- Safety
    - Jaber emphasized continued concerns regarding distracted driving and driver behavior.
    - Nebraska has experienced more than 2,300 phone-related crashes over the past four years.
    - Nebraska ranks 46th nationally in seat belt usage.
    - Emphasized the importance of seat belt use and continued safety efforts.

New Business

- District 1 Presentation – Brandon Varilek, District Engineer
    - District Overview
        - District 1 includes 13 counties in southeast Nebraska.
        - Approximately 1,679 miles of highway, including approximately 70 miles of interstate and approximately 3,700 lane miles.
        - District 1 maintains 25 bridges through 15 maintenance and construction yards.
        - Approximately 230 employees serve the district.

        - District 1 encompasses approximately 25% of Nebraska's population, or approximately 486,000 people.
    - 2026 Construction Program
        - 2026 construction program is valued at approximately $89 million, not including several multi-year projects funded in previous years.
        - Highlighted projects included the I-180 bridges over I-80, Highway 6 and Adams Street bridges over I-180, the Highway 77 Wahoo Interchange, and the I-80 reconstruction and expansion from Pleasant Dale to Northwest 56th Street.
    - 2027–2032 Construction & Planning
        - 2027 construction program is valued at approximately $233 million.
        - Major projects include the US-34 and N-50 roundabout, I-80 expansion from Pleasant Dale to Seward, and the proposed US-92/N-31 and US-275 expressway improvements.
        - The US-92/N-31 and US-275 project is currently in the concept and design phase, with construction potentially beginning as early as 2032, subject to funding.
    - Maintenance & Winter Operations
        - NDOT is working to modernize its statewide snow blower fleet.
        - District 1 currently has three snow blowers ranging from 21 to 48 years old.
        - District 1 purchased a smaller truck-mounted blower and ordered its first bi-directional tow plow.

- Highway 77, Wahoo-Fremont South - Chris Lutz, NDOT Roadway Design
    - Project Purpose & Need
        - Continue development of the expressway system identified in the 1988 Nebraska Highway Study.
        - Improve regional connectivity between Lincoln and Fremont.
        - Improve the condition, safety, and reliability of US-77 while maintaining access to communities along the corridor.
    - Project Overview
        - Proposed widening of just over 60 miles of US-77 between Waterloo and Fremont.
        - Includes improvements at US-77/US-92 and US-77/N-19, as well as new interchanges at US-77/N-64 and US-77/County Road W.
        - The northern approximately four miles would include four new lanes constructed off alignment.
        - Additional improvements include culverts, bridges, lighting, access relocations and consolidations, side road modifications, and intersection improvements.
    - Public Involvement
        - Two public information meetings were held in June 2024.
        - Overall public support was received, along with questions regarding the previously purchased right-of-way and project timeline.
        - A stakeholder meeting and two public information meetings were held in late July 2026.
        - NDOT received positive feedback during the most recent round of public involvement.
    - Access Control & Relinquishment
        - NDOT plans to purchase new access control at specific locations along the corridor.
        - A portion of existing US-77 may be relinquished to Saunders County following construction of the off-alignment segment.
        - NDOT has begun coordination with Saunders County regarding the potential relinquishment.
    - Schedule & Cost
        - Estimated project cost is $135 million.
        - The project would be funded through state sources.

        - Construction would be completed in segments and could begin as early as spring 2029, with completion as early as fall 2030.
    - Resolution 2026-4
        - The item in question was approval of the project location and design, use of access control, and relinquishment for the Highway 77 Wahoo to Fremont South project.
            - Motion made by Commissioner **Mello, Wolford** seconded.
            - Motion carried by unanimous rollcall vote.

- Digital Project Delivery Presentation - Jon Starr, NDOT Digital Delivery Manager
    - Digital Delivery Overview
        - NDOT is transitioning from traditional paper-based plans to interactive 3D digital models.
        - Digital delivery provides project information in one location and allows project teams and contractors to access detailed information throughout design and construction.
    - Implementation
        - NDOT released its digital delivery implementation plan in 2025.
        - NDOT is currently preparing its first project using a digital model as the legal project document.
        - NDOT is currently considered a Level 4 state for digital delivery and is working toward Level 5.
    - Industry Coordination
        - NDOT has worked with industry partners, including the Associated General Contractors and American Council of Engineering Companies, to develop digital delivery practices.
        - NDOT is also working with other states and national organizations to advance open data standards.
    - Commission Discussion
        - Commissioner **Mello** asked about the future of AI with Digital Project Delivery. Starr discussed proprietary software, open data standards, potential use of digital delivery on projects involving local governments, and the future role of artificial intelligence.
            - NDOT noted that AI could eventually assist with quality control, conflict analysis, and reviewing standardized project data.
        - Khalil Jaber emphasized that NDOT is taking a measured approach to implementation while ensuring contractors are prepared and competitive bidding requirements are maintained.

- Aeronautics Update - Jeremy Borrell, NDOT Aeronautics Director
    - Division Overview
        - The Division of Aeronautics oversees airport services, project development, airport inspections, system planning, flight services, and navigational aids.
        - Nebraska has 78 public-use airports and more than 150 private airports.
        - Three airports are state-owned: Harvard, Fairmont, and Springer.
    - Funding
        - Aeronautics is primarily funded through user taxes and fees rather than the state General Fund.
        - Funding sources include aircraft fuel taxes, aircraft sales and use taxes, federal airport funding, and state grant programs.
        - State funding helps provide matching funds for federally funded airport projects and supports airports that are not eligible for federal funding.
    - Economic Impact
        - Nebraska's airport system generates approximately $8.6 billion in annual economic impact and supports more than 90,000 jobs directly and indirectly.

        - Airports provide important connections for economic development, agriculture, emergency response, and medical access.

- State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) Delegation- Khalil Jaber, NDOT Chief Operating Officer
    - Infrastructure Development Investment Program
        - The Infrastructure Development Investment Program was established through 2026 legislation.
        - The program is intended to provide loans and other financial assistance to eligible entities for transportation infrastructure projects.
        - The State Infrastructure Bank would provide a source of capital with low-interest and flexible repayment terms.
    - NDOT Role
        - NDOT requested authorization to serve as the Highway Commission's agent in establishing and administering the program.
        - The authorization would allow NDOT to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Federal Highway Administration and perform the administrative and technical functions necessary to implement the program.
        - The delegation would not limit or restrict the Commission's statutory powers and duties.
    - Commission Discussion
        - Commissioner **Wolford** discussed the development and implementation of the program and the Commission's future role in approving loans.
    - Resolution 2026-5
        - The item in question was authorization for NDOT to serve as the Commission's agent in establishing the State Infrastructure Bank program.
            - Motion made by Commissioner **Mello, Wolford** seconded.
            - Motion carried by unanimous rollcall vote.

PUBLIC INPUT

- Jim Bunch, Northeast Lincoln
    - Expressed concerns regarding semitrailer traffic traveling in the left lanes of interstate highways.
    - Requested consideration of legislation requiring trucks to remain in the right two lanes on interstate highways with three or more lanes.
- Jerry Johnson, Mayor of Wahoo
    - Thanked the Commission for approving the Highway 77 Wahoo to Fremont South project.
    - Expressed support for the project and discussed the importance of completing the corridor.
    - Highlighted the benefits of the US-77/US-109 roundabout and the importance of improving the corridor for traffic and flood-related detours.
- Lucas Froeschl, Falls City
    - Provided an update on economic development activity and transportation needs in Falls City.
    - Discussed planned projects on Highway 8, Highway 73, and Highway 159.
    - Highlighted potential industrial development and the importance of transportation infrastructure to future economic growth.
    - Requested that NDOT consider future development and economic growth when evaluating transportation needs in Falls City.
- Bill Lorson, Chairman of the Village of Mead
    - Expressed concerns regarding the proposed Highway 77 improvements and potential impacts to businesses and properties.
    - Requested consideration of how the US-77/US-92 roundabout could affect future access and the proposed alignment.

- Shirley Niemeyer, Ashland
    - Suggested reducing tree removal during highway construction where possible.
    - Requested consideration of traffic improvements near the Gretna Mall area.
    - Expressed concerns regarding pedestrian access and the need for a school crossing in the area of Highway 6 and surrounding residential development.
    - Encouraged NDOT to consider tree replacement and environmental impacts during future projects.
- Mayor Jim Anderson, City of Ashland
    - Thanked the Commission for holding the meeting in Ashland and welcomed attendees to the community.

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

- None

PUBLIC MEETINGS CALENDAR

- The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) has 5 public meetings scheduled between now and the next Highway Commission meeting.
    - NDOT will hold a public meeting for the US-77 & N-91 project on Tuesday, September 15th, 2026, from 5-7 p.m.
    - A local public meeting for the Lincoln County Crossroads Study will take place on Thursday, September 17th, from 5-7 p.m. at the MPCC South Campus Theatre.
    - NDOT will hold a public meeting for the Pender East Bridge/In Pender projects on Thursday, September 17th, from 4-7 p.m. at the Pender Community Center.
    - NDOT will hold a public meeting for the I-480 Corridor Study, I-80 to Harney St project on Tuesday, September 22nd, 2026, from 5-7 p.m. at the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center at 6400 University Drive Rd N in Omaha, NE.
    - A local public meeting for the Fort Calhoun Safe Transportation project will take place on Tuesday, October 13th, 2026, from 5-7 p.m. at Northern Lights Venue at 310 N 14th St. in Fort Calhoun, NE.
- The next scheduled Highway Commission meeting is October 23rd, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. in Kearney, Nebraska.

ADJOURNMENT

The chair adjourned the meeting at 10:40 am.

Kuehn, Marissa

From: Kevin Knuth <kkknuth@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2026 8:03 AM
To: Kuehn, Marissa
Subject: S-77-2(1083); CN 13519 Wahoo To Fremont South Expressway Comments

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

You don't often get email from kkknuth@hotmail.com. Learn why this is important

I would like to make a request for the State Highway Commission to delay the approval of the S-77-2(1083); CN 13519 Wahoo To Fremont South Expressway Project until the next State Highway Commission Meeting. While I am generally ok with the location and design of this expressway project, I would like to ask the commission to have the engineers make a minor adjustment to the proposed roundabout at the U.S. 77/N-92/County Road 11 Intersection located one half of a mile west of Mead. What I would like for the NDOT to change here is for the four-lane connection on the east side of the roundabout to be reduced to a temporary two-lane connection, similar to what is being done on the south side of the roundabout for County Road 11, until final decisions are made and construction can begin on the proposed N-92 four-lane expansion project to the east of this intersection. What this change will do is allow the NDOT to have the option of bypassing the community of Mead when the N-92 four-lane expansion project is constructed thus increasing safety for the community and eliminating the need for the NDOT to relocate several residential and commercial properties currently located along the current corridor alignment. A bypass will also make it easier for the NDOT to make improvements at the County Road 10 Intersection by eliminating the need to relocate all of the businesses that are currently located there. Another question that I have for the commission is that if the NDOT gets approval of the federal grant which it is planning to make a request for so that it can begin construction of the proposed roundabout at this intersection during the fiscal year 2028 construction season why it would not also begin construction on the Wahoo East segment of this proposed expressway project at the same time so that it is completed sooner and so that the current roundabout at the U.S. 77/N-92/N-109/Old Highway 77 Intersection near Wahoo can be opened up to a double -laned roundabout to improve traffic flow at that intersection sooner?

Regards,
Kevin Knuth
Kevinknuth@reagan.com
913 N Orange Street Wahoo Ne, 68066
Ph, 402-607-4776

NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Journey.
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PUBLIC COMMENT SHEET
Nebraska State Highway Commission Meeting

Ashland, NE
Meeting Location

Aug. 2026
Date

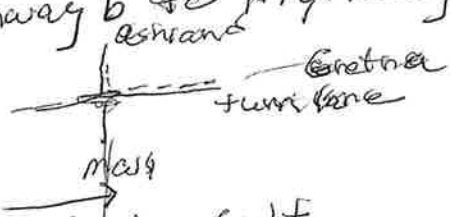
Return to: Marissa Kuehn
Communications & Public Policy Division
Nebraska Department of Transportation
PO Box 94759
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5. Replant Trees along highway 6 from Ashland to Gretna & to Lincoln. It was so beautiful.

1. Cost cutting: Reduce cutting of trees when repair, improvent of roads. Climate change is here. Example. Previously highway 92 west detoured for many miles. Hilly detour with steep side roads. Cut down all the trees for many miles. There is no way for a car to go up those steep sides easily. Major cost of tree removal. Sure & Nice to NE. need to cut 800 million dollars in Budget

2. Please put more turn lanes at Highway 6 & Nebraska Hill at the Gretna Shopping Mall. From Gretna, add a turn lane from highway 6 to Highway 6 going right turn to Ashland



Not a good intersection with a turns please fix it.

~~3. Add digital map delivery of tourism stops - info about each town, etc.~~

4. Over-pass on Highway 6 at Ashland for children to cross Highway 6. OR a school crossing. We had one at the Hwy 6 for a school crossing a while ago.

300 + children Developments from horse whitetail

(PLEASE PRINT)

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) and the Nebraska State Highway Commission appreciate your input. Your comments, questions, and suggestions will be reviewed by appropriate personnel. Thank you for your participation.

Name: Shirley Niemeyer
Address: 1302 Dawes St.
City, State, Zip: Ashland, NE 68003
Phone: 402-944-3503 landline
Email: niemeyersmarie@gmail.com

Written comments are considered public information and may be shared with local, state, or federal agencies, as well as the general public, as part of the project development process.

JAMES E. BUNCH
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Nebraska Dept. of Transportation

State Highway Commission

August 14, 2026

Dear Commissioners,

I spent from 2020 to 2024 commuting daily between Lincoln and La Vista. On a regular basis I would observe unsafe road conditions when three semi tractor-trailers would be side-by-side-by-side at speeds well below the posted speed limit, chugging along on significant uphill grades on Interstate 80, such as the attached photo near Gretna. On November 13, 2025, I emailed you regarding the need in Nebraska for a third-lane law. Several states have such a law, where any vehicle over 10,000 pounds with three or more axles is prohibited from being operated in the far left, or third, lane on highways with three or more lanes of travel. For Nebraska, this would include I-80 from the Iowa State Line all the way to the west side of Lincoln, soon to be extended, and I-680 in West Omaha. In fact, some states prohibit travel in the far left TWO lanes when four or more lanes are present, such as I-80 through the Chicagoland area, as well as Indiana for this same stretch of highway.

Here is the third-lane law in Massachusetts, as an example:

On any highway with more than one passing lane in the same direction, heavy commercial vehicl es, except buses, shall be restricted in ordinary operation to the right-hand travel lane, and in overtaking and passing shall be restricted to the next adjacent passing or travel lane, and shall not use any other lanes except in an emergency. For the purpose of this section, heavy commercial vehicles shall be defined as those in excess of tow and one-half tons used for the transportation of goods, wares, and merchandise.

-Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 89, § 4C

I urge you to move to enact a similar law for the State of Nebraska, thereby making highways safer for all.

Sincerely,

Jim Bunch

