

8:30 a.m., Friday, March 27th, 2026
State Highway Commission Meeting Minutes

On Friday, March 27th, 2026, the Nebraska State Highway Commission convened at the Columbus Community Building at 2500 14th Street in Columbus, Nebraska. 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, March 20th, 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

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|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| • Commissioner Richard Meginnis | District 1 |
| • Commissioner Heath Mello | District 2, Virtual |
| • Commissioner David Copple | District 3 |
| • Commissioner Jim Hawks | District 6 |
| • Commissioner Greg Wolford | District 7 |
| • Director, Vicki Kramer | Ex Officio |

Marissa Kuehn, NDOT Highway Programs Administrator, 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.
- The chair requested an attendance roll call. A quorum was present.
- The January 16th Meeting Minutes were called for approval.
 - Motion made by Commissioner **Copple, Hawks** seconded.
 - Motion carried by unanimous rollcall vote.

INTRODUCTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- None

MEETING BUSINESS

Remarks from Director Kramer

- Staffing Updates
 - Marissa Kuehn was introduced as the new Highway Commission Secretary.
 - NDOT implemented a new leadership structure, including:
 - Chief Operating Officer
 - Deputy Director of Engineering
 - Deputy Director of Administrative Services
 - Deputy Director of Operations
- Commission Membership & Engagement
 - Director Kramer noted challenges in maintaining a quorum and encouraged increased participation.
 - Highlighted need for additional representation in Districts 4, 5, and 8.
 - Encouraged public involvement in Commission service opportunities.
- Public Engagement & Outreach
 - Public engagement received regarding the Highway 12 roundabout project near Crofton.
 - NDOT plans to hold a public meeting in April to improve understanding of the project and detour routes.
- Emergency Response Efforts
 - NDOT deployed 34 personnel and multiple equipment units to assist with recent wildfires.
 - Coordination occurred across five districts and with local agencies.
 - Emphasized safety concerns and need for clear coordination with local fire departments.
- Federal & National Updates
 - Ongoing national discussions regarding potential suspension of the federal gas tax.
 - NDOT continues monitoring impacts to Nebraska.
 - Awaiting updates on the 2027 Surface Transportation Reauthorization; no draft language or funding levels released yet.
- NEPA Assignment (Section 327)
 - Nebraska officially signed the Section 327 NEPA Assignment agreement.
 - Nebraska is now the ninth state with full NEPA assignment authority.
 - This allows NDOT to streamline environmental review processes and improve efficiency.
- Legislative Update
 - NDOT's safety package, including hands-free legislation, did not advance out of committee.
 - Director Kramer expressed concern over lack of support despite safety data.
 - NDOT will continue working with legislators to reintroduce safety measures.
 - LB 1112 (infrastructure bank and cleanup initiatives) is progressing with minimal opposition.

- Safety & Public Awareness
 - Emphasized NDOT's priority of saving lives through safety initiatives.
 - Encouraged Commissioners and the public to engage with legislators and communities on safety efforts.
 - Highlighted April as Work Zone Safety Month and an opportunity for outreach.

New Business

- Appointment of Highway Commission Secretary
 - The item in question was the appointment of Marissa Kuehn as Highway Commission Secretary.
 - Motion made by Commissioner **Copple, Hawks** seconded.
 - Motion carried by unanimous rollcall vote.
- Commissioner Welcome
 - Commissioner David Copple welcomed attendees to District 3 and provided an overview of:
 - Commission structure (8 districts)
 - Meeting rotation schedule
 - Importance of public input
- District 3 Presentation – Kevin Domogalla, District Engineer
 - District Overview
 - District 3 includes 15 counties in northeast Nebraska.
 - Approximately 3,400 lane miles (15% of the state system).
 - 190 employees, 4 construction offices, and 20 maintenance yards.
 - Completed Projects
 - US-275 Expressway segments completed.
 - 23rd Street reconstruction in Columbus (award-winning project).
 - US-81 paving project completed using nighttime operations.
 - Current Projects
 - Continued US-275 expansion (28 miles remaining across three segments).
 - Loup River bridge replacement project underway and ahead of schedule.
 - Highway 30 (Silver Creek to Duncan) rehabilitation project addressing maintenance concerns.
 - Public Engagement
 - “Name a Snowplow” contest received ~4,500 submissions from 211 schools statewide.
 - Public Comment
 - **Mayor Jim Bulkley** (Columbus) provided comments regarding Highway 81 expansion between Columbus and York. Suggested constructing from both ends toward the middle to maximize early benefits.
 - NDOT responded that project sequencing is driven by right-of-way acquisition, funding limitations, and engineering constraints.
 - NDOT noted limited funding prevents construction of multiple segments simultaneously.
- I-80 Sarpy County Interchange – Brian Johnson, Roadway Design
 - Project Purpose & Need
 - Address current and future traffic demand.
 - Improve regional connectivity and access.
 - Project Overview
 - New interchange at I-80 and 192nd Street in Sarpy County.
 - Diamond interchange design with roundabouts.
 - Includes pedestrian accommodations and roadway connections.

- Public Involvement
 - Public meeting held February 12, 2026 with approximately 234 attendees.
 - General public support with requests for coordination with future development.
- Schedule & Cost
 - Estimated project cost: \$35 million.
 - Construction anticipated between 2026–2028.
- Funding Approach
 - Combination of federal, state, and local funding.
 - Innovative financing approach in partnership with local entities to accelerate timeline.
- Commission Discussion
 - Question from Commissioner **Wolford**: Asked about funding sources and project prioritization. **Director Kramer** confirmed project aligns with long-range planning and addresses capacity needs. Emphasized importance of local partnerships in advancing project timeline.
 - Comment from Commissioner **Mello**: Reiterated the local and regional support for the project that as it has been discussed regularly since he joined the commission.
- Resolution 2026-3
- The item in question was approval of project location, design, and access control for I-80 Sarpy County Interchange.
 - Motion made by Commissioner **Copple, Hawks** seconded.
 - Motion carried by unanimous rollcall vote.

PUBLIC INPUT

- Mark Lief thanked the commission for coming to Columbus for this meeting. He expressed his appreciation as a resident of Columbus for the past 47 years.

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

- Chair **Meginnis**: Congratulated Khalil for his recent naming as the 2026 Nebraska Engineering Pillar Award winner by the American Council of Engineering Companies of Nebraska (ACEC).

PUBLIC MEETINGS CALENDAR

- The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) has 5 public meetings and 1 public hearing scheduled between now and the next Highway Commission meeting.
 - NDOT will hold a public hearing for the Decatur Bridge project next week. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 31, 2026 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Decatur City Hall. The formal presentation will begin at 5:30 p.m.
 - NDOT will also hold a public meeting for the Mead- US-6/N31 Project on May 5th, 2026, in Yutan, NE at the Veterans Country Club.
 - A local public meeting will be held regarding the Bellevue Fort Crook Road Bridge Study on May 7th, 2026 at the Bellevue Volunteer Firefighter Hall.
 - NDOT will hold 3 public meetings for the US-75 Corridor Study, N-370 to I-80. There will be one on May 7th, 2026, held at the Kroc Center in Omaha. On May 13th there will be an additional public meeting for this project at Bellevue University. Finally, NDOT will have a booth at the Cinco De Mayo Omaha Festival on May 16th in Omaha, NE. The variety of meetings supports our team's efforts to extend our outreach for this project.
- The next scheduled Highway Commission meeting is May 22nd, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. in Gehring, Nebraska.

ADJOURNMENT

The chair adjourned the meeting at 9:22 am.