WORKING GROUP MEETING

Meeting Minutes

LOCATION: City of San Diego Construction Management & Field Services Office / Kearny Mesa, Paul Piscapo Conference Room (1st Floor), 9573 Chesapeake Dr., San Diego, CA 92123; and Virtual via Microsoft Teams Meeting

DATE OF MEETING: October 14, 2026 (1:30 PM to 3:00 PM)

ATTENDEES: See attached attendance roster

PRESENTATION: Refer to the presentation link under the 10/14/26 meeting

AGENDA:

1) Introductions / Sign-In / Meeting Overview
2) Public Comments
3) Featured Presentation- Specifying "Premium Asphalt for Local Agencies" – Buzz Powell, PhD, PE, Technical Director, Asphalt Pavement Alliance
4) Industry / Organization Updates
5) County Paving Forecast
6) Next Building Better Roads Workgroup Meeting / Close

1) INTRODUCTION / SIGN-IN / MEETING OVERVIEW

Gabriel "Gabe" Gutierrez, Program Coordinator, Policy, Outreach and Data (POD) Division, County of San Diego

- Thanked the City of San Diego for hosting the Building Better Roads' October 14th meeting
- Reminded everyone that the meeting is being recorded in accordance with the Brown

Act and all meeting files will be posted to the BBR website

- Felt fortunate to have present so many different partners including those helping shape our region through best practices, innovation, and a shared commitment to building and maintaining the infrastructure our communities depend on
- Joked that in the future, when there are flying cars, this will be called, “Building Better Skies”
- Talked about change coming at federal level, a new congress, at state level, a new governor and senators each bringing their own vision on how governments should serve the people of California
- Brought up local government having new mayors, council members and for the Board of Supervisors
- Mentioned we are bringing in new ideas, new priorities and new expectations but that although we have worked with many officials with different priorities, our job has remained consistent in that we are here to serve
- Explained that Building Better Roads is about taking a vision and turning it into something real, with planning, design, procurement, construction, inspection, maintenance, emergency response and communications with the public and stakeholders
- Conveyed the importance of the cooperation taking place because of the challenges facing our infrastructure becoming more complicated, including climate conditions with this year we will be seeing Super El Niño, the biggest in 1,000 years
- Expressed how issues that the County of San Diego will also be faced by other jurisdictional partners and adaption to sharing information and learn best practices
- Hoped that we can make sure that the work we do today serves the people who depend on it for the next 10, 20, or even 50 years
- Challenged those in the meeting to ask good questions, listen to the presentations and embrace change
- Thanked the City of San Diego again, and the participant online and in the room
- Shared the Agenda
- Asked everyone to sign-in
- Went over the building logistics and safety for those attending meeting in-person
- Went over the Teams meeting etiquette for virtual participants

2) PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Gabe opened the floor for public comment.
- No comments were provided.

- Gabe welcomed and introduced Buzz Powell, Technical Director of the Asphalt Pavement Alliance

3) FEATURED PRESENTATION – SPECIFYING "PREMIUM ASPHALT FOR LOCAL AGENCIES"

Buzz Powell, PhD, PE, Technical Director, Asphalt Pavement Alliance

- Buzz explained he was unable to attend in-person because he is in Michigan to do an APA innovation workshop.
- Mentioned that there is no formal definition for when to specify premium asphalt and that different associations like National Asphalt Association, CalCIMA, CalAPA, and the Asphalt Institute have their own unique focus and priorities
- Expressed that The Asphalt Paving Handbook is an outstanding digital tool that free and encouraged everybody to obtain it.
- Recommended the Flexible Pavement Design Catalog for non-state dot roadways
- Illustrated that 25 years ago, the APA was formed with a mission to champion, promote and support quality asphalt pavement www.DriveAsphalt.org – Asphalt Pavement Alliance (APA)
- Shared the useful web addresses and some notes in parenthesis:
  www.DriveAsphalt.org – Asphalt Pavement Alliance (APA)
  www.AsphaltPavement.org – National Asphalt Pavement Association (asphalt mix)
  www.SAPAinc.org/members – local market driven advocacy & resources
  www.AsphaltInstitute.org – Asphalt Institute (liquid asphalt, emulsion, AIEI)
  www.NCAT.us – National Center for Asphalt Technology (reports, preservation)
  ccpic.ucdavis.edu – City & County Pavement Improvement Center (tech transfer)
  www.ChatGPT.com – general information about roads & highways (good & bad)
  www.HeyNAPA.com – focused technical library for asphalt pavement (vetted!)
- Warned about asking AI systems that look at the whole internet but not vetting the information being correct
- Recommends making an account on HeyNAPA.com for an AI System that is trained on a vetted research library of technical documents and will tell you when it doesn't know
- Shared HeyNAPA answering the inquiry: "When is it smart to utilize "premium" asphalt for local roads?" where the AI system gave multiple links showing what could be considered a premium demand
- Reiterated that the question when using premium asphalt is whether you will get a return on investment (ROI)

- Illustrated what premium demands could be considered
    - Heavy truck, slow moving, and/or stopping traffic
    - Intersections, turn lanes, other high-stress areas
    - Frequent maintenance for rutting or shoving
    - Prevent reflection over existing cracked pavement
    - High moisture exposure or stripping concerns
    - Better performance needed without extra thickness
    - Clearance issues
    - Inadequate existing foundation support
- Explained what kind of upgrades make a "Premium" asphalt
    - Enhanced properties of mixed constituent materials
    - A more costly polymer or a high polymer in your asphalt binder
    - Better aggregates
    - Putting additives in the mix to alter performance like tire rubber or high strength aramid fibers
    - DGA mix design that's both crack & rut resistant
    - Conventional vs healthy vs premium
- Reiterated that the question when using premium asphalt is whether you will get a return on investment (ROI)
- Stated that partnership in research by NCAT and MnROAD are currently evaluating and quantifying the performance from using fibers like aramid fibers in asphalt mixtures
- Described what requirements are considered for asphalt quality
- Shared a 2018 NCAT Pavement Test Track RAP mix placed in one lift/ or single pass with paver, between 7 and 8 inches thick of healthy mix was easy to compact and good density profile cores
- Mentioned that this form of rapid rebuilds is allowed as standard practice in South Carolina
- Gave a Terminology Review:
    - High modulus asphalt mix (HIMOD or HMAC) – stiffness
    - Highly ~3x modified asphalt (HiMA™) binder – proprietary
    - High ≥2x polymer binder (HP) - Asphalt Institute (non-proprietary)
    - High polymer grade binder (HPG) - TxAPA (guidance document)
    - Highly modified asphalt mix (HiMod) - Utah, Missouri,…

    - HiMod = ↑$binder_{HP}$, ↑V_{be}, ↓V_a, DGA - quarry balance
    - "Thicklay" paving option for HiMod mix

- Shared that at a weigh station in Utah coming in from Nevada, they did a 6 inch mill and inlay, windrow paving, compacted in place with a single layer, used an HIMOD mix with HP “BG” binder M320 and it has performed well under heavy truck traffic
- Explained that for binders, the key to PG grading is if you add that first number (high temperature) with the second number (low temperature), it needs to be at least 110 degrees Celsius for it to qualify as a PG binder that can be use in HIMOD mixes
- Stated that Utah now has approximately 2 million tons of Dense Graded Mixes (DGA) and shared their mix design requirements and values
- Reminded us that you want to have a positive return on investment
- Recommended to do a life cycle cost analysis for costs you anticipate for different alternatives
- Talked about the process of adding high-Strength Aramid fibers to a mix
- Went over when premium mix utilization is decided to be a good option, you have to find if local industry is able to produce it and place it as required
- Expressed the importance of communication with industry because they have to buy in to use these mix alternatice
- Encouraged using NCAT report 25-01 to find out what are the best specification mix in your area
- Gave another example in Alabama where they reduced the thickness of the premium mix and got savings overall
- Explained the process and use of high polymer mastic for patching
- Showed what the high polymer mastic patch done a decade ago looks like today with cracking around it, but the patch has no cracks in it at all
- Concluded that lower cost asphalt may not be the lowest life cycle cost (LCCA) investment, getting buy-in for the mix from industry in your area, targeting premium mix where it provides ROI, optimizing investment, taking advantage of improved structural value
- Reflected that this is all about safe and sustainable asphalt pavement at the lowest possible life cycle
- Provided his contact information
    - Dr. R. Buzz Powell, PE, APA Technical Director
    - 334-750-6293
    - BPowell@AsphaltPavement.org
    - In/BuzzPowell

    - 4534 Alabama Highway 51, Opelika, AL 36804
    - DriveAsphalt.Org
- Offered his help to those in California
- Gabe thanked Buzz for the conversation and valuable information
- Buzz answered questions
- Orland introduced Brandon Milar

4) INDUSTRY UPDATES

Brandon Milar, P.E., Technical Director, The California Asphalt Pavement Association (CalAPA)

- Brandon attended virtually and thanked everyone for the opportunity to present the CalAPA's perspective on Asphalt Industry Updates
- Showed the specification updates and provided QR codes with the links
    - 2025 Caltrans Standards Available Online with 2026 coming soon
    - 2024 Greenbook Available to order with 2027 coming soon
    - City and County Pavement Improvement Center (CCPIC)
- Talked about the Caltrans emerging initiatives for Balanced Mix Design to meet criteria for rutting and cracking potential introducing new tests
- Explained the focus on using the IDEAL-CT test
- Reminded us of the other tests, IDEAL-RT and HWTT (Hamburg Wheel Track TEST)
- Added that another Caltrans initiative is Percent Within Limits (PWL) since Caltrans is changing how they accept mix and pay for mix
- Shared a training happening on October 26 at 1:3o pm ET for Validating Contractor Data For Acceptance: Reinforcing the Fundamentals
- Announced Caltrans addition to their standard specification in 2026 is a requirement for submissions of environmental product declarations found in Section 5.
- Offered assistance to local agencies in understanding those changes
- Mentioned that the Green Book Asphalt Concrete Task Force meets the first Wednesday of every month, the co-chairs are Blaine Toman, Orange County and himself
- Explained that the 2027 Greenbook will include specification language for Aramid fibers, a change in the warm mix asphalt (WMA) contractor option, a change to the ARMH specification
- Added that the Green Book Asphalt Concrete Task Force will be working on gyratory compacted mixes for AC design, JMF Submittal requirement, tack coat requirements

which use CSS-1h and CQS-1h

- Shared training opportunities and QR code links for:
    - City and County Pavement Improvement Center – various training classes
    - CalAPA Training: AP 101 & Asphalt Forensics, Sacramento Nov. 17, Los Angeles Jan.12, San Diego TBD
- Answered a question about penalties on EPAs
- Brandon thanked everyone
- Gabe thanked Brandon and welcomed the next speaker, Cameron with CalCima

Cameron Richardson, Director of Technical Affairs, California Construction Industrial Materials Association (CalCIMA)

- Cameron thanked Gabe and introduced himself
- Explained that CalCIMA represents aggregate mines, mineral mines, asphalt producers and concrete producers
- Announced a big win with the help of Assembly member Juan Carillo, Assembly Bill 982 which enables clarifies idle mine status versus active mine status and protects mine rights
- Reminded us that in the past you would lose your rights to that mine if left inactive for more than 10 years
- Shared that the bill passed 39-0 in the senate and 78-0 in the assembly before reaching the governor's desk and getting signed a couple weeks ago
- Brought awareness about South Coast AQMD- Rule 1157 major updates are to process and report practical dust suppression from mine sites, asphalt sites, and operation in the area
- Gave kudos for industry partners coming to the table to try to do better with dust from their operations
- Shared a QR code with a link to the Proposed Amended Rule 1157, PM10 Emission Reductions from Aggregate and Related Operations document
- Announced that CalCIMA was celebrating the 50 year anniversary of Surface Mine and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA)
- Presented a photo of a mine in Mission Valley being in use in 1995 for mining and materials and then the land is reclaimed and redeveloped in 2022
- Shared that CalCIMA is working on, at a state level moving from 25% RAP to 40% RAP inclusion (High RAP Phase 2)
- Encouraged the group to use the mountains of RAP that are coming off the roads right

now, get them reintroduced to make sure we have sustainable and long lasting roads

- Explained another specification update being low and Non-Nuclear Density Guage acceptance for HMA that is safer, would allow more people to get involved in the inspection on site, do their job better and faster with maximizing resources
- Shared that they worked with Caltrans over the past year for the Specification update of Adjustments to Sand Equivalent test frequency, moving Caltran's 1 per 750 tons to 1 per 10,000 tons, making it an efficient test
- Mentioned that the Criteria for Alkali Silica Reactivity (ASR) will be updated
- Added that a new method for acceptance of in-place concrete spec will also be updated
- Extended Invitation to participants by sharing a QR code with a link to the CalCIMA events:
    - 2026 Education Conference, Nov. 3-6, 2026, Hyatt Regency, Monterey, CA
    - Next year, La Quinta
- Thanked everyone for their time
- Gabe Thanked Cameron and introduced Mike McManus

Mike McManus, Director of Engineering Construction & Industry Relations, Associated General Contractors (AGC) The Construction Association

- Mike greeted the room
- Began his US Construction Outlook presentation with Jobs
- Shared that construction jobs are up in 35 states with Ohio, North Carolina and Texas in the lead
- Mentioned that California lost the most construction jobs, followed by New York and Viginia
- Stated that unemployment in construction was at an all-time low at 3.1%
- Shared the possible policy headwinds that may reduce job gains with an explosion of moratoriums on data centers across the country with 300 local governments either banning or pausing data centers because of concerns of electric use and water use affecting utility cost for locals
- Informed us Congress has delayed passage of New Federal Transportation Bill and the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act Expired on September 30, 2026, showing hesitancy on big funding packages because of the national debt and high interest rates
- Shared that all this is creating uncertainty in the infrastructure space, and additionally the constant turmoil and whiplash on tariff policy, raising materials costs

- Illustrated how Tariffs and Diesel are pushing up costs of construction materials including producer price index (PPIs) on new nonresidential construction, and domestic input prices for items competing with tariff-burdened imports, soared
- Shared how construction pay increases continue to outpace the private sector
- Voiced that construction spending is down 3.8% compared to last year, Power projects are up 6.5%, Manufacturing Facilities are down 22% and Data Centers are up 57% which is an amazing number but thinks it might be slowing, and public construction is up a bit at 1.7%
- Envisioned the conditions that will shape the Market for 2027 starting with inflation especially on oil and diesel, material costs like steel, aluminum and copper climbed on tariffs, tight labor market where 92% firms struggled to hire craft workers, financing stayed inexpensive, federal benchmark rate moved to 3.75 to tame inflation
- Expressed that like other agency members he too is cautiously optimistic and shared the following:
    - The office and retail project starts, were recorded to almost to 0 new office starts
    - Surge in multifamily residential
    - Near transit stops, you can build heights up to 50-100 feet
    - Cost pressures with higher rates, materials costs, and cost of labor
    - Mega-Infrastructure has been anchoring us like the San Diego International Airport Terminal 1 project, and the Chula Vista Bayfront project which has kept our labor here
- Shared that the economists at AGC of America think that there will be a plateau here across the country for job growth and spending, and that the big growth for recent years is probably over
- Asked if there were any questions
- Gabe thanked Mike for his cautious optimism and asked James Watkins to present the Couty Paving Forecast

5) COUNTY PAVING FORECAST

James Watkins, P.E., Senior Civil Engineer, Department of Public Works, Design Engineering & Capital Project, County of San Diego

- James announced that the County officially met their goal of reaching a pavement condition index of 70 and that this was a significant milestone for the county representing the result of several years of sustained investment in their road network
- Noted that reaching 70 was not the intended finish line and that more resurfacing

contracts are in full speed ahead for advertisement and construction

- Remarked that they are continuing to include ADA ramp construction in the contracts to comply with federal regulations
- Shared that they are gradually moving towards increasing preservation efforts to extend pavement life and delay the need for expensive rehabilitation
- Announced that the Fiscal Year 25/26 AC Overlay Contract is on its way to being advertised around the end of the month which is planned to resurface approximately 83 miles and 270 ADA curb ramps
- Expects bids to open some time around the new year due to the size of the contract
- Shared that the Fiscal Year 26/27 Pavement Seal Contract is currently in design which includes approximately 20 miles of preventative chip and slurry seals and the upgrading of 20 ADA ramps
- Aims for a February 2027 advertisement with bid opening the following month
- Shared that they are in the beginning stages of design for their Fiscal Year 26/27 AC Overlay contract aimed for a summer 2027 advertisement with about 72 miles of asphalt resurfacing and the reconstruction of approximately 160 ADA ramps
- Assumed that towards the end of 2028, when these contracts are done, the County will have resurfaced 1100 miles, representing 56% of its road network, and upgraded over 1500 ADA Curb ramps
- Noted the importance of the County's effort to maintain their drainage facilities which play a vital role in protecting their roads and other infrastructure
- Imparted that a roadway can have an excellent pavement section but if a drainage system fails or is allowed to undermine a roadway, then that pavement investment is compromised
- Announced that two AC culvert projects are in design and will advertise and go into construction in the next few months, adding about 50 additional culverts to the 150 that are already out for construction
- Conveyed the importance of maintaining drainage infrastructure alongside their roadway program is an important component of maintaining the overall transportation system
- Informed that the County of San Diego uses BuyNet for electronic procurement and will require contractors to pre-qualify if you intend to bid on any of the mentioned projects
- Wants to make sure interested contractors are positioned to participate when the opportunities come up
- Invited local agencies who want to share their paving forecast to reach out to Orland Mott
- Offered to answer any questions after the meeting

- Gave thanks

6) NEXT MEETING/CLOSE

- Gabe closed the meeting out
- Thanked everybody for their support
- Looks forward to the next BBR meeting which will be next year