U.S. Department of Transportation
BEAUTIFYING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes
July 29, 2026

The Beautifying Transportation Infrastructure Council (BTIC or the Council) met Wednesday, July 29, 2026, on *Government Zoom*. Justin Shubow, BTIC Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time. In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public.

The following individuals participated in the meeting:

Council Members
Justin Shubow, Chair
Bradley Cambridge
Maryam Ghyabi-White
Jason Pike
Gary Meisner
Peter Quintanilla
Kim Vierheilig

Governmental Representatives
Julianne S. Schwarzer, Designated Federal Officer, U.S. DOT
Nate Deshmukh Towery, Facilitator, U.S. DOT Volpe Center

Presenters
Mark Baker, Statewide Landscape Architect, Texas DOT
Jennifer Loa, Landscape Architect, Texas DOT
Robert Owens, Bridge Design Section Director, Texas DOT
Will Watts, Chief Operating Officer, Florida DOT

Call to Order
Nate Deshmukh Towery welcomed participants and introduced Council Chair Justin Shubow and Designated Federal Officer (DFO) Julianne Schwarzer. Mr. Shubow called the meeting to order. Ms. Schwarzer welcomed the participants to the meeting.

Meeting Logistics
Mr. Deshmukh Towery provided an overview of the meeting logistics and agenda.

Approval of Minutes from June 24, 2026, Meeting
Mr. Deshmukh Towery presented the minutes from the Council's meeting on June 24, 2026, noting they were circulated to Council members in advance of the meeting. Mr. Shubow

requested a motion to approve the minutes. Gary Meisner moved to approve the minutes. Peter Quintanilla and Bradley Cambridge supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously by the Council.

Presentation: Beautiful Transportation Infrastructure in Texas:
Together with BTIC's Jason Pike, Mark Baker, Jennifer Loa, and Robert Owens of Texas DOT presented examples of transportation infrastructure aesthetics in Texas.

Part 1 - Aesthetics Master Planning
Mr. Baker, supported by Ms. Loa, presented Texas DOT's framework for aesthetic master planning across four distinct geographic scales: statewide, district, corridor, and neighborhood. The presentation demonstrated how master planning establishes standardized aesthetic treatments such as the use of form liners for mechanically stabilized earth panels and bridge abutments, streamlines design efforts, lowers sourcing costs, and incorporates Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design features that deter vandalism and graffiti. By securing community consensus early in the planning process, Texas DOT streamlines approvals and creates cohesive visual identities tailored to local contexts. The presentation also highlighted case studies, including the Houston District's Green Ribbon Project, San Antonio's Camino Verde regional iconography, and Central Texas's Mobility 35 corridor character zones.

Part 2 - Principles of Bridge Design
Mr. Owens detailed Texas DOT's structural engineering principles for bridge aesthetics, emphasizing that visual appeal must integrate seamlessly with safety, context sensitivity, and clear structural load paths. The presentation highlighted a preference for muted natural tones and standardized form liner concrete textures over bright paints, which control long-term maintenance and traffic-control costs while giving contractors predictable standards. Mr. Owens showcased various structural applications, ranging from precast post-tensioned arches and segmental bridges to continuous box caps and historic-inspired Texas Classic railings, while emphasizing design for pedestrian and cyclist perspectives. Additionally, he outlined Texas DOT's Historic Bridge Preservation Program in partnership with the Texas Historical Commission, local municipal maintenance agreements, and the agency's decentralized process of gathering community input before structural engineering locks in final designs.

Subcommittee Update: (1) Principles of Beautiful Design
Mr. Shubow provided an update on the subcommittee that aims to expand on the five core aesthetic design principles with real-world examples and best practices. Under the principle of uplifting and inspiring travelers, the subcommittee highlighted LaGuardia Airport's water feature show and Washington Union Station's Roman-bath-inspired architecture. They recommended best practices such as multi-style project renderings, public design sessions, demographic analyses, and "coffee with contractors" workshops. For harmonizing with landscapes and

complementing local heritage, members cited historic parkways (Blue Ridge, George Washington Memorial, Merritt), as well as Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival terminals (Los Angeles Union Station, Santa Fe Depot), advising coordination with State Historic Preservation Offices and local pattern books. Additionally, the update emphasized set-asides for public art along prominent structures and utilizing intuitive structural form to guide users naturally, thereby reducing signage and visual clutter. Mr. Quintanilla noted that design details must adapt to travel speeds and context, distinguishing urban pedestrian lighting from large-scale stamped concrete along high-speed highways.

Subcommittee Update: (2) Implementation of Beautiful Design

Mr. Shubow and Mr. Pike outlined draft recommendations to ensure aesthetic principles carry enforceable policy weight across project lifecycles without compromising safety or fiscal responsibility. Key recommendations included establishing design quality as an evaluation criterion in Notices of Funding Opportunities, requiring applicants to detail long-term maintenance plans, and treating promised aesthetic features as binding project commitments to protect them from value engineering cost cuts. The subcommittee noted the importance of early-stage peer design reviews modeled after the General Service Administration's Design Excellence Program before engineering locks in structural forms. Such early-state design review provides model procurement and contract language to help state and local agencies lawfully select firms based on design capability.

Presentation: Beautiful Transportation Infrastructure in Florida

Maryam Ghyabi-White and Will Watts discussed and presented examples of transportation infrastructure aesthetics in Florida.

Mr. Watts outlined the state's multi-modal framework for infrastructure beautification, which serves over 130 million residents and visitors across diverse regional ecosystems. Florida DOT's approach is guided by five core principles (uplifting traveler journeys, harmonizing with landscapes, reflecting local heritage, boosting economic vitality, and leveraging design excellence) supported by a constitutional mandate to protect natural scenery and a statutory requirement to allocate at least 1.5 percent of construction funds to plant materials through the "Bold Landscaping" program. Florida DOT embeds aesthetic evaluations directly into its Project Development and Environment reviews and Florida Design Manual upfront, while adhering to a statutory mandate to maintain existing facilities before constructing new capacity. During the question-and-answer portion of the presentation, Mr. Watts emphasized that Florida DOT formally locks in aesthetic commitments during early environmental reviews, controls billboard sign pollution, prioritizes native low-maintenance vegetation, and separates landscaping contracts from roadway construction to ensure proper plant establishment.

Resume Deliberations and Finalize Recommendations for Task 26-03

The Council discussed leveraging the existing National Environmental Policy Act's environmental processes to formalize aesthetic commitments during early project scoping, while agreeing to expand knowledge-sharing with additional state DOTs and research committees. Members also debated aesthetic funding strategies, weighing flexible budgetary set-asides and project-hierarchy categorizations versus potential complexities of rigid statutory mandates across different states. Notes from the Council's discussion of Task 26-03 are available on the Council's meetings page.

Closing Remarks and Next Steps
Ms. Schwarzer noted that the next BTIC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 30, 2026, with meeting details to be published on the Council's website.

Mr. Shubow thanked the Texas DOT and Florida DOT representatives for their presentations, noting that real-world examples provide invaluable concrete models for national policy recommendations.

Public Input
No materials were received from the public for Council consideration in advance of the meeting.

Adjournment
Mr. Shubow adjourned the meeting at 2:20 PM after providing closing remarks.

We hereby certify that, to the best of our knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

_____//Signed//_____
Justin Shubow, Chair

_____//Signed//_____
Julianne S. Schwarzer, Designated Federal Officer