

Scheduling Interagency Project Meetings

Project Development and
Environmental Analysis Branch



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- Technical Support Analyst
- Team Member

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Purpose

To communicate the process for reserving and scheduling slots on the Interagency Project Meeting Calendar (formerly, Merger or Concurrence Calendar).

Background

What is the Interagency Project Meeting Calendar?

It is what we used to call the “Concurrence Calendar” or “Merger Calendar”. We have previously used these terms but are now calling them Interagency Project Meetings, since the NC Turnpike Authority (NCTA) also may use these days for their agency meetings.

The Interagency Project Meeting Calendar consists of days that are reserved each month for a whole calendar year (usually 3 per month) for various inter-agency meetings in order to make scheduling easier. Merger meetings (Concurrence Points 1 through 4C), scoping meetings, NCTA Agency meetings, Design-Build meetings, and any other purpose that requires the attendance of interagency team members can be scheduled on these days. Scheduling for all of these is handled by the PDEA Staff Engineer.

What about web-conferencing capabilities?

Web meetings (“webinars”) are set up for all PDEA Merger meetings, and these web meetings are recorded. Hydraulics, Design-Build, and NCTA meetings can be recorded if desired. Any

meeting that needs to be recorded must have a web meeting set up, since the current mechanism is to record the web meeting.

Responsibility

Four parties have responsibility for carrying out this procedure: the PDEA Staff Engineer; the person requesting a meeting slot (the PDE, or the Hydraulics Engineer, the DB Engineer, or NCTA); the PDEA Technical Support Analyst (Christie Murphy); and Interagency Team members. The specific [Roles and Responsibilities](#) for each party are listed under the Procedures section.

Resources

How do I know when the Interagency Project Meeting Days are?

The Annual Merger calendar can be found on line at <http://www.ncdot.gov/doh/preconstruct/pe/concurrence.html>

Is there a way I can tell how much time is available on a particular Meeting Day?

You can see when the Western and Eastern Interagency Project Meeting days are, and which slots have been filled, in Outlook. To do this:

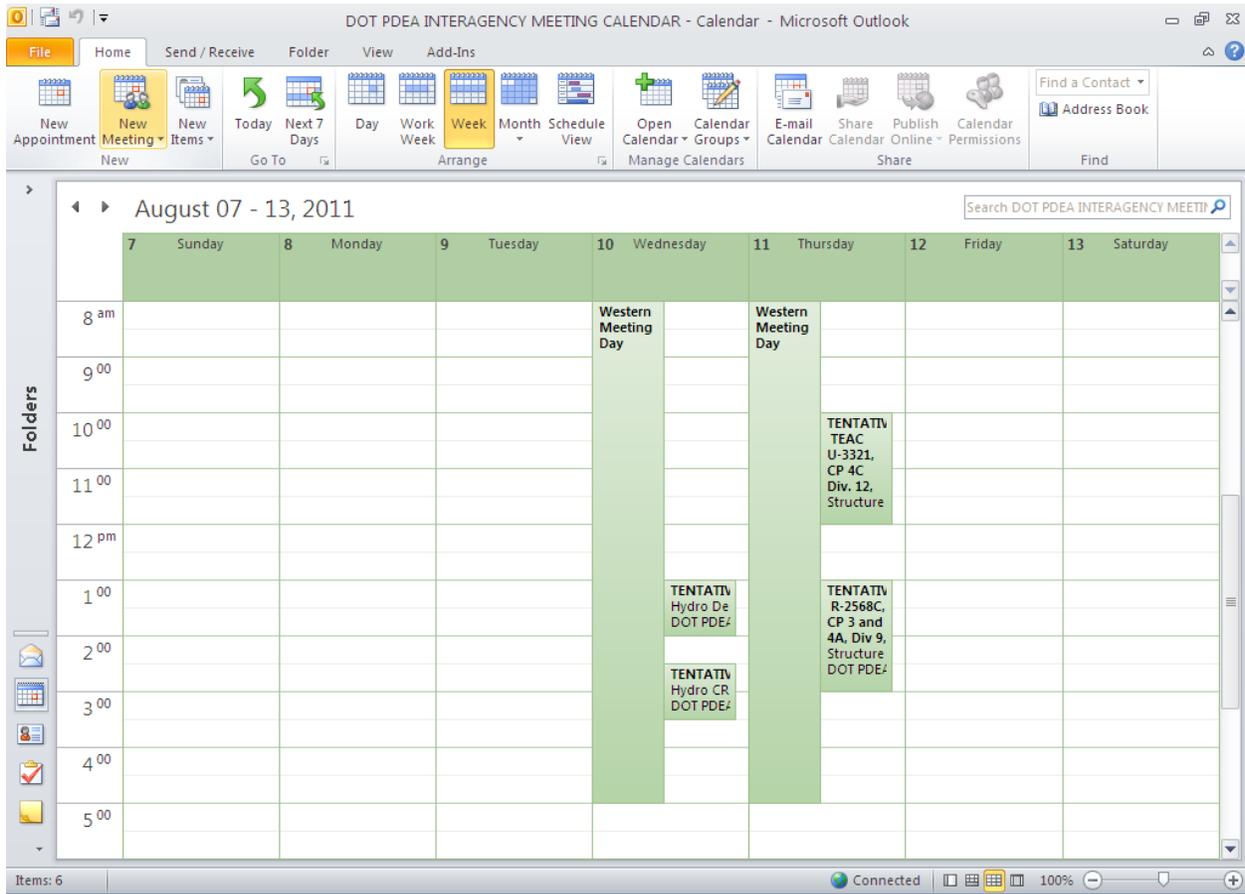
- In Outlook Calendar, Home tab, click on “Open Meeting”
- Choose “From Room List”
- Find “DOT PDEA INTERAGENCY MEETING CALENDAR” and open.
- The Interagency Project Meeting days are reserved for the whole day on the calendar. Slots are available unless you see an individual project meeting scheduled. For example, the first screenshot below tells you that Wednesday, September 14 is a Western Meeting Day, but so far no slots have been requested or scheduled. The second screenshot below tells you that August 10 and 11, 2011 are Western Meeting Days, and that four project slots have been requested and tentatively scheduled as shown. (Note: even though anyone can view the DOT PDEA Interagency Meeting Calendar on Outlook, only the Staff Engineer can schedule meetings. All requests must go through him/her.)

Example – Meeting Day Reserved, All Time Slots Available

The screenshot displays the Microsoft Outlook calendar interface for the 'DOT PDEA INTERAGENCY MEETING CALENDAR'. The calendar is set to 'Week' view, showing the dates from Sunday, September 11, to Saturday, September 17, 2011. A vertical green bar is present on Wednesday, September 14, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, labeled 'Western Meeting Day'. The rest of the calendar grid is empty, with a 'Click to add appointment' prompt visible on Monday, September 12, at 10:00 am. The interface includes a ribbon with 'File', 'Home', 'Send/Receive', 'Folder', 'View', and 'Add-Ins' tabs. The 'View' tab is active, showing options for Day, Work Week, Week, Month, and Schedule View. The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Items: 1' and 'Connected'.

	11 Sunday	12 Monday	13 Tuesday	14 Wednesday	15 Thursday	16 Friday	17 Saturday
8 am				Western Meeting Day			
9:00				Western Meeting Day			
10:00		Click to add appointment		Western Meeting Day			
11:00				Western Meeting Day			
12 pm				Western Meeting Day			
1:00				Western Meeting Day			
2:00				Western Meeting Day			
3:00				Western Meeting Day			
4:00				Western Meeting Day			
5:00				Western Meeting Day			

Example – Meeting Day Reserved-Time Slots Reserved



Procedures

Procedure for requesting and scheduling a meeting slot:

1. The requesting party (the Project Development Engineer, the Design-Build Engineer, the Hydraulics Engineer, or the NCTA) contacts the PDEA Staff Engineer (preferably by email) and provides the following information:
 - Meeting Month
 - STIP number
 - Concurrence Point or other purpose of meeting
 - Division
 - County
 - Length of time needed (any length, as project needs dictate: 30 minutes to all day).
 - Team members (both Interagency Merger Team members and NCDOT support staff). You have the option of also including any consultant/contractor staff. If you do include consultant/contractor staff, though, also provide their email addresses.

(This is not required for NCTA projects. This information is so the Staff Engineer can prepare the Outlook invitation and the Day Agenda; NCTA prepares their own meeting agendas and issues their own invitations.) The team members should be provided in a table, according to the following format:

TEAM (signing):	
Name, USACE	Name, NCWRC
Name, FHWA	Renee Gledhill-Earley, SHPO
Name, USFWS	Name, MPO (or RPO)
Chris Militscher, EPA	Name, PDEA
Name, NCDWQ	Name, DCM
Etc.	Etc.
SUPPORT STAFF/TECHNICAL TEAM (non-signing)	
Name, NEU	Name, Division
Name, Roadway	Name, REU
Name, Structures	Name, HEU
Name, Hydraulics	Name, PDEA Group Leader
Name, PEF	Name, PEF
Etc.	Etc.

2. The above information is sent to the Staff Engineer, who will tentatively schedule the projects according to the following process:

- Assign a time slot (in Outlook, on DOT PDEA INTERAGENCY CALENDAR) to each project, with the word TENTATIVE in front of the meeting subject.
- Arrange the meetings to accommodate, where possible, staff travelling from other buildings and especially from other parts of the state. For example, they will try not to schedule a meeting with an Asheville team member before 11 am, unless there is a meeting in Raleigh the previous afternoon requiring an overnight stay. As another example, if NCTA has two meetings, they will try to schedule those back-to-back.
- Space the meetings such that there is at least 30 minutes between the end of one and the start of the next. This is to allow for overruns, breaks, set up time, etc.

All meetings are treated as TENTATIVE until all meeting requests have come in, and the Day Agenda has been finalized based on consideration of all meetings and all team members involved. This means that someone requesting a meeting slot for a particular month needs to hold open the entire day or days for that month until the Day Agenda is finalized, about two weeks ahead of the meeting date. The fact that a project has a TENTATIVE slot on the calendar does not guarantee it that slot.

3. Around 4 ½ weeks ahead of an Interagency Project Meeting Day, the Staff Engineer will send out an email reminding people that the deadline to request a slot is approaching, and what that deadline is. Generally, a slot needs to be requested a minimum of 4 weeks ahead of the meeting day. However, exceptions are made under some circumstances; discuss with the Staff Engineer.

NOTE: It is the Project Development Engineer's responsibility to send out packages. Packages should not indicate a meeting date or time. This causes confusion in the event the time changes. The Outlook Calendar and the on-line Day Agenda are the source information for the meeting time, not the packages. Packages should be received by the Team members two weeks ahead of the meeting date at the latest; three weeks ahead is ideal. Packages to NCDOT employees can be sent via email or FTS. There is no need to print packages for NCDOT Staff.

4. At 3 weeks ahead of the Interagency Project Meeting Day, or after the deadline given in Step 3 above passes, the Staff Engineer does the following:
 - Rearranges project slots as necessary in consideration of all scheduled projects to maximize convenience of all team members involved.
 - Prepares a draft Day Agenda for each Interagency Project Meeting Day. It will have a "DRAFT" watermark.
 - Prepares and sends an Outlook invitation for each project, with the STIP, CP, Division, and County in the subject line. In the case of a NCTA meeting, the subject line will just say "TENTATIVE: NCTA – Project Name". The Draft Day Agenda will be attached.
5. Upon receiving the TENTATIVE Outlook invitations for a particular day, the Technical Support Analyst will post the Draft Agenda to <http://www.ncdot.gov/doh/preconstruct/pe/concurrence.html>
6. The Staff Engineer will receive feedback on the draft Day Agenda for a week. People who would like to request an alternative time for a particular project should notify the Staff Engineer by email or phone upon receipt of the TENTATIVE Outlook invitation.
7. About 2 weeks ahead of the meeting day, the Day will be "closed," that is, no more requests for meetings will be taken. The Staff Engineer will re-arrange the slots based on any feedback. S/he will revise the Day Agenda accordingly and finalize it by removing the "DRAFT" watermark. S/he will send out an updated Outlook invitation that: reflects any changes, has the word "TENTATIVE" removed from the subject line, and has the final Day Agenda attached.
8. Upon receiving the revised Outlook invitations for a particular day, the Technical Support Analyst will replace the Draft Agenda with the final Agenda at <http://www.ncdot.gov/doh/preconstruct/pe/concurrence.html>

Roles and Responsibilities

STAFF ENGINEER

- To prepare, circulate for review, and finalize the Yearly Interagency Project Meeting Calendar in the Fall of each year.
- To manage the Outlook resource "DOT PDEA INTERAGENCY MEETING CALENDAR"

- To schedule project slots based on requests, minimizing, where possible , inconvenience to those travelling from off-site, with priority given to those travelling from other parts of the state
- To prepare Day Agendas and to prepare and send Outlook invitations
- To secure room reservations
- To manage, revising where necessary, the procedure for scheduling projects on the Interagency Project Meeting calendar.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT ENGINEER (OR OTHER MEETING REQUESTOR)

- To be aware of when Interagency Project Meeting Days are.
- To plan ahead and request a meeting slot in time to not jeopardize project schedule
- Upon planning to schedule a meeting, to notify in as far advance as possible MPO/RPO representatives and any other critical party who may not be holding Merger Days open of the potential dates. For example, let's say you contact the Staff Engineer in March about possibly scheduling a May concurrence meeting. S/he lets you know there is room on the agenda on both days for your region. You notify the Division (usually DCE and DEO), RPO or MPO, the Roadway Project Engineer, etc. to let them know to hold those days open until the agenda is set.
- Anyone requesting a meeting slot for a particular month needs to hold open the entire day or days for that month until the Day Agenda is finalized, about two weeks ahead of the meeting date. The fact that a project has a TENTATIVE slot on the calendar does not guarantee it that slot.
- To communicate to the Staff Engineer any known scheduling constraints (for instance, some vital party has told you they cannot be available for the morning of the Interagency Project Meeting day and so you are asking for an afternoon slot).
- To find out if any participants plan to call in and/or web conference in and to notify the Technical Support Analyst of who these people are.
- To prepare and send out packages. Packages should not indicate a meeting date or time. This causes confusion in the event times change. The Outlook Calendar and the on-line Day Agenda are the source information for the meeting time, not the packages. Packages should be received by the Team members two weeks ahead of the meeting date at the latest; three weeks ahead is ideal. Packages to NCDOT employees can be sent via email or FTS. There is no need to print packages for NCDOT Staff.
- To forward Outlook invitations to any involved consultant staff, unless Staff Engineer was provided their email addresses and they are already included on Outlook invitation.
- To prepare presentation materials and have any digital materials available the day of the meeting on a flashdrive or the PDEA shared drive.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT ANALYST

- To hold open all Interagency Project Meeting Days in order to provide technical support, including computer, web-conference, phone-conference, and video-conference.
- To let the Staff Engineer know of any day (s)he cannot provide technical support, so that alternate arrangements can be made.

