

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This is my last newsletter as President of the ASCE National Capital Section. My term still has a few months to run, and I plan to use every one of them, but I wanted to use this space to thank you and to look ahead to what comes next.

This has been a full and active year. We hosted technical programs, webinars, and networking events. We invested in students and young engineers. We brought timely conversations to our members and gave people new reasons to show up and get involved. Every one of those moments happened because volunteers and members made the time, and I am grateful for it.

Now we turn to the event I am most excited about. On August 6, the Section will host the 2026 State of Infrastructure Summit at 25 Massachusetts Avenue NW in Washington, DC. The theme is Interdisciplinary Resilience in the National Capital Region, and the program is built to bring the full breadth of our profession into one room for a single day. This is the signature event of the year, and the Section has not put on something of this scale in several years. The last time we gathered at this level was during our centennial celebration. I want this Summit to mark the return of that tradition and to set a standard the Section carries forward year after year.

I am asking every member to be part of it. Come for the program, come for the connections, and come to be in the room when our community shows what it can do together. Registration opens in early July, so watch for the details and mark August 6 on your calendar now.

Thank you for an outstanding year. I look forward to seeing you at the Summit.



Warm regards,
Shofiq Ahmed, P.E., PTOE, RSP1
President, ASCE NCS

OPEN BOARD POSITIONS

with ASCE NCS Reston Branch

The ASCE Reston Branch is currently seeking individuals interested in participating on the Board for the 2025-2026 program year. Be a part of the group that puts together great technical meetings and networking opportunities! Participating with the Board is a great chance to meet professionals in our local community and to learn more about the Civil Engineering work that drives our area. We currently have two (2) voting board positions open, one (1) for the At-Large Director and one (1) for the Secretary.

If you would like to be considered for the At-Large Director and Secretary position, please provide a Statement of Intent (a brief paragraph describing your interest in the position) and Qualifications (a brief bio or resume) to **ASCE Reston Branch, Vicky Yu**, at this email address: vyu@atcs.com.

NCS Reston Branch Upcoming Meeting Announcements

9/15/2026 – Geophysics 101 presented by Felicia Kegel Bechtel, MSc, PG from RETTEW company

10/13/2026 – Innovative Practices topics by Michale Fontaine from VTTI

Look out for registration links in upcoming emails from the NCS Reston Branch.



SAVE THE DATE

2026 • ASCE NATIONAL CAPITAL SECTION

STATE OF INFRASTRUCTURE SUMMIT

Interdisciplinary Resilience in the National Capital Region

AUGUST 6, 2026

7:30 AM – 5:30 PM

25 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC

A multi-disciplinary program spanning the broad-based civil engineering industry.

REGISTRATION OPENS EARLY JULY | 6.0 PDH

Presented by the ASCE National Capital Section

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Virginia Infrastructure Report Card – Public Release Scheduled for August 2026 – Richmond, Virginia



By: Victor I. Crawford, P.E., FASCE, Co-Chair, Virginia Report Card Committee

The Virginia Section, with excellent support from the National Capital Section and the staff at ASCE Headquarters, will release the Infrastructure Report Card in Richmond, Virginia, in August 2026. The Report Card Committee has worked hard to develop the final drafts of the chapters, which have been submitted to ASCE Headquarters for review and the preparation of the Executive Summary and talking points.

This Report Card, which covers all of Virginia, has been a combined effort by civil engineers from both the Virginia and National Capital Sections. Particularly, the Reston Branch, whose members also provided key leadership and support during the writing and public release of the Report Card in the Winter of 2022, at the Lynnhaven Boat Ramp and Beach Facility, Chesapeake, Virginia. For the 2026 Report Card release, the weather will be much warmer, and the location will be in downtown Richmond, Virginia.

Following the public release, the Virginia Report Card will be used when meeting with Legislators during the ASCE Fly-In to Capitol Hill in early 2027 and during the Drive-In, when the Report Card will be used in meetings with Virginia legislators and their staff.



Public Release of 2022 Report Card, Chesapeake, Virginia
Virginia Section Delegation support by Shainur Ahsan, Reston Branch



Virginia ASCE Members Prepare to Meet with Congressional Members and Staff using the 2022 Report Card During ASCE 2023 Fly-In



NCS Geo-Institute Young Members Volunteer at D.C. Central Kitchen

By: Morgan Berger, P.E., ASCE NCS Secretary Geotechnical Engineer at A.G.E.S., Inc.

On May 6th, members of the ASCE NCS Geo-Institute Young Members volunteered at DC Central Kitchen (DCCK), spending the evening preparing food and packing meals for local community members. The event offered an opportunity to give back while working alongside a dedicated, enthusiastic group of volunteers. Participants enjoyed a rewarding evening of service in support of DCCK's mission to combat hunger and poverty in the Washington, D.C. region.

Following the volunteer event, attendees gathered at The Point DC for happy hour and networking. Thanks to everyone who came out to volunteer, and please look out for our next fundraising event, which will be the Dulles Plane Pull on August 22nd!



NCS APRIL MEETING

By: Shofiq Ahmed, P.E., PTOE, RSP1, ASCE NCS President, Executive Vice President of Peggy Malone & Associates

On April 25, 2026, the ASCE National Capital Section hosted a virtual webinar on **AI in Transportation**, moderated by **Shofiq Ahmed, P.E., PTOE, RSP1**, Executive Vice President at Peggy Malone & Associates. The panel featured **Kristin White** of Google Public Sector, **Hillary Orr** of the City of Alexandria, **Stephanie Dock** of the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and **Danielle Chou** of the Federal Highway Administration. Together, they moved the discussion past the hype and into how agencies are using AI in practice, covering funding, procurement, workforce capacity, public trust, and measurable outcomes. The conversation spanned the full range of the field, from federal policy to local implementation to private sector innovation. Attendees left with a grounded sense of where AI in transportation stands and what it will take to move from pilots to policy.

NCS MAY MEETING

Procurement and Delivery Strategies for Infrastructure Projects

By: Danielle C. Gittens, P.E., CCM, ASCE NCS Newsletter Editor, Owner of Brewington Management Company, LLC

At the May 2026 ASCE National Capital Section Meeting, members heard from **Steven R. Kramer, P.E., F.ASCE**, Senior Vice President with COWI, on the evolving landscape of procurement and project delivery strategies for major infrastructure and underground construction projects.

Kramer discussed the challenges currently facing the industry, including labor shortages, volatile material costs, supply chain disruptions, rising project risks, and a shrinking pool of qualified bidders. He highlighted how these pressures are driving owners and agencies to consider alternative project delivery methods beyond the traditional Design-Bid-Build approach.

The presentation explored the advantages and risks associated with delivery methods such as Design-Build, Progressive Design-Build, Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR), and Public-Private Partnerships (P3s). While these approaches can accelerate schedules, drive innovation, and improve collaboration, Kramer emphasized the importance of balancing risk allocation among owners, designers, and contractors to achieve successful project outcomes.

Drawing on examples from major tunnel and infrastructure projects across North America—including DC Water's Clean Rivers Program, the Port of Miami Tunnel, and the CSX Howard Street Tunnel Rehabilitation—Kramer demonstrated how project delivery strategies continue to evolve to meet the demands of increasingly complex infrastructure investments.

His closing message was clear: alternative delivery methods are becoming a permanent part of the infrastructure industry, and owners, designers, and contractors must adapt their procurement strategies to effectively manage risk, encourage innovation, and deliver successful projects.

NCS MARCH MEETING

Modernizing Traffic Monitoring in DC

By: Skye Guo, DDOT ITS Specialist

On March 10th, members of the ASCE NCS gathered at the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) headquarters for a presentation titled **Modernizing Traffic Monitoring in DC**, delivered by DDOT Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Specialist **Skye Guo**. The presentation provided an overview of DDOT's efforts to enhance traffic monitoring and data collection throughout Washington, DC, through the deployment of innovative ITS technologies. Attendees learned about DDOT's integrated approach to transportation management, which relies on collaboration among internal divisions and regional partners to support data-driven planning, operations, and decision-making.



The presentation highlighted several advancements, including the expansion of Continuous Count Stations (CCS), the implementation of AI-based video traffic counting systems capable of FHWA-compliant 13-class vehicle classification, and the successful deployment of an AI video count station along I-395. DDOT also showcased recent upgrades to its Weigh-In-Motion (WIM) program on I-295, including license plate recognition, automated credential screening, and enhanced enforcement capabilities designed to identify overweight vehicles and improve roadway safety. The session concluded with a look ahead at future deployments, including expanded multimodal monitoring, additional CCS installations, and broader integration of WIM technologies into commercial vehicle enforcement initiatives, underscoring DDOT's commitment to modernizing transportation infrastructure across the District.

ASCE Geo-Institute Geotechnical Symposium

By: Sharon Hartley, P.E., Vice President of Engineering at ICOP

On March 18th, the National Capital Chapter of the ASCE Geo-Institute held its annual Geotechnical Symposium at the ASCE Headquarters in Reston, Virginia. The one-day event featured presentations by several practitioners, consultants, and academics, along with great networking opportunities. Almost 100 local geotechnical professionals gathered to participate.



The topics of the day covered a wide variety of geotechnical practices and projects. **Anastassia Townsend** and **Richard Guenther** of Berkel & Company Contractors presented on a significant renovation and expansion project in downtown DC with impressive foundation support challenges. **Chris Brixius** of Rettew provided an overview of near-surface geophysical testing and guidance on the technology's capabilities. **Theresa Loux** from Aero Aggregates demonstrated several applications for foamed glass aggregates, including a case study in slope stabilization at Teton Pass in Wyoming. **Abdul Ahad Faizan** of Clark Foundations presented an overview of the support of excavation components and design.

After lunch, **Christopher Nelson** of Delve Underground presented on the recent tunneling project in Ellicott City, Maryland, and **Imran Meghji** from Grounded AI demonstrated advances in 3D geotechnical and geological mapping using LiDAR and iPads in the field. **Valerie Merida** from Keller North America provided an overview of Rigid Inclusion testing methods and applications on a recent project in Pennsylvania. **Silas Nichols** of the Federal Highway Administration presented a discussion of reliability in design parameters and the current state of guidance and codes. **Giovanni Bonita** of GEI Consultants delivered an overview of the evolution of ground improvement systems in the DC area. Finally, **Chad Verdin** and **Chris Leininger** closed out the program with a discussion of the modulus of subgrade reaction, including its origins and best practices for application today.

The presentation of the 2026 NCS GI Scholarships was the highlight of the day. The NCS GI was pleased to recognize three recipients of the inaugural scholarship award: **Janel Baxter** (UDC, first place \$2000), **Nasya Irigollen-Rodriguez** (UDC, second place \$1000), and **SaeWon Kim** (GMU, second place \$1000). The chapter is excited to continue this scholarship program in future years!



Metro At 50: Building the Backbone of the National Capital Region

By: Asvin Mandadi, Senior Program Manager at HDR, Inc.

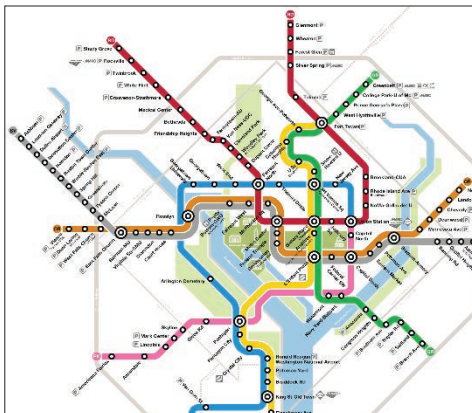
The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), commonly called Washington Metro, was created in 1967 by the United States Congress as an interstate compact among Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Congress approved the interstate compact because Metro was viewed as critical infrastructure for the nation's capital. Key pioneers included engineer Major General



Jackson Graham and architect Harry Weese, whose vaulted concrete station designs became internationally recognized

symbols of Washington itself. The massive, coffered-vault station architecture was both an artistic and an engineering achievement, creating stations that feel monumental yet uniform across the entire network.

Construction began in 1969, and the first section opened in 1976. Over the next several decades, Metro expanded into Maryland and Northern Virginia, eventually connecting major employment centers, universities, suburbs, and airports, including Reagan National and Washington Dulles International. The system became a major catalyst for transit-oriented development around stations such as Bethesda, Silver Spring, Rosslyn, and Arlington.



WMATA is one of the youngest major heavy rail systems in the U.S., but already among the largest by mileage. Its system was designed as a regional rapid-transit network rather than a dense urban subway like New York or Chicago. Compared with Bay Area Rapid Transit, WMATA has similar mileage but a significantly larger workforce because it also operates a large regional bus and paratransit network. The 2022 Silver Line extension was the largest WMATA expansion since the original system build-out and connected rail directly to Washington Dulles International Airport.

Key WMATA Facts

Total track mileage	~ 128 route miles across 6 lines and 98 stations
Area served	~ 1,500 square miles across the DC, parts of MD, and VA
Population served	~ 4 million people
Rolling stock	~ 1,200 railcars in service
Employees	~ 10,000+ employees
Years in service	50 years since the first Metrorail segment opened in 1976
Last major expansion built	~12 miles and 6 stations, Silver Line Phase 2 extension to Ashburn and Dulles Airport; opened 2022
Last major station addition/improvement	Potomac Yard infill station on Blue/Yellow Lines, opened 2023

Today, WMATA operates Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess under a regional governing board representing Washington D.C., Maryland, Virginia, and the federal government. Metro serves commuters, tourists, federal workers, contractors, students, and businesses throughout the region. Ridership and system performance are closely connected: improved reliability, safety, and train frequency have steadily increased passenger return after the pandemic. By FY2025, Metro recorded roughly 264 million passenger trips and about \$462 million in passenger revenue, while annual operating and capital budgets together approached \$5 billion.

Future expansion now focuses less on building entirely new rail lines and more on modernization and integration. WMATA is investing in automated train control, station modernization, platform screen doors, new railcars, electrified buses, improved frequencies, and stronger coordination with commuter systems such as MARC and VRE.

The Crystal City Metro Rail Station in Arlington County is adding a new east entrance, and is the latest major investment by WMATA, to be completed in the summer of 2027.

50 years after opening, Metro remains one of the most ambitious examples of regional cooperation and long-term urban planning in the United States.



Photos taken from Google.com

RESTON BRANCH UPDATES

5/12/2026 A Journey to Clean Water – In Person Only

On May 12, 2026, **David J. Rigby, Ph.D., P.E.**, President and Founder of Aquatronox LLC and Director of Water and Wastewater at WG Construction Company, Inc., presented in person at ASCE Headquarters in Reston, VA on the topic “A Journey to Clean Water.” He shared his professional knowledge and experiences from more than 50 years of work, both locally and internationally, in water and wastewater engineering as well as environmental and waterresources sustainability.

He discussed the history, regulatory framework, innovative technologies, sustainability considerations, and funding aspects of wastewater treatment processes and management—taking the 15 professionals in attendance on a journey from wastewater to clean water.



Younger Member's Forum Updates

By: Wing-Mei Ko, P.E., Assistant Project Manager at Soltesz

Event Recap: Younger Members Spring Social Hour

The ASCE NCS Younger Member Forum had a great time connecting with other young professionals from the Structural Engineers Association of Metro Washington at Hive Bar, DC. This is always a fantastic event, and they enjoyed the lovely spring weather!



Event Recap: Younger Members Park Cleanup

On May 16, 2026, the ASCE NCS YMF joined the Chesapeake Section of the American Water Works Association and the Chesapeake Water Environment Association to clean up trash on the Matthew Henson Trail Park in Silver Spring, Maryland. The group collected 29 trash bags and roughly 350 pounds of oversized items, removing 1,075 pounds of trash from the Matthew Henson Trail and the Lower Rock Creek Watershed! Shoutout to Montgomery Parks for leading our group to the park's most trash-laden areas and showing us where we can make the most impact.



NCS Geo-Institute March Madness Happy Hour

By: Morgan Berger, P.E., ASCE NCS Secretary, Geotechnical Project Engineer at A.G.E.S., Inc.

On March 19th, the ASCE NCS Geo-Institute Young Members tipped off March Madness with a Happy Hour at Yard House in Tysons to watch the first round of the tournament. Spirits were high despite the brackets that were busted during the first round.

It was a great chance to unwind, meet new faces, and strengthen connections within the Geo-Institute community. Thanks to everyone who joined us—we hope to see you at the next event!



NCS Annual Sponsorship Opportunities

ASCE-NCS invites organizations to partner with us in supporting the civil engineering community throughout the National Capital Region. Through annual sponsorship, firms help advance professional development, recognize excellence, engage students, and strengthen connections across the industry, while receiving recognition through our events and outreach efforts.



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Partner with ASCE-NCS to connect your firm with the civil engineering community.



BENEFITS	PLATINUM (3)	GOLD (5)	SILVER	BRONZE
Event Slide Recognition	✓	✓	✓	✓
Website Logo Recognition	✓	✓	✓	✓
eNewsletter Logo Recognition	✓	✓	✓	-
LinkedIn Recognition Post	✓	✓	✓	-
Verbal Recognition at Each Monthly Section Meeting	✓	✓	✓	-
Complimentary Registrations at Each Monthly Section Meeting	2 per meeting	1 per meeting	-	-
Awards Gala Verbal and Logo Recognition	✓	✓	-	-
Awards Gala Benefit	2 tickets +\$500 Sponsor Credit	\$250 Sponsor Credit	-	-
Firm Spotlight Feature (5 minutes) at One Meeting	✓	✓	-	-
Infrastructure Summit Recognition + 1 Registration	✓	-	-	-
Your partnership helps ASCE-NCS advance the profession, support future leaders, and deliver high-impact programs all year long.	\$3,500 ANNUALLY	\$2,000 ANNUALLY	\$1,000 ANNUALLY	\$500 ANNUALLY



LET'S PARTNER TOGETHER. Email Sanskrit Singh at sponsorships@asce-ncs.org today to secure your sponsorship!

Annual Sponsorship Benefits Valid September 1, 2026 - August 31, 2027

District Of Columbia Council of Engineering and Architectural Societies Annual Engineer's Week Event

By: ASCE-NCS Newsletter Staff

The ASCE NCS Vice President **Alan McDonald**, Treasurer Sanskrit Singh, and Past Newsletter Editor Emeritus **LJ Sauter** had a fantastic time celebrating Engineers



Week at the DCCEAS Engineers & Architects Week Banquet on February 28th. It was an evening filled with insightful presentations, prestigious awards, and great company at Maggiano's Little Italy in Washington, DC.

A major highlight of the night was the keynote address by Captain Richard Delpizzo, USN Ret., of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, who offered a fascinating look at the future of maritime engineering and innovation.

Congratulations to all the Achievement Award winners—including the Young Engineer and Engineer of the Year! Seeing the dedication and talent within our D.C. engineering community is the perfect reminder of why we do what we do.

NCS RESTON MARCH to MAY EVENTS

3/12/2026 Construction Inspection 101 – Virtual Only

On March 12, 2026, **Donald "DJ" Stover**, ATCS Director of the Construction Services Practice, and **Sean Knick**, ATCS Construction Manager, virtually presented a typical scenario that inspectors face each day on assigned transportation projects in Virginia. They broke the scenario into specific sections, focusing on the decisionmaking process and the overall impact on stakeholder considerations. They also discussed how and why proper inspections are crucial to the success of a project.

Approximately 30 professionals joined the virtual presentation, participated in the Q&A, and complimented the presenters for their valuable insights and information sharing.

4/9/2026 Highway Cleanup

On April 9, 2026, ASCE Reston and ATCS hosted a joint highway cleanup event along a 2.2mile stretch of Sunrise Valley Drive, from Sayward Boulevard to Monroe Street in Herndon, as part of the VDOT AdoptAHighway program. A total of 10 professionals from ASCE Reston and ATCS participated in the event.



4/14/2026 Smart Cities project in Falls Church by Matthew Nice (Virginia Tech Transportation Institute) – Virtual Only

On April 14, 2026, **Matthew Nice, Ph.D.**, Research Faculty at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, presented virtually for the Smart Mobility Lab (SML), a collaborative initiative between the City of Alexandria and VTTI. The presentation addressed the gap between information and decisionmaking as urban areas gain increasing access to automated sensing, control, and data resources. The initiative aims to enhance transportation efficiency, safety, and sustainability through advanced technologies and datadriven solutions.

Approximately 10 professionals joined the presentation and participated in the discussion.

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GET INVOLVED: ASCE Needs You!

The ASCE National Capital Section is powered by volunteers. Every event, scholarship, technical program, networking opportunity, student outreach effort, and advocacy initiative happens because members like you step forward to contribute their time, ideas, and expertise.

Whether you're a student, early-career professional, seasoned engineer, retired member, or somewhere in between, there is a place for you to make an impact.

Our Section offers a variety of committees and institutes where you can connect with peers, develop leadership skills, expand your professional network, and help shape the future of civil engineering in our region. Opportunities include:

- Reston/Bull Run Branch
- Structural Engineering Institute (SEI)
- Younger Member Forum (YMF)
- Environmental & Water Resources Institute (EWRI)
- Education Committee
- Collegiate Education Committee
- Geo-Institute
- Architectural Engineering Institute (AEI)
- Engineers Week (E-Week)
- Transportation Committee
- Sustainability Committee
- Boundary Stone Committee
- By-Laws Committee
- Life Members Forum
- History and Heritage Committee
- Construction Committee
- Corporate Relations Committee
- Management & Best Practices Committee
- Report Card Committee
- Section Meetings Planning Committee
- Newsletter Committee

Not every committee is at the same stage. Some are thriving and looking for additional volunteers, while others are seeking members willing to help rebuild and reenergize their programs. This creates unique opportunities to step into leadership roles, introduce new ideas, and leave your mark on the Section.

Share Your Voice Through the Newsletter

Have an opinion on industry trends? Attended an interesting project tour or technical presentation? Know an engineer with a story worth sharing?

The Newsletter Committee is always looking for contributors. Whether you enjoy writing, interviewing, photography, social media, event coverage, or simply sharing what is happening in your corner of the profession, we would love your help. No prior experience required—just curiosity and enthusiasm.

Start Small. Make a Difference.

Getting involved doesn't require a major commitment. Attend a committee meeting. Volunteer at an event. Write a short article. Mentor a student. Share an idea.

The connections you build and the impact you make may be greater than you expect.

The future of the National Capital Section depends on engaged members who are willing to participate, contribute, and lead. We hope you'll join us.

Interested in getting involved? Reach out to any committee chair or contact the ASCE National Capital Section leadership team to learn more.

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NCS FEBRUARY WEBINAR

Your Project Isn't Telling You the Truth

By: Morgan Berger, P.E., ASCE NCS Secretary, Geotechnical Engineer at A.G.E.S., Inc.

At the ASCE National Capital Section February Webinar, attendees had the opportunity to hear from **Matthew Oleniuk**, founder of *The Risk Insider*, on a topic that applies to projects of every size and discipline: recognizing project failure before it becomes visible.

Many project teams rely heavily on dashboards, status reports, and performance metrics to gauge project health. However, as Matthew explained, these tools often measure activity rather than vulnerability. While reports may show milestones being met, decisions being made, and processes being followed, they can fail to reveal the underlying conditions that place a project at risk.

Drawing on real-world examples, Matthew discussed how project instability frequently develops outside the reporting frame. Warning signs such as deferred decisions, reduced stakeholder engagement, procedural risk management, and a growing reluctance to discuss uncomfortable concerns can emerge long before traditional metrics indicate trouble.

The presentation challenged attendees to look beyond familiar indicators and consider the subtle behavioral signals that often precede project distress. Matthew shared three thought-provoking questions leaders can use to uncover hidden risks: What decisions are being delayed because of uncertainty? What concerns are no longer being raised? And if the project failed a year from now, what issue would we wish we had paid more attention to today?

The session provided valuable insight into the importance of judgment, open communication, and proactive leadership. By recognizing early warning signs and encouraging candid conversations, project leaders can identify vulnerabilities sooner and make course corrections while options are still available.

RESTON BRANCH UPDATES

Continued from page 6

4/23/2026 Florida Avenue NE–New York Avenue NE Intersection Project Field Trip

On April 23, 2026, ASCE NCS and the Reston Branch hosted a joint field trip to visit the Florida Avenue NE–New York Avenue NE Intersection Project in Washington, DC, which received the ASCE NCS 2026 Transportation Engineering Merit Award. DDOT and JMT project managers led the tour and discussion.

A group of approximately 20 professionals explored transforming this complex and historically hazardous intersection into a vibrant community hub with green public space through transportation improvements, green infrastructure, stormwater management facilities, and landscaping enhancements. The field trip highlighted the engineering challenges, design innovations, and multiagency collaboration that enabled this transformative urban infrastructure project.



Seeing Risk While Everything Still Looks “Green”



Most major project failures are not caused by missing controls, poor tools, or a lack of effort. They happen because leaders are shown the wrong signals for too long.

Dashboards reassure.

Reporting stays green.

Governance activity increases.

Meanwhile, real pressure builds quietly – outside the reporting frame.

This handout highlights the patterns leaders often notice before a project becomes visibly distressed – and how to surface them earlier.

THE PROBLEM WITH FAMILIAR METRICS

Most dashboards capture activity, not vulnerability.

They show:

- progress against plan
- volume of decisions
- compliance with process
- milestones met and artefacts produced

They rarely show:

- exposure created as options narrow
- assumptions hardening without challenge
- confidence rising while room to manoeuvre disappears
- growing dependence on outcomes that have not yet been tested

The most consequential risks rarely appear in slide decks.

EARLY SIGNALS LEADERS OFTEN NOTICE

These are not red flags in a register. They are recognition cues – subtle shifts in behaviour and tone.

Common examples include:

- Progress is reported, but exposure is not discussed
- Decisions are repeatedly deferred “until the next phase”
- Governance becomes busier without becoming clearer
- Risks are handled procedurally rather than candidly
- Stakeholders disengage quietly
- Testing confirms effort, not readiness

Individually, these signals can seem manageable.

In combination, they rarely are.

THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILE EVERYTHING STILL LOOKS “GREEN”

The issue is rarely bad intent or missing data. The earliest signals of instability tend to appear in places that reporting systems are not designed to capture — in hesitation, behaviour, and silence.

The three questions below are meant to surface those signals while everything still looks “green.” They are not diagnostic tools or checklists. They are prompts for judgment, intended to be used occasionally, honestly, and without ceremony.

QUESTION 1: THE DECISION TEST

What decision would we delay if we were being completely honest about uncertainty right now?

Leaders often delay decisions instinctively when something feels off, even if they can't yet explain why. Formal reporting rarely captures hesitation, because hesitation is not framed as a risk or an issue. It is framed as prudence.

But patterns of delay can be one of the earliest indicators that confidence is eroding beneath the surface.

Where are we “waiting for more information” — and what might that actually mean?

QUESTION 2: THE SILENCE TEST

What concern is no longer being raised – not because it's resolved, but because it's uncomfortable?

Teams learn quickly which concerns gain traction and which ones don't. Over time, escalation is replaced by silence, not because risks disappear, but because raising them no longer feels productive.

When reporting remains stable but debate fades, it's often a sign that people are adapting their behaviour rather than confronting uncertainty.

What topic used to generate discussion that now barely gets mentioned?

QUESTION 3: THE NARRATIVE TEST

If this project failed in 12 months, what would we say we should have paid more attention to?

Looking back from an imagined failure can bypass optimism and defensiveness. It creates space to acknowledge weak signals that leaders may already sense but haven't yet named.

The value of this question is not in crafting a perfect answer, but in noticing which concern surfaces first — before it is edited, softened, or explained away.

What's the first answer that comes to mind?

JUDGEMENT BEYOND THE DASHBOARD

These questions are not meant to replace reporting, assurance, or formal controls. They exist to complement them — by drawing attention to signals that appear *before* metrics move and dashboards change colour.

Used sparingly and with discipline, they can help leaders intervene earlier, when options are still available and course correction is less disruptive.