

Strategic Plan for  
Transportation Research Board Committee A5017  
Library and Information Science in Transportation (LIST)  
January 2000

**1. Vision Statement** *What We're Committed To*

To provide leadership for the transportation community in efforts to gather, organize, and disseminate information, utilizing current technology, for the improvement of transportation systems worldwide.

**2. Mission Statement** *What's Our Business*

- 2.1. To serve as a forum for the transportation community, including policy makers, the general public, transportation librarians, and transportation researchers, to monitor developments in information science and their applicability to transportation.
- 2.2. To facilitate the implementation and diffusion of national library science innovations, such as the National Transportation Library, throughout the transportation community.
- 2.3. To facilitate the use of information resources and tools in the transportation arena.
- 2.4. To define critical research issues on the development and implementation of new information tools.
- 2.5. To promote the use of information science capabilities throughout the transportation community.

**3. Values or Guiding Principles** *What We Believe*

- 3.1. Access to the right information is vital in promoting advancements in transportation technology and improvements in transportation policy.
- 3.2. Adoption of standards for information presentation, storage and retrieval promotes exchange of, access to, and use of information.
- 3.3. Information developed in the public sector should be freely available to all.
- 3.4. Collaboration in the generation and transmission of transportation information promotes access and makes best use of scarce resources.
- 3.5. Continuing education for information professionals and information users facilitates use of the best information technologies.
- 3.6. Transportation information resources from around the world should be readily available in the U.S.

**4. History and Organizational Profile of the LIST Committee**

The transportation community is experiencing dramatic changes place in information technology and library science. Four years ago the U.S. Department of Transportation's (U.S. DOT) Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) created the National

Transportation Library (NTL), a collection of electronic full-text documents available via the Internet and on CD-ROM. Today, the online library provides access to more than 5,000 full-text documents on transportation planning, including documents drawn from more than 30 state departments of transportation (DOTs) and university web sites. 1,800 documents are accessed daily.

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) and BTS signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop, test, and implement a fully searchable, public-domain, web-based version of the Transportation Research Information Services (TRIS) and to integrate it into the National Transportation Library. The existing TRIS database consists of almost 500,000 records and is expected to be accessible on the Internet at the end of 1999. Nearly 70 percent of the government reports listed in the database are expected to become available for downloading or through e-mail requests within three years.

Within U.S. DOT alone 23 separate libraries exist. Approximately two-thirds of the state DOTs have libraries, as do many metropolitan planning organizations and transportation research centers at universities.

Much needs to be done to utilize these resources more efficiently. Anecdotal evidence suggests that half of the requests for U.S. DOT reports go unfilled because the reports either cannot be found or are out of print.<sup>1</sup> Most state DOT libraries have small staffs who need to understand new national resources, as well as integrate their unique materials into the information pool. Transportation lags behind other sectors in investing in library services. The national spending on library services per persons employed by economic sector is \$13.30 in medicine, \$6.00 in agriculture, and only \$.40 in transportation.

In addition to the problems of organizing and accessing traditional types of transportation information, the scope of transportation activities is expanding. Today, the transportation community is truly a multi-disciplinary one. The environment, safety, and the role of transportation in economic growth are major pillars of the current surface-transportation legislation, TEA21. Transportation professionals need access to a wider scope of information resources.

TRB has an Information Services Committee that is a very focused scope: serving as a sounding board for issues related to TRIS and TRB library services. A committee oriented toward promoting a broad range of information science capabilities throughout the entire transportation community is also needed.

State DOTs, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, and the Federal Highway Administration supported instituting such a committee. Therefore, in spring 1999 a proposal to establish the Library and Information Science for Transportation Committee was approved by the TRB Executive Committee. The LIST Committee held its first

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<sup>1</sup> Zarnetske, Robert, Chris Berendes, Ossama Abd Elrahman, and Jeanne Tomas, "Toward a National Transportation Library," TR News, March-April, 1998, p. 4.

meeting in June 1999 in conjunction with the Annual Conference of the Special Libraries Association (SLA).

## **5. Goals and Strategies**

- 5.1. Serve as a conduit for alerting transportation professionals of new resources and tools.
  - 5.1.1. Conduct workshops and demonstrations and provide information booths at U. S. and international transportation conferences and regional meetings of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).
  - 5.1.2. Establish a sub-committee to serve as a reviewing mechanism for new electronic transportation resources and tools.
  - 5.1.3. Publish a Transportation Research Sources handout for conferences.
- 5.2. Promote and provide support for the National Transportation Library and other national transportation collections.
  - 5.2.1. Identify historical collections.
  - 5.2.2. Investigate and recommend funding for developing and maintaining physical international and national transportation collections.
  - 5.2.3. Work with the National Transportation Library to identify materials that should be incorporated into its electronic collection, e.g., reports of the Future Strategic Highway Research Program (F-SHRP).
  - 5.2.4. Publish position papers on collection issues important to transportation, e.g., closing of National Technical Information Service (NTIS).
- 5.3. Improve the exchange/flow of international information.
  - 5.3.1. Investigate and promote a program for including information professionals at national and international transportation conferences.
  - 5.3.2. Prepare demonstrations and workshops highlighting international resources presented by information professionals from various countries.
  - 5.3.3. Support and promote the directory, *Highway Transportation Libraries, Information and Research Centers*. This directory should serve as the first step for developing an international network.
  - 5.3.4. Work with FHWA to hold a second international workshop of information professionals.
  - 5.3.5. Identify those countries and publishers that produce information most important to U.S. transportation initiatives and whose material is not systematically collected in the U.S.
  - 5.3.6. Investigate and recommend a funding mechanism for obtaining foreign transportation information.
  - 5.3.7. Identify institutions that are willing to collect and maintain foreign transportation publications.
  - 5.3.8. Investigate an international document delivery strategy.
- 5.4. Identify and develop institutional partnerships and alliances.

- 5.4.1. Co-sponsor key events, such as the AASHTO Document Management and Workflow Conference.
- 5.4.2. Co-sponsor workshops, seminars, and other events with the SLA Transportation Division.
- 5.4.3. Coordinate with the FHWA Office of Professional Development on its efforts in knowledge management.
- 5.4.4. Coordinate joint actions and events with other organizations.
- 5.4.5. Provide expertise on information management to leading research initiatives, such as F-SHRP.
  
- 5.5. Advocate and publicize effective information handling as a means to an improved business process.
  - 5.5.1. Promote the value of information and share case studies on benefits derived from effective information handling.
  - 5.5.2. Position information handling as a means to asset management, which is an important topic for FHWA and AASHTO.
  - 5.5.3. Identify and develop relationships with “information hounds” and “information champions” in leading roles in various transportation organizations.

## **6. Service Levels and Success Indicators**

- 6.1. The success of the LIST Committee can be measured by the extent to which it fulfills its mission and achieves the goals it sets for itself. TRB performs a triennial review of its committees. Questions to be addressed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, for this TRB review would include:
  - 6.1.1. In what ways has the Committee alerted transportation professionals of new information resources and tools?
  - 6.1.2. How has the Committee provided support for the NTL and other national transportation collections?
  - 6.1.3. What activities has the Committee engaged in to promote international networking?
  - 6.1.4. Is a mechanism in place for securing of international transportation research information?
  - 6.1.5. What institutional partnerships and alliances are in place?
  - 6.1.6. How has the Committee served as an advocate for information handling as a means to improved business processes?
  
- 6.2. Some general baseline service levels identified to support the Committee mission and goals are listed below:
  - 6.2.1. Present a program at TRB Annual Meetings: formal presentation, a workshop, a booth, or an online demonstration.
  - 6.2.2. Offer workshops, information booths, or online demonstrations at regional transportation meetings at least every two years.
  - 6.2.3. Hold two committee meetings per year, one at the TRB annual conference and the second at an AASHTO regional meeting or at the Annual Conference of the Special Libraries Association.

- 6.2.4. If FHWA funding is available, coordinate a conference for transportation international information professionals in 2001.

## **7. Implementation Plan**

- 7.1. Make a formal presentation on transportation information resources at the June 2000 meeting of environmental resources information professionals.
- 7.2. Prepare and present a formal, one-hour session regarding transportation information resources to participants at the ASSHTO Research Advisory Committee meeting in late July 2000, St. Louis, Missouri.
- 7.3. Prepare printed handouts featuring citations to major transportation resources to be ready for the January 2001 TRB Annual Meeting. This project will be undertaken with the Transportation Division, Special Libraries Association.
- 7.4. Prepare a series of “hands-on” computer demonstrations focusing on various transportation databases. These demonstrations will be presented as the LIST Committee’s formal program for the 2001 TRB Annual Meeting.
- 7.5. Participate in the planning and organization of the projected International Conference on Transportation Information Access to be held in Tampa, Florida, July 29-August 4, 2001.