

**AASHTO STANDING COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS**

I. PROBLEM NUMBER

To be assigned by NCHRP staff.

II. PROBLEM TITLE

Identifying Transportation Libraries and Information Centers

III. RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

In early 2006 TRB released Special Report 284, *Transportation Knowledge Networks: A Management Strategy for the 21st Century*, which concerns “how to improve the identification, collection, accessibility, and preservation of information so . . . resources can be better circulated and shared among users.” The report notes that “Users of transportation information represent a diverse and decentralized community, including the states and federal agencies involved in transportation; more than 600 transit agencies; nearly 400 metropolitan planning organizations; countless public works officials in thousands of cities, towns, and counties, supported by private contractors and consultants; universities; and private transportation companies and professional associations. Not only do these groups need transportation information, but they also are frequently the primary sources of reports, research, and technical information that are not always widely shared.” A follow-on study to be conducted under NCHRP Project 20-75 will develop a business plan for implementing the administrative structure recommended in the special report, establish performance measures for evaluating delivery of the recommended core services, engage key personnel in supporting the study recommendations, and develop a prototype website to demonstrate integrated information access and retrieval.

The project proposed here would complement NCHRP Project 20-75 and enhance implementation of the recommendations of Special Report 284 by identifying the key personnel and describing the collections of the libraries and information centers associated with the decentralized community described above. Although many transportation librarians - mainly from state DOTs, federal agencies, professional organizations, and a few university transportation centers - already collaborate, others are not part of the discussions. This may be because participation in professional activities is not a personal or organizational priority or, in the case of large university libraries, because transportation librarianship is one aspect of a multi-faceted job.

The work of this project would be to develop a directory of U.S. transportation libraries and librarians who could participate in knowledge networks and take responsibility for collecting and providing access to the reports, research, and technical information of their own organizations. In the case of university libraries and federal agencies, the responsibility might also include serving as long-term repositories of transportation information. The appropriate roles for these groups might be described in the products of NCHRP 20-75.

IV. LITERATURE SEARCH SUMMARY

Several existing but dated directories of transportation libraries would serve as a starting point. They include the following:

Acquiring Highway Transportation Information from Abroad: Handbook, FHWA, November 1994
Directory of Transportation Libraries and Information Centers 7th edition – revised, National Transportation Library, 2002
Guide to Transit Libraries, APTA, 1998

FHWA maintains directories of MPOs such as are available at <http://tmip.fhwa.dot.gov/contacts/mpos.stm>. The contractor could use these as a basis for contacting MPOs or identifying libraries through MPO websites.

A new tool, the OCLC WorldCat Collection Analysis service, could be used to compare a known strong transportation collection against the holdings of other university libraries to identify additional strong collections. The librarians at the institutions identified could potentially be brought into discussions concerning collection development and retention projects.

V. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective is to develop a directory of transportation librarians/libraries/information centers that could participate in any of a number of ways in the knowledge networks envisioned in TRB Special Report 284. The directory should include librarians/libraries at agencies of the U.S. DOT, state transportation agencies, MPOs, transit agencies, professional associations related to transportation, universities that house university transportation centers, and other organizations that the contractor would suggest. The contractor should document which of the individuals named have responded personally to surveys and messages. The directory should be delivered in an electronic format that could be published on the web by the Transportation Research Board and/or the National Transportation Library; this could be a document or a set of database records.

VI. ESTIMATE OF PROBLEM FUNDING AND RESEARCH PERIOD

Recommended Funding: \$90,000

Research Period: 18 months

VII. URGENCY, PAYOFF POTENTIAL, AND IMPLEMENTATION

The timing of this project is intended to facilitate implementation of recommendations of TRB Special Report 284 and NCHRP Project 20-75. Identification of potential collaborators is an important step in establishing the desired knowledge networks.

Given the pace of the move to electronic publishing, it is urgent that as many organizations in the transportation community as possible be brought into the knowledge networks to make their information findable in uniform ways. It is also urgent that the transportation community find ways to preserve its intellectual output for the long term. Including large numbers of producers and potential archivists in the discussion will improve the chances for success.

VIII. PERSON(S) DEVELOPING THE PROBLEM

Sandra Tucker
Chair, TRB Committee on Library and Information Science for Transportation
Associate Professor
Engineering and Applied Sciences Librarian
Texas A&M University Libraries
979-862-1043
s-tucker@tamu.edu

IX. PROBLEM MONITOR

A statement of the specifics (name, title, affiliation, address, telephone number, e-mail address) of the person who will be assigned by the Administrator or Committee submitting this problem to monitor the research, if programmed, from inception to completion. The monitor's final responsibility will

entail recommendations to the Standing Committee on Research as to how the research results could be implemented.

X. DATE AND SUBMITTED BY

Submitted September 15, 2006 by

William P. Carr
Director – Research and Technology
District of Columbia DOT
2000 14th Street, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: 202-671-1371
Fax: 202-671-0617
Email: williamp.carr@dc.gov

Please submit completed problem statement to the following e-mail address:

nchrp@nas.edu

Questions on the process can be directed to the same address or cjencks@nas.edu.