

**STATE OF TRB
January 2007 Report
(a.k.a. “The Cheat Sheet”)**

This document is being provided to the chairs of TRB Groups, Sections, committees and task forces for their information and use in planning committee activities. It is also hoped that this “State of TRB” overview will help to maximize the efficient use of available time during your January meetings. Comments are welcome, and can be addressed to Mark Norman (mnorman@nas.edu) or any TRB staff member. Group and Section Chairs will be provided with any updates to this information at the Group/Section Chairs luncheon on Sunday, January 21st.

REQUESTED ACTION ITEMS

The TRB Technical Activities Council and TRB staff request all Chairs to consider the following action items as part of their January meetings:

- Solicit any additional input from their committees on the updated TRB Strategic Plan in advance of, or as part of, their January meetings (refer to information emailed to all Chairs in December)
- Assign one or more individuals from your committee to enter and maintain your committee’s collection of research problem (needs) statements into the new TRB database
- Review appropriate sections of the 2007 Technical Activities Leadership Guide, particularly the updates
- Whenever possible, schedule future midyear meetings in conjunction with other committees to reduce the costs for TRB staff to travel to multiple destinations

2007 TRB ANNUAL MEETING

Attendance Outlook:

As of late December, registrations for the TRB Annual Meeting were running slightly ahead of last year’s pace, which resulted in 10,300 registrations. An update will be provided at the meeting.

Paper Submissions Surpass Record, TRB Server Capacity

More than 3,000 papers were submitted for consideration for Annual Meeting presentation and/or TRR publication for 2007—another new record. Committees assigned reviewers to all papers, and the vast majority of reviews were received by the September 19 due date. Session proposals from committees were submitted by October 1. Speaker invitations were sent in October, and the program was posted on the TRB website in early November.

All did not go smoothly with the paper submissions, however. Authors attempted to submit more than 2,000 papers in the final 24 hours before the original August 1 deadline. When the TRB servers couldn’t handle the volume, we were forced to extend the deadline through August 6. Although every author who tried to submit a paper by the original deadline was eventually able to do so by August 6, the first week in August was a time of significant frustration for the authors and TRB staff. Authors resubmitting papers by the November 15 deadline also experiences some delays.

Options being considered to avoid a repeat of this experience in 2007 include:

1. Expand TRB server capacity: Arrange and pay for additional server capacity to handle this once-a-year peak in demand (we thought we had done that for this year)
2. Congestion pricing: Attempt to stagger demand by allowing authors to submit papers at no cost up to a certain date, but charging gradually increasing processing fees as the date gets closer to August 1. Charging authors for multiple paper submissions might also be included.
3. Stagger by topic: Establish different paper submission due dates by topic area
4. Some combination of the above

The Technical Activities Council has recommended option #3. The plan would require papers from one set of topic areas to be submitted by July 27, and the second set by August 1. TRB staff is also working to revise how our servers handle these papers for more efficient processing.

Poster Sessions Continue to Grow

The number and percent of papers presented in “Meet the Author” poster sessions continues to set records each year. Steps taken to group poster presentations on similar topics have helped to create a critical mass and synergy that has significantly increased the popularity of these sessions. While there continues to be concern expressed by some international participants over the value of traveling long distances for a poster session, steps have been take to assure authors that the acceptance criteria for poster session presentations is the same as for lectern sessions (the decision on where to place a paper is not made until after the paper review and acceptance process is complete).

	2004	2005	2006	2007
# Lectern Sessions	498	470	469	455
# Poster Sessions	46	65	88	134
# Workshops	62	62	73	79

Almost half of the papers will be presented in poster sessions or “hybrid” sessions. The latter provide an opportunity for authors to present a very short (3 to 5 minute) introduction of their poster session paper in a lectern session format.

3070 Total Papers Submitted

1849 (60.2%) Total Papers Selected for Presentation

935 (50.5%) Papers Presented in Lectern Sessions

752 (40.7%) Papers Presented in Poster Sessions

123 (6.7%) Papers Presented in “Hybrid” Poster/Lectern Sessions

39 (2.0%) Papers Presented in Meetings

In addition, the program includes 1350 invited speaker presentations. Approximately 25% of submitted papers will be accepted for publication in the Transportation Research Record series.

Annual Meeting Spotlight Shines on Three TRB Critical Issues

“Transportation Institutions, Finance and Workforce – Meeting the Needs of the 21st Century” is the spotlight theme for the TRB 2007 Annual Meeting. Representing three of the nine TRB “Critical Issues in Transportation”, these sessions focus attention on some of the most significant policy issues facing transportation agencies today, the areas most in need of innovation, and what the latest innovations are. Committees and staff have worked to develop more than 50 sessions that focus on this theme. Many of these sessions are the result of joint efforts among multiple Groups and Sections coordinated through the Technical Activities Council.

New Attendees Guide on How to Get the Most Out of the TRB Annual Meeting

TRB staff has developed a handout to help new attendees get the most out of the Annual Meeting. In addition to providing a general overview of the meeting, the handout provides brief descriptions of the different types of events held at the meeting. The handout will be distributed at the registration desks and at the New and Young Attendees Welcome Session on Sunday, January 21st.

Future Annual Meetings

The TRB 87th Annual Meeting will be held January 13-17, 2008. The Technical Activities Council plans to announce the spotlight theme for the 2008 meeting during this Annual Meeting.

STANDING COMMITTEES ACTIVITIES

Technical Activities Division Providing Input on TRB Strategic Plan Update

More than half of the TRB standing committees, task forces, Sections and Groups provided input into the updated TRB Strategic Plan in response to our August 2006 survey. Thank you again to all who submitted comments and ideas. Most of the major recommendations submitted by the committees were included in this draft. Rather than developing a separate strategic plan, the Technical Activities Council is developing an action plan that maps back to the action items in the TRB strategic plan.

A document containing the latest proposed objectives and action plan to be included in the TRB Strategic Plan, along with a summary of the input received from committees in response to the August survey, was sent to all Chairs in early December. Chairs have been asked to solicit any additional input from their committees in advance of, or as part of, their January meetings. TRB will send out a survey to Chairs following the Annual Meeting to collect any additional input generated.

Research Needs Statements Database Developed – Ready for Data Entry by Committees

TRB standing committees are responsible for maintaining a collection of research problem statements for the most needed research in their topic area. However, until now there has not a central place where these can be housed and shared. As announced last summer, a TRB research

needs database has been developed. It will be available for viewing at the TRB TRIS booth at the TRB 2007 Annual Meeting in January.

For this to be successful, standing committees will need to enter and maintain their collection of research problem (needs) statements. The Technical Activities Council has therefore asked committee chairs to assign this responsibility to one or more individuals on your committee. TRB will ask for the name(s) of these individuals as part of a survey to all Chairs following the Annual Meeting.

Groups to Audit Scopes of Standing Committees

The Technical Activities Council is asking each Group to audit the scopes, levels of activities, performance, and potential of committees during 2007 to determine if any committees should be dropped, combined, or changed to subcommittees. This action is being undertaken in response to comments made by a number of TRB Executive Committee members as part of the discussions on the TRB strategic plan. It also reflects the limits in TRB resources to support the growing number of standing committees and task forces.

Criteria have been developed to help the Groups in evaluating the available alternatives, specifically in the following areas where little or no criteria previously existed:

- Eliminating or combining existing committees
- Establishing task forces
- Establishing joint subcommittees

TRR Publication Board Appointed – Issues and Priorities Identified

At its June 2006 meeting, the Technical Activities Council nominated the following individuals to serve on this new Board. All were contacted and accepted the appointment.

Co-chairs:

- C. Michael Walton, University of Texas @ Austin
- Mary Lynn Tischer, Virginia DOT

Universities:

- Michael Meyer, Georgia Tech
- Kumares Sinha, Purdue University
- Sandra Rosenbloom, University of Arizona
- Mary Brooks, Dalhousie University

Practitioners:

- Daniel Brand, CRA International
- Charles Howard, Puget Sound Regional Council
- Thomas Kazmierowski, Ontario Ministry of Transport
- David Suits, North American Geosynthetics Society

Conference calls and a survey on issues were conducted during the Fall, and the first face-to-face meeting will be held at the TRB Annual Meeting in January.

Members have adopted the following objectives for the new Board:

- Enhance the quality of the TRR and its value to the academic and practitioner communities
- Assure that the TRR is positioned to take advantage of emerging trends
- Ensure that access to TRR papers by researchers and others reflects the latest state-of-the-art
- Increase the citation impact factor of the TRR
- Further strengthen the TRB process for peer review of submitted papers
- Identify and provide needed information and guidance to those involved in the production of the TRR and to TRR users

As a result, the Board has identified the following questions to address during 2007.

1. What steps should be taken to enhance the citation impact factors of the TRR?
2. What are the best options for dissemination of, and access to, the TRR, now and in the future?
3. Should the TRR review process and publication continue to include both academic and practitioner papers, or should there be separate processes and publications?
4. Is the timeframe from initial paper submission to final publication of a paper in the TRR too long? If so, how can it be shortened?
5. Should the peer review process for the TRR papers and the TRB Annual Meeting presentations continue to be part of the same process?

2007 Leadership Guide Distributed

The 2007 Technical Activities Division Leadership Guide has been distributed to all Chairs. It is also available on the TRB website at <http://www.trb.org/Activities/About/DivA.asp>. Updates from the 2006 version of this guide include the following:

- Updates to descriptions of TRB Divisions to accommodate new research programs
- Additional information describing the differences between standing committees, task forces and subcommittees
- Added Committee Chair responsibility to keep committee's research needs statements up to date and entered on TRB's on-line research needs statements database
- Allow more than one member from the same organization as a committee member when that member can serve as a mentor for a Young Member from the same organization
- Clarification that there is no limit the number of committee members from outside the United States and Canada who can be appointed to a committee
- Clarification that service requirements for appointment as an Emeritus Member should be in support of Technical Activities Division standing committees
- Emphasis that standing committee members are not authorized to speak on behalf of TRB or the committee on policy or other issues
- Add failure to perform committee member duties when requested by the committee chair as a reason for possible termination of a committee membership
- Add more complete description and information on subcommittees and joint subcommittees

- Add new section on dissolution of a standing committee
- Significant revisions to section on task force formation, including specific criteria and more formal approval process
- List of specific criteria for early rejection of a submitted paper
- Add new appendix: Guidelines for Committee Members

New TRB Standing Committee Members Guide Now Available

TRB staff has completed development of a 2-page guide for committee members. The guide is being included in the appointment packets for all new standing committee members. The new guide can be viewed and downloaded from the TRB website at <http://www.trb.org/Activities/About/DivA.asp>, and has been added as an appendix to the updated Leadership Guide.

TRB NEWS

TRB Taking Steps to Meet Challenges Posed by Funding Cuts

Unless the Congress acts to address the unintended consequences of SAFETEA-LU on FHWA's research budget and programs, FHWA's level of support will be approximately \$1.1 million per year less than called for in the TRB 2007-2009 triennium budget.

Legislative Update

Congress was not able to complete action on a "legislative fix" before adjourning in December. During the summer, the House passed a stand-alone SAFETEA-LU technical corrections bill that would transfer the SHRP-II program from the research Title V to the programs Title I. This would have the effect of getting SHRP-II out from under some of the funding limitations that exist under Title V, while freeing up funds available for the remaining Title V research programs, including FHWA discretionary research funds. In September, the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee passed a similar measure. Unfortunately, time ran out before final Senate passage.

With all pending bills expiring after completion of each two-year Congress, any legislative fix will have to be reintroduced after the new Congress convenes. Even if Congress eventually takes the necessary actions, and assuming none of these funds are earmarked, FHWA would still need to decide how to allocate the additional funds among its programs and activities.

Steps Taken by TRB to Date

Since the passage of SAFETEA-LU, TRB staff has been identifying measures and taking steps to reduce costs and increase revenues. These steps have followed the guidance that has been provided by the TRB Executive Committee, the Technical Activities Council, and others. Steps taken to date include the following:

Standing Committees:

- Informed the TRB standing committees that the target percent of submitted papers to be published in the *Transportation Research Record* has been reduced from 30% to 25%

- Requested that committee chairs who are in a position to do so to forego requesting TRB reimbursement for all or a portion of their travel to chair their committee meeting at the TRB Annual Meeting and midyear meetings.
- Asked that committee chairs schedule future midyear meetings in conjunction with other committees to reduce the need for TRB staff to travel to multiple destinations
- Requested that Group Executive Boards begin to review the scopes, levels of activities, performance, and potential of committees to determine if any committees should be dropped, combined, or changed to subcommittees in light of the current financial situation

Staffing:

- Have not filled the new Senior Program Officer staff position that was approved earlier as part of the TRB triennium budget
- Have not filled a web/software specialist position that became vacant during 2006, or a vacant associate editor position in the publications office
- Reorganized the Technical Activities Division staff to take maximum advantage of abilities and interests of current staff members. Appointed Kim Fisher as Associate Director of the Technical Activities Division, opening up some of Mark Norman's time to better deal with strategic and funding issues.
- Reduced "nonessential" staff travel
- Converted a part time meetings staff position to full time as an investment toward designing and implementing a limited commercial exhibit beginning at the TRB 2008 Annual Meeting

Meetings and Conferences:

- Increased registration fees for the TRB 2007 Annual Meeting by an average of 15% over 2006 levels
- Replaced complimentary TRB Annual Meeting registration fees with a discounted fee for TRB university representatives
- Eliminated complimentary TRB Annual Meeting registration fees for chairs of TRB panels outside of the Technical Activities Division
- Contracted with convention bureau to help staff Annual Meeting on-site registration, reducing reliance on TRB staff and associated costs (overhead, food, and lodging)
- Developed budgets for future conferences that place greater reliance on income that can be generated by the conference, including registration fees, sponsorships, and exhibits

Other:

- Initiated development of TRB Organizational Affiliates packages with costs and benefits better targeted to specific constituencies
- Selected an outside service to provide web access to Transportation Research Records papers through paid subscriptions and pay-per-view beginning in 2007
- Surveyed states on preferences for frequency of TRB staff field visits. As a result, expect that about half of the states will be visited during 2007.
- Took steps to reduce the average size of each issue of *TRNews* from 48 pages to 40 pages

TRR Online Available Beginning in Spring 2007

TRB's newest web-based information dissemination service provides 24/7 electronic access to more than 7,600 peer-reviewed papers that have been published as part of the *Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board* series since 1996. This powerful new electronic format for the TRR Journal includes the latest in search and analysis technology. Prices for subscriptions will be available at the TRB 2007 Annual Meeting. Availability will begin in the Spring of 2007.

Cooperative Research Programs

The National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) published 61 reports during 2006, including four new volumes in the security series and *Commuting in America III*, jointly funded with TCRP. NCHRP is funded as a voluntary 5.5 percent take down of SP&R funds. Under SAFETEA-LU, NCHRP funding dropped to \$33 million in fiscal years 2005 and 2006 but should increase gradually through FY 2009.

The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) published 33 research reports during 2006, which included five joint efforts with NCHRP. SAFETEA—LU increased authorized funding for the TCRP from \$9 million in 2006 to \$9.3 million in 2007, with further step increases to \$10 million in 2009 expected.

The new Airport Cooperative Research Program, initiated in late 2005, completed its first year of operation. The ACRP Oversight Committee (AOC), the governing board for the program, met in January and July to select the FY 2005/2006 and FY 2007 research programs, respectively. Over 50 projects are now in progress covering a wide range of topic areas. An FY 2006 appropriation of \$10 million was provided for the program and an FY 2007 appropriation of \$10 million is pending as of this writing. ACRP funding beyond FY 2007 will be subject to the reauthorization of federal aviation funding legislation.

SAFETEA-LU authorized two new cooperative research programs to be administered by TRB – a National Cooperative Freight Research Program (\$2.65 million in FY 2006) and a pilot Hazardous Materials Cooperative Research Program (\$880,000 in FY 2006). Both programs were authorized to begin in September 2006, and the oversight group for each program met in December, 2006 to select the first round of research projects.

SHRP-II Off to Running Start

Funding: The estimated total funding for SHRP II is \$150 million. If a technical corrections bill for SAFETEA-LU is passed, an additional \$20 million to \$25 million could be made available for the program. The Technical Coordinating Committees (TCC) have developed contingency projects in the event that this additional funding materializes. Total FY 2007 funding is not known, but is expected to be close to the amount provided for FY 2006 (about \$36 million).

Accomplishments: Major SHRP II accomplishments in the last six months include the following items:

- In January, the Memorandum of Understanding among FHWA, NAS/TRB and AASHTO formally signed
- First year funds made available to SHRP II in late March

- The TCCs met for the first time in May and June to prepare revised program plans, which were approved by the Oversight Committee and FHWA in July.
- Requests for Proposals (RFPs) were advertised in mid-September for 12 projects across all four program areas. In November, the Oversight Committee selected 15 contractor teams for awards (one project was not awarded and one involved 5 separate awards). Contract negotiations are underway for these projects.
- The TCCs met a second time in November to make further program revisions and recommend projects for advertisement in 2007. The Oversight Committee approved 18 projects for 2007.
- A SHRP II booth will be set up in the exhibit hall at the TRB Annual Meeting.
- Four technical sessions—one for each program area—at the TRB Annual Meeting will cover the current versions of the research plans, projects scheduled for 2007, and other technical issues. Meetings with contractors are also expected to take place during the Annual Meeting.

Policy Studies Address Key Issues

TRB published significant study reports during 2006 including studies on the future role of the fuel tax for supporting surface transportation programs, the energy saving benefits and safety risks of low rolling resistance tires, and on how to better manage information about transportation research and practice in the electronic age. A committee also conducted a peer review of the USDOT's five-year strategic plan for R&D as mandated in SAFETEA-LU. An assessment of the state of the practice in metropolitan area travel forecasting was nearly completed by year-end and is expected to be released in early 2007.

In addition to ongoing reviews of research programs in FHWA, FTA, and FRA, projects underway include:

- the impacts of climate change on transportation;
- future highway safety professional workforce;
- research priority setting and coordination in highway infrastructure operations and safety;
- options for halting introduction of non-indigenous species into the Great Lakes by vessels transiting the St. Lawrence Seaway, and
- options for accelerating ITS standards development.

Two major studies initiated by the TRB Executive Committee are starting up: (1) lessons learned from the most successful nations in improving highway safety and (2) financing options for freight projects of national significance.

Congress requested a number of studies in SAFETEA-LU, as outlined below. The review of the USDOT strategic plan for R&T was completed and the study on public transportation's role in national security, which addresses emergency evacuation, was initiated with funding from FTA and TCRP. Discussions are underway with FHWA's Office of Planning and Environment on the review of the USDOT "de minimis" implementation study, which addresses changes to the Section 4(f) review process included in SAFETEA-LU. The major studies of National Transportation Information Needs and Rail Transportation and Regulation remain unfunded.

<u>Policy Studies Requested by Congress</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Authorized</u>
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		<u>Amount</u>
On-Scene Motor Vehicle Collision Causation study design	2003(c)	
Public Transportation National Security Study	3046(a)(1)(A)	\$500,000
Review of USDOT Strategic Plan for R&T	5208	
F-SHRP Implementation Report	5210	
National Transportation Information Needs Assessment	5601	
Review of plan for De Minimis Implementation Study	6009(c)(1)(B)	
Study of Rail Transportation and Regulation	9007	\$1,800,000