

STATE OF TRB
(a.k.a. “The Cheat Sheet”)
Report to Group, Section, Committee, & Task Force Chairs
January 2009

This report is being provided to the chairs of TRB Groups, Sections, standing committees and task forces for their information and use in planning committee activities. This “State of TRB” overview should also 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 and staff will be provided with any updates to this information at the Group/Section Chairs luncheon on Sunday, January 11th.

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1. Technical Activities Leadership Guide Updated

The 2009 Technical Activities Leadership Guide has been updated and has been provided to all Chairs along with this cheat sheet. Updates from 2008 include:

- Part IV. Sections
 - Adds Section Chair responsibility to monitor committees within the Section and take any appropriate actions to assure their short-term and long-term health and vitality
- Part V. Committees
 - Adds requirement, approved by the Technical Activities Council in 2008, that a committee’s existing research needs statements must be reconfirmed at least once every three years or they will be deleted from the TRB Research Needs Statements database.
 - Provides additional guidance for standing committees on limitations on providing advice, recommendations, or advocacy
 - Under criteria for establishing new standing committees, adds requirement that requests should also state what other alternatives were considered, and why the formation of a standing committee is the preferred alternative
 - When nominating members for committees, adds that consideration should be given to enhancing racial and gender diversity
 - Clarifies maximum age of Young Members and the number of international members that can be appointed to a committee in excess of the 25 committee member limit

- Expands section on webpages to cover broader communications portfolios for committees
- Part VII. TRB Annual Meeting
 - Adds that proposals from Groups for cross-cutting sessions should be submitted to TRB staff by May 15, and should include the session title, a brief description, and what other Groups would be involved
- APPENDIX K. Cooperative Research Program Calendars
 - Updates these calendars for 2009

2. Committee Members' Overwhelming Response to Survey Will Drive Priorities for 2009 and Beyond

A survey was sent to all TRB standing committee members in September to help the Technical Activities Council (TAC) and the TRB staff enhance the experience of those participating in our committees, and to assist in attracting new and young volunteers to these committees. More than 1200 committee members completed the survey, a response rate of almost 28%! TAC and TRB staff are using the responses to help determine our priorities for 2009 and beyond.

- The vast majority of respondents replied to all of the six open-ended questions.
- Reasons cited most often for originally deciding to volunteer to participate on a TRB standing committee included keeping informed, networking with peers, supporting the goals of the committee, and contributing to the profession.
- Professional contacts and networking, relationships with colleagues, and learning from others were the benefits valued most from participation in TRB standing committees.
- Almost all respondents listed contributions that they feel they are making to transportation and/or to society through their service as a TRB volunteer, including advancing a field or discipline, solving problems, advancing best practices, and guiding quality research and publications.
- Suggestions for what TRB could do to further enhance experiences as a TRB volunteer included providing more communications and facilitating information sharing, increasing transparency in committee operations, and addressing the barriers to attending meetings.
- Enhancing the outreach information and tools targeted to young professionals, their employers, and TRB university representatives was recommended to attract and involve new and young volunteers to the TRB standing committees.
- The Technical Activities Council is using these responses to identify the highest priority action items to accomplish the following strategies:
 - Identify and address emerging critical and cross-cutting issues.
 - Increase the involvement of key constituencies and groups.
 - Identify research needs, monitor ongoing research, and ensure the effective sharing of research results.
 - Optimize the effectiveness and value of the TRB annual meeting and conferences.
 - Ensure the quality, stature, accessibility and usefulness of TRB publications and products.
 - Take maximum advantage of new technologies, communications, and information innovations.
 - Ensure the effectiveness of standing committees and recognize research leadership.
- The above information is being emailed to all standing committee members in December

- Additional information will be provided to Chairs at the Annual Meeting following the January 11 TAC meeting.

3. TRB Annual Meeting News

A. 2009 Annual Meeting Program Reflects Energy & Climate Change Spotlight Theme

More than 60 sessions and workshops are included in the “Transportation, Energy, & Climate Change” spotlight theme for the Annual Meeting.

- The Special Task Force (STF) on Climate Change and Energy helped to coordinate the development of sessions addressing this theme.
 - Information on sessions being developed for the spotlight theme was collected by the STF and shared across the standing committees.
- An article on climate change by STF member Dan Sperling in the November/December issue of TRNews kicks-off the spotlight theme.
- Sunday workshops at the Annual Meeting will introduce attendees to the science of climate change and the climate change/transportation linkage.
- Sessions during the meeting will focus on climate change and energy implications for all transportation modes and disciplines.

B. Record Number of Papers Received, Reviewed, and Programmed

Almost 3400 papers were submitted for consideration for presentation at the Annual Meeting and/or for publication in the Transportation Research Record.

- This breaks the previous record of 3100 in 2006.
- The overall program consists of more than 600 sessions and workshops, and more than 400 committee related meetings.
- The following table shows how this year’s program compared to previous years.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
# Lectern Sessions	498	470	469	455	452	461
# Poster Sessions	46	65	88	134	112	132
# Workshops	62	62	73	79	86	89
# Meeting				425	442	424

- The percentage of papers to be presented in poster sessions exceeds 50% for the first time.

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total Number of Papers Submitted	2862	3070	2847	3384
Total Presented	1688 (59%)	1849 (60.2%)	1759 (61.8%)	1882 (55.6%)
Papers in Lectern	888 (52.6%)	935 (50.5%)	867 (49.3%)	900 (47.8%)

Session				
Papers in Poster Session	728 (43.1%)	752 (40.7%)	861 (48.9%)	952 (50.6%)
Papers in Meeting	21 (1.2%)	34 (1.8%)	31 (1.8%)	28 (1.5%)
Papers Otherwise Presented	2 (0.1%)	5 (.2%)	0	2 (0.1%)

- The more than 1800 papers being presented are included in the Annual Meeting Compendium of Papers DVD
- In addition, for the first time the papers are being posted on the web for access and review by Annual Meeting registrants in advance of the meeting

4. TRB Takes Steps in Anticipation of Reduced Attendance at Meetings

Travel restrictions being imposed by state DOTs and other organizations are beginning to impact attendance at TRB sponsored conferences and meetings. Although some recent TRB conferences have met attendance expectations, a growing number are falling short. TRB has taken a number of proactive steps in anticipation of this downturn.

- Other organizations are having the same experience
- Pre-registrations for the TRB Annual Meeting are running slightly behind last year. A drop in state DOT employee attendance is expected.
- TRB is surveying state DOTs on their travel policies expected during 2009
- TRB is taking steps to make information available to those who cannot attend TRB events:
 - Increasing the number of TRB webinar offerings from the current one per month to about three or four per month. Participation in webinars has been averaging about 400 persons per webinar.
 - Following each webinar, posting a digital recording of the webinar on a webpage that is made available to TRB Sponsors for access by employees who could not participate
 - Increasing the number of recorded and posted TRB Annual Meeting “e-sessions” from 24 in 2008 to almost 50 in 2009
 - Offering phone and web-based conference call capabilities for all midyear standing committee meetings
- National Academies “Sounds of Science” has produced podcasts on TRB available through iTunes:
 - Let’s Talk Transportation (Jan. 18, 2008): Overview of TRB and 2008 TRB Annual Meeting
 - Critical Issues in Transportation (Aug. 31, 2007): Summary of TRB’s critical issues document.
 - Commuting in America III (March 9, 2007): Overview of latest report by Alan Pisarski in demographics and commuting trends.
 - Where the Weather Meets the Road (March 2, 2007): Summary of policy study jointly sponsored by TRB on surface transportation weather.

- These steps are also helping us to reach new audiences. Other options and their associated costs and benefits are being considered.
- TRB is also taking steps to help minimize the financial impact:
 - Developing alternate budgets for future conferences that assume a drop in expected attendance
 - Reducing the room blocks in hotel contracts to try to lessen TRB's exposure to attrition penalties. In cases where this is not possible, we have had success in avoiding attrition penalties by scheduling a future event at the same hotel property.
 - When possible, consider postponing conferences to a later year

5. TRB Takes On Energy & Climate Change Issues

TRB currently has more than 25 major projects/activities addressing energy and/or climate change that are being initiated or are underway.

- Projects and activities are spread across TRB Technical Activities Division, Cooperative Research Programs, SHRP-2, and Policy Studies
- A new TRB webpage will provide "one-stop shopping" for those interested in this topic area
- A PowerPoint presentation has been prepared that provides overview of TRB along with energy and climate change activities under each program
- The Technical Activities Division's Special Task Force on Climate Change & Energy (STF) has developed a strategic roadmap of activities to pursue in these important areas.
 - Includes a series of activities under the general headings of meetings, publications, web-based information, external outreach, and research needs

6. TRB Programs Update

Updates on Cooperative Research Programs, SHRP-2, and TRB Policy Studies are presented below.

A. Cooperative Research Programs

- The National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) published 72 reports during 2008.
 - NCHRP is funded as a voluntary 5.5 percent take down of SP&R funds.
 - Under SAETEA-LU, NCHRP funding was approximately \$35.2 million for fiscal year 2008. A similar amount is anticipated for fiscal year 2009.
- The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) published 24 research reports during 2008.
 - Fiscal year 2008 funding was \$9.3 million; the same funding level is anticipated for fiscal year 2009.
- The Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP), initiated in late 2005, completed its third year of operation. During 2008, the ACRP published 23 reports.
 - The ACRP Oversight Committee (AOC), the governing board for the program, met in July to select the FY 2009 research program.
 - Over 115 projects have been authorized since the inception of the program covering a wide range of topic areas.

- An FY 2008 appropriation of \$10 million was provided for the program and an FY 2009 appropriation of \$10 million is anticipated as of this writing.
- The National Cooperative Freight Research Program (NCFRP) and Hazardous Materials Cooperative Research Program (HMCRP), both initiated in late 2006, completed their second full year of operation.
 - Annual funding for the NCFRP and HMCRP is \$2.75 million and \$0.9 million, respectively.
 - The governing boards met in late 2008 to select their fiscal year 2009 projects.
 - The initial research projects selected in each program are nearing completion. It is anticipated that the first publications will be available in 2009.

B. Policy Studies Address Key Issues

- TRB published significant study reports during 2008 on:
 - The need to begin adapting the transportation system to the effects of climate change;
 - The federal investment in highway research during SAFETEA-LU;
 - Strategies to reduce the introduction of invasive species brought into the Great Lakes by ocean-going vessels;
 - The role of transit in emergency evacuations; and
 - The design of a comprehensive risk assessment of oil spills in the Aleutian Islands.
- Peer committees also issued letter reports on the R&T programs of FHWA, FRA, and FTA, on the Long Term Pavement Performance (LTPP) program, and on the pavement technology research and deployment programs of FHWA.
- Policy studies underway include:
 - Relationships among development patterns, VMT, and energy consumption;
 - Options to reduce GHGs and energy consumption from transportation;
 - Funding options for freight projects of national significance;
 - Role of transit in emergency evacuations;
 - Equity implications of alternative finance mechanisms;
 - Review of USDOT study of implementation of changes to the 4(f) process;
 - Traffic safety lessons from nations that have a better safety record than the United States; and
 - Transportation research program proposals to address climate change and energy consumption.

C. SHRP-2

- Little more than a third of the way into the expected 7-year lifespan of the program, about 75 percent of the planned research projects in SHRP 2 are active.
- As of December 2008, SHRP 2 had committed \$55 million to 50 research projects in its four focus areas: safety, renewal, reliability, and capacity.
- With design phases of the \$26 million naturalistic study of driving behavior nearly complete, study site selection and data collection preparations are the current focus of the Safety program.
- The first research reports of the program have been submitted for review and will soon be available on the TRB Website. Summaries of these early results are reported online in the SHRP 2 First Fruits information series.

- A salutary side effect of the passage of the SAFETEA-LU Technical Corrections bill was an increase in the SHRP 2 budget of about \$7 million.
 - The 2009 SHRP 2 Program Plan reflects the SHRP 2 Oversight Committee efforts to redress at least some of the earlier inability to fund all of the planned research.
- As methods and technologies take shape from SHRP 2 research projects, opportunities will arise for transportation agencies to participate in evaluations and trials of what may become solutions to challenging transportation problems.
 - For example, host sites will be sought for a fall 2010 demonstration project developing standardized approaches to designing, constructing, and reusing complete bridge systems.
 - A capacity project will provide funding for a state or an MPO to implement an advanced travel-demand model linked with a time-sensitive network. Descriptions of these and other partnership opportunities are linked to the SHRP 2 home page.