

Strategic Plan for the Committee on Planning

As approved by the Strategic Management Committee, September 22, 2018

Goal 1: Provide Value to Committee on Planning Members

1.1 Foster Collaborative Interrelationships and Interactions within AASHTO and with Other Groups

The Committee has historically interacted with other AASHTO committees, often holding joint meetings. The joint meetings have been viewed by Committee members as being very productive and useful.

Implementation Actions:

- *Seek liaison with the AASHTO Forum, Councils and Committees, as appropriate. This could include liaison positions, cross committee reporting, staff updates on committee activities and the like. Initial priority should be given to the Committees/Councils on Funding and Finance, Performance-Based Management, Data Management and Analytics, Highways and Streets, Public Transportation, and Active Transportation and the Freight-related activity.*
- *Enhance (and coordinate) research interactions with (initially) the Environment and Sustainability Committee, Public Transportation Council, Highways Council, Active Transportation Council, and the Transportation Research Board to foster multimodal transportation research statements. Seek jointly-sponsored research proposals.*
- *Jointly sponsor meetings with other AASHTO Committees.*

1.2 Co-Sponsor Conference Sessions on Transportation Planning Issues with Other Organizations

Committee members often participate in other professional meetings where planning issues important to state DOTs are discussed. These meetings provide opportunities to interact with other important constituencies.

Implementation Action:

- *Seek opportunities to interact with other planning professional groups and, in particular, explore possibilities for co-sponsoring conference sessions.*

1.3 Participate in AASHTO Conferences and Meetings

AASHTO jointly sponsors specialty conferences and meetings on a variety of topics (in addition to the Spring and Annual Meetings).

Implementation Actions:

- *Identify AASHTO and other meetings where a planning perspective should be present, and seek opportunities to participate in the meeting.*
- *Provide up-to-date information on conferences and meetings on the website.*
- *Interact with the appropriate AASHTO and NCHRP staff to have a presence and role in the 2018 National Summit/Peer Exchange on Transportation System Resilience to foster the planning role in system resiliency.*

1.4 Form Task Forces to Focus on Specific Policy and Technical Issues

The Committee is often engaged in interpreting and recommending AASHTO responses to federal legislation and regulatory actions. The need for information and recommendations is often short-term, leading into adopted policy positions by the AASHTO Board.

Implementation Action:

- *Appoint task forces for planning and policy issues that need specialized attention of Committee members. The mandate and expected outcomes of each task force should be defined upon the creation of the task force. If a task force continues long past its sunset target, the Chair should consider subsuming it under an existing subcommittee or form a new subcommittee on the task force topic.*

1.5 Provide an Up-to-Date Website

The Committee on Planning currently supports a website for planning at: www.statewideplanning.org. The tabs on this website include: About SCOP, Resources (including the results of research reports), Meetings, State Profiles, The Crawl (news), The 511 (blog), Links, and Contact Information.

Implementation Actions:

- *Include the latest best-case examples of planning and include case studies that highlight the value of transportation systems*
- *Maintain visibility within the AASHTO website and display current and relevant information and linkages.*
- *Continue Committee support of the statewide planning website. Each Subcommittee will provide a lead article for the website on a quarterly, rotating basis.*

1.6 Develop Webinar Series of Topics Identified by Committee Members

Webinars are a major means of conveying information to a wide range of interested parties. They are easy to organize and manage, and could provide the Committee with a wider reach to planning constituencies.

Implementation Action:

- *Develop a biannual webinar series (in collaboration with other AASHTO committees) that highlights topics of greatest interest to Committee members and that would attract interest of other AASHTO committees. Seek a host state to organize the webinar.*

1.7 Provide Greater Institutional Support for Planning Resources within AASHTO

AASHTO has examples of institutional structures that support knowledge transfer on particular topics. The best example of this is the Center for Environmental Excellence, supported with FHWA funds.

Implementation Action:

- *Explore the possibility of establishing a Center for Planning Excellence in AASHTO, similar in concept and approach to the current Center for Environmental Excellence.*

1.8 Monitor the Implementation of the Action Plan and Provide Progress Updates to Committee Members

The success of most committees depends to a large extent on member perceptions that committee activities are worthwhile and provide benefits to their organization. One of the ways of showing benefits and progress is to monitor the activities of the committee.

Implementation Action:

- *Provide progress reports on the implementation of the Action Plan at each Committee meeting. The corresponding agenda item at a Committee meeting will also provide an opportunity for the Action Plan to be amended or modified in response to new challenges or requests from the Board. As per AASHTO guidelines, the annual Action Plan and Accomplishments Report will be submitted to the Strategic Management Committee.*

1.9 Highlight the State-of-the-Practice of Statewide Planning

Periodically over the past 40 years, TRB has sponsored a national conference on statewide transportation planning that has provided a major “point-in-time” understanding of the state-of-practice of statewide transportation planning and that provided a road map for future steps to prepare such planning for likely challenges.

Implementation Action:

- *Work with FHWA, other AASHTO committees, TRB committees and other professional planning organizations to hold a national conference on statewide transportation planning.*

Goal 2: Provide Innovative Planning Technical Products and Professional Services

2.1 Foster Peer Exchanges Among State DOT Planning Groups that Focus on Key Planning Challenges

One of the most effective means of building staff and organizational capacity is to provide opportunities to DOT staff to exchange information with their peers. Such exchanges promote an exchange of ideas and lessons learned.

Implementation Actions:

- *Annually solicit ideas from Committee members on peer exchange topics of interest.*
- *Initial peer exchanges should be developed (in coordination with other Committees as appropriate) on the following topics: 1) valuation of the benefits of improvements to the transportation system, 2) connected and automated vehicles (and implications for planning), and 3) update on use of performance measures.*

2.2 Collaborate with AASHTO Councils and Committees, TRB Committees and other Groups to Develop Research Statements

A traditional role for the Committee has been identifying research statements for funding through the NCHRP program. This research has focused on quick turn-around projects.

Implementation Actions:

- *Enhance (and coordinate) research interactions with (initially) the Environment and Sustainability Committee, Public Transportation Council, Highways Council, Active Transportation Council, Data Management and Analytics, Performance-Based Management and the Transportation Research Board to foster multimodal transportation research statements. Seek jointly-sponsored research proposals*
- *Continue to identify important quick turn-around research projects through various NCHRP programs.*
- *Continue to identify, develop and promote problem statements for regular and Synthesis research, and provide rankings of proposed planning-related research to NCHRP.*
- *Define and propose an NCHRP research project that takes the lessons and recommendations from NCHRP Report 798 “The Role of Planning in a 21st Century State Department of Transportation” as they relate to needed planning skills for addressing future challenges and that relates them to professional development and academic program offerings.*

2.3 Propose NCHRP Synthesis Topics

The NCHRP Synthesis Series (20-05) provides useful information on the state-of-practice on a range of topics of concern and interest to Committee members.

Implementation Actions:

- *Identify and recommend annually an NCHRP synthesis topic that is of interest to Committee members.*

2.4 Disseminate the Results of Synthesis and Research Projects

Much of the latest information on the latest services and products comes from the research and synthesis programs of NCHRP and other Cooperative Research Programs (CRPs).

Implementation Actions:

- *Highlight the results of research from relevant NCHRP studies so that Committee members are aware of the latest information on planning-related topics. Opportunities for dissemination should be provided at AASHTO, TRB and other professional conferences, on the statewide planning website, and as part of Committee meetings.*
- *Work with NCHRP and research team to implement the results of NCHRP 08-36, Task 134 “Evolving Transportation Planning Research Needs for the 21st Century.”*

2.5 Identify and Propose Proposals for Implementing Planning Research

NCHRP has set aside funds for implementing research findings. Very little of these funds have been used for implementing planning research results.

Implementation Action:

- *Identify and submit proposal for pilot studies on implementing the results of NCHRP planning-oriented research projects.*

2.6 Host AASHTO Technical Tools and Publications that Provide Support to Planning Processes

AASHTO has been an important source of technical guidance on all functional aspects of a State DOT’s program. Over the past several years, AASHTO and NCHRP have developed software and technical guidance material that is highly relevant to planning efforts.

Implementation Actions:

- *Host and support the planning-related products of the SHRP-2 program, in particular TravelWorks and EconWorks.*
- *Identify and catalogue technical service guides and other materials that relate to improving the planning process, and determine if updates are needed.*
- *Initiate this determination with the AASHTO-published “User and Non-User Benefits Analysis for Highways.”*

Goal 3: Be a Leader in the Development of Planning National Transportation Policy

3.1 Provide Policy and Planning Input in Proposed Federal Legislation and Regulations

One of the important roles AASHTO committees play in a broader governmental policy structure is providing a State DOT perspective on proposed federal legislation and/or regulations. This has historically been an important influence on the positions taken by AASHTO on a variety of topics.

Implementation Actions:

- *Develop timely input to AASHTO positions on proposed federal legislation and/or regulations. The intent is to provide relevant information early in the process to help define the issues and establish the boundaries of discussion.*

3.2 Use Committee Functions as an Opportunity for Federal Officials to Interact with Committee Members and Receive Input on Proposed Actions

The FHWA Associate Administrator for Planning, Environment and Realty sits on the Committee as an ex officio member. In past meetings, the Associate Administrator has updated Committee members on the latest programs or proposals from the federal government.

Implementation Actions:

- *Provide opportunities for federal transportation agency and other partner agency (e.g., FTA) involvement in Committee meetings as well as other activities, as appropriate.*

3.3 Provide Forward-Looking Ideas and Thoughts that Identify Likely Future Policy Issues

One of the major purposes of planning is to forecast/predict future conditions (such as demographics) that will influence how transportation and travel occurs in future years. Committee members should be one of the major sources of understanding the concepts and societal changes that could dramatically affect the transportation sector.

Implementation Actions:

- *Develop a triennial white paper series on “issues affecting transportation planning in the future.” The purpose of this white paper will be to look into the future and identify societal, technological, demographic, etc. factors that could have a significant impact on travel and the use of the transportation system.*

3.4 Recognize Best Practices in Statewide Transportation Planning

Several planning-related associations acknowledge best practices by making awards to worthy applicants. Such groups include FHWA, the American Planning Association, and the American Public Transportation Association.

Implementation Actions:

- *Recommend the awardee for the America’s Transportation Award in Planning.*

3.5 Foster Peer Exchanges Among State DOT Planning Groups the Focus on Key Planning Challenges

One of the most effective means of building staff and organizational capacity is to provide opportunities to DOT staff to exchange information with their peers. Such exchanges promote an exchange of ideas and lessons learned.

Implementation Actions:

- *Annually solicit ideas from Committee members on peer exchange topics of interest.*

- *Initial peer exchanges should be developed (in coordination with other Committees as appropriate) on the following topics: 1) valuation of the benefits of improvements to the transportation system, 2) connected and automated vehicles (and implications for planning), and 3) update on use of performance measures.*

3.6 Provide Greater Institutional Support for Planning Resources within AASHTO

AASHTO has examples of institutional structures that support knowledge transfer on particular topics. The best example of this is the Center for Environmental Excellence, supported with FHWA funds.

Implementation Actions:

- *Explore the possibility of establishing a Center for Planning Excellence in AASHTO, similar in concept and approach to the current Center for Environmental Excellence.*

Goal 4: Communicate the Value of Transportation as a System

4.1 Identify Successful Efforts at Communicating the Value of Transportation

By its very size, the nation's transportation system requires very large amounts of investment to not only maintain current conditions, but to expand capacity and address anticipated future conditions. Passing enabling legislation to provide for such levels of investment is often challenging and dependent on voter or legislative approval. Often, such support relies on an understanding of the benefits associated with investing in the transportation system.

Implementation Action:

- *Explore with the AASHTO TransComm Committee the desirability of submitting an NCHRP Synthesis request for a report on the state-of-practice for approaches for communicating the value of transportation.*

4.2 Collaborate with Other AASHTO Committees in Developing Strategy for Communicating the Value of Transportation

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Implementation Action:

- *Team with the TransComm committee to update the communication tools for demonstrating the value of transportation.*

4.3 Disseminate the Results of Synthesis and Research Projects

The NCHRP Synthesis Series (20-05) provides useful information on the state-of-practice on a range of topics of concern and interest to Committee members.

Implementation Action:

- *Identify and recommend annually an NCHRP synthesis topic that is of interest to Committee members.*

4.4 Provide an Up-to-Date Website

The Committee on Planning currently supports a website for planning at: www.statewideplanning.org. The tabs on this website include: About SCOP, Resources (including the results of research reports), Meetings, State Profiles, The Crawl (news), The 511 (blog), Links, and Contact Information. As of April 1, 2017, each of these tabs link to up-to-date information (except the future meetings tab).

Implementation Actions:

- *Include the latest best-case examples of planning and include case studies that highlight the value of transportation systems*
- *Maintain visibility within the AASHTO website and display current and relevant information and linkages.*
- *Continue Committee support of the statewide planning website. Each Subcommittee will provide a lead article for the website on a quarterly, rotating basis.*