

RAC Leadership Team Meeting
July 17, 2008
Portland, Maine

Meeting Notes

National Meeting Observations

- The meeting was very productive, and it is unfortunate that many states were not able to attend.
- The hotel location and facilities were excellent.
- There were 5 states absent from the meeting, but two were able to participate by teleconference
- RAC 101 would benefit from more structure; i.e. a clearer definition of the objectives and the role of speakers. Some new members noted that even more basic information about RAC was needed.
- There were only three projects displayed in the poster session, but those who attended found it to be valuable. More promotion might be helpful in attracting more posters, especially outside the host region. There was some confusion between the poster session and the exhibits. The TRIS workshop conflicted with the poster session, and this further reduced the attendance.
- UTC participation was not large, even though all UTCs were invited (through CUTC), and the UTCs in region 1 were encouraged to attend.
- A longer opening reception would provide more networking opportunities, especially with newer RAC members.
- The hospitality suite on Sunday night was very well received and provided a great opportunity to get to know one another. Dale noted that the suite was included in the contract negotiations with the hotel.
- The meeting time provided for the Task Group meetings proved to be very productive.
- Some felt that more time for regional meetings would have been useful, even if it meant extending the conference for another half or full day. Others felt that the time was adequate, since the regions were meeting regularly by conference call.
- It might be more effective to schedule the Future Needs task group at the end of the meeting, rather than the beginning.

- It was very valuable to have participation via conference call from those who were not able to attend, although the “single microphone” system made it difficult to hear in some of the meeting rooms.
- Wireless internet access was intermittent in the meeting rooms.
- Providing questions in advance to the plenary session speakers was a great idea, although some felt that it would have been a better use of time to minimize the “talking heads” format by distributing written status reports. Some suggested having a question and answer session with the senior management representatives, rather than formal presentations. It was noted that most other AASHTO committees do not begin with a plenary session of this type.
- RAC should do more to encourage SCOR members or other senior managers to attend the RAC meeting.
- The presentation on the international scan was informative and very appropriate for the RAC audience. Several of the RAC task forces have plans to follow up on the scan team recommendations. A follow-up on implementation activities would be useful for next year’s meeting agenda.
- The “idea solicitation” and “agreements and funding” sessions were well received, although the speakers went beyond the scope into other aspects of the research program. Amy Estelle’s use of audience participation was excellent.
- Scheduling sessions or presentations on current hot topics (climate change, reauthorization, etc) would be valuable in attracting attention from senior management and may also help RAC members to get travel approval.
- The role of FHWA division office research coordinators came up several times during the meeting. Mike Trentacoste and Deb Elston offered to work with RAC to clarify how the FHWA division staff can best participate in RAC activities and meetings.
- The social event on Peak’s Island was very well received.
- Some felt that it would be better to schedule Task Group meetings over two days so that time was split between meetings and sessions on each day of the agenda.
- There was a question about the role “friends” (non-members) could play on RAC task groups who attended Task Group meetings and were interested in participating. To date it has not seemed to present a problem and has created a larger pool of volunteers to help with Task Group activities. In general, the task group chairs are encouraged to make full use of non-member volunteers to

accomplish their mission. If necessary, the task group could schedule a closed meeting if significant decisions or policies need to be discussed or voted on.

- There is continuing discussion of the scheduling and duration of regional RAC meetings.
- Additional time for regional meetings or more focused technical discussions could be provided by extending the meeting from midday on Monday to midday on Friday. If the content of the meeting needs to be reduced in order to fit time constraints, it was generally felt that workshops and discussion should take priority over presentation sessions. Consideration of alternatives will be discussed on future RAC leadership team conference call agendas.
- More effort could be made to encourage non-group members to participate in the task group meetings.
- RAC officers or long term members are encouraged to meet with new RAC members before the meeting to help them get the most out of the event.
- The “hot topics” session was very well-structured and beneficial.

Use of RAC listserv for surveys

Concerns were expressed about the possibility of sensitive survey results being entered as depositions during legal proceedings. Several members noted that survey data collected by RAC, TRB and others was extremely valuable, and there was a strong feeling that the use of surveys not be curtailed. It was noted that surveys rarely contain information that is not already publicly available. There was a suggestion to use a password-protected site to post survey information that is particularly sensitive.

Some members are finding it difficult to manage the volume of surveys and the size of attachments on the RAC listserv. RAC members will be reminded to take this into account and exercise restraint in their use of the listserv. TRB staff will work with Jim Sime to prepare guidance on “survey etiquette” will be posted in the survey section of the RAC/SCOR website. TRB staff will find or develop similar guidelines for e-mail and teleconference etiquette. Wes will coordinate with AASHTO on the most effective means of contacting subject experts on their various technical committees.

Status of CTC survey

The final version of the CTC survey on reauthorization has been posted on the RAC/SCOR website, although it is not prominent. TRB staff will post a new link to make the survey results easier to find.

Chris Jenks reported that the survey results will be incorporated into a summary report to SCOR and the AASHTO Board of Directors to provide examples of research successes.

Task Group assignments from SCOR Strategic Plan

Task group chairs are not sure how to address some of the items in the strategic plan. Coordination between task group chairs will be needed to avoid duplication of effort and make appropriate assignments. The task groups would welcome feedback and clarification from SCOR on the tasks they are assigned. A conference call will be arranged over the next four weeks for task group chairs and the RAC/SCOR strategic planning committee to provide clarification and coordination.

RAC Bylaws

The administrative task group will submit proposed revisions to the bylaws for review by the RAC leadership group. The leadership group will decide whether to send the revisions to the full RAC for review before putting them out for formal ballot.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4 p.m. on Thursday, July 17th.