

**AASHTO RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC)
RESEARCH COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION TASK GROUP
MEETING NOTES
6/20/07**

1. Introductions/Housekeeping

a. Roll Call

Task group members present: Steve Albert, Nelda Bravo, Nancy Chinlund, Sandi Hoff, Crawford Jencks, Sue Lodahl, Laurie McGinnis, Leni Oman, Calvin Roberts, Lou Sanders, and Sue Sillick.

Task group members absent: Jeff Brown, Colin Franco, Georgene Geary, Allison Hardt, Richard Long, Wes Lum, and Tim Klein.

b. Volunteer for meeting notes?

Sandi Hoff volunteered to take meeting notes.

c. Changes/additions to agenda?

None.

d. Committee Members (attached)

The membership list was reviewed. Steve Albert commented that he is representing the Council of University Transportation Centers (CUTC), which includes federally designated UTC's and other universities.

e. Who are we missing on the Committee (other modes, agencies)? Process for inviting new members?

The Committee decided that although there are numerous other modes/agencies that could be invited, in the interest of keeping the group to a workable size and moving forward quickly, no other members should be invited at this time. Other modes, agencies, nonprofits, automobile industry, ITS-JPO, natural resource agencies, universities/UTC's, etc may be considered for later involvement. There was no discussion of a process for inviting new members.

2. RAC Task Group Purpose and Need - General (attached)

The general RAC task group purpose and need was reviewed. There was no discussion.

3. What do Coordination and Collaboration mean?

a. What do these terms mean to you?

Coordination and collaboration were defined by the committee to better understand our purpose and to determine whether this group should remain as one or split into two (coordination, collaboration).

The discussion included the following ideas. Coordination needs to begin with education. We need to determine what people/groups do and how they do it before we can begin to collaborate. We need to look at where everyone is trying to go. What are their goals and objectives? We can have different goals and still collaborate, but it is important to recognize that the differences exist. Coordination is more process oriented, while collaboration is about the outcomes. Looking at the process is more threatening to people, so we should try to agree with the outcomes and then we can look at the process.

The following resulted from the coordination/collaboration brainstorm during the meeting.

Coordination

- Educating (beginning steps) – What’s going on? Knowing what others are doing. Where are we going? Who are the players? What can the players contribute? Who’s communicating to whom? Not only knowing what others are doing, but acting on that information (players address pieces of a puzzle).
- Need process/structure to get information out.
- More about process.
- Prioritizing projects through our funding processes (UTC’s-DOT’s) in a just in time manner.
- Pooled-fund projects are an example.
- Education (letting everyone know what is going on) is the first step to coordination. When you are fully coordinated, you are prioritizing projects, not duplicating efforts, and leveraging knowledge/expertise and funds.
- Coordinating groups can have different goals.

Collaboration

- Groups have shared goals.
- Leveraging of knowledge/expertise and funding.
- More about outcomes.
- Best practices for working together are needed – how researcher and sponsor can work together.
- Iterative process – key for keeping these two topics together.

- b. Should this group be split into two (1. Coordination and 2. Collaboration) or remain as one?

It was unanimously decided that the group should remain one.

4. Coordination and Collaboration Task Group Purpose (attached)
 - a. Does this need to be changed or does it meet the group’s needs for a mission statement? Suggestions for a revised mission statement? What is our role in coordination and collaboration? What can our group do to foster coordination and collaboration?

The question was posed does this need to be changed or does it meet the group’s needs for a mission statement? A discussion of the need to refine the Purpose statement into a formal mission statement included the addition of RITA. It was decided that the Task Group would use this paragraph, but reformat it into bullets to increase its readability.

The group decided that focus should remain on the front end activities with an awareness of how it affects implementation, deployment, and technology transfer. Implementation, deployment, and technology transfer are crosscutting issues and, in part, may be addressed by various task groups. It was suggested these topics should be addressed in a more explicit manner and this may be a gap in the current task groups. This may be a topic for the RAC leadership board.

Steve said that implementation was discussed a lot at the recent CUTC meeting. He also said that for basic research, implementation does not necessarily follow. Nelda indicated that FHWA recognizes the need to conduct both basic and applied research. Leni suggested that since UTC's conduct both basic and applied research and the match allowed is SPR, which is typically used to conduct applied research, other match sources should be allowed. This would be a topic for the funding task group. Steve also mentioned that the challenge to collaboration for UTC's is that they are trying to maintain a unique niche. This might lead to competition rather than fostering coordination and collaboration.

5. AASHTO Standing Committee on Research (SCOR) Strategic Planning (general, free-flowing discussion summary attached)
 - a. Which items fit into our mission? What items should we address as a group? Do some items belong more to other task groups?

Sue created a new document that contains only the coordination/collaboration items with some comments. Since the task group didn't have the opportunity to review prior to this meeting, this item was tabled until the next meeting.

6. Resources/Coordination-Collaboration Efforts
 - a. Research needs databases – TERI, TRB, Pooled-fund Studies, unfunded NCHRP topics
 - b. Research in progress databases – RIP, Pooled-fund Studies
 - c. Completed research databases – TRIS, WorldCat, TLCat, Pooled-fund studies
 - d. Coordination/Collaboration efforts – FHWA-UTC meetings (Safety Summit – 11-12/2006, Infrastructure Workshop – 3/2007, Mobility?), TERRA, Transportation System Preservation (TSP) Workshop, SHRP2
 - e. Washington DOT bubble charts, CALTRANS Roadmaps.
 - f. What else? Please share efforts of which you are aware. What entities are conducting, funding, coordinating, or collaborating in transportation research (TRB, TRB committees – Conduct of Research Committee, State DOT's, UTC's, FHWA, Volpe, AASHTO)

At this meeting, not all of the above items were address; discussion will continue at the next meeting.

There are a number of websites that contain research needs: TERI (Transportation and Environmental Research Ideas database); TRB (TRB developed a research needs database. This database is now being populated and should be available on the web some time this summer); unfunded NCHRP topics (These are posted on the web in PDF format by year. Crawford was asked if it would be possible to set up the TRB website such that these unmet research needs could be searched by keyword across the years. It would also be extremely helpful to include the complete problem statement with submitter and sponsor information); and pooled-fund studies (newly entered studies could be viewed as an indication of research needs). Sue Lodahl said that research customers are confused because we ask for research needs for different programs at different times, with different processes. Research need requests come from different entities

(internal to DOT, AASHTO committees, NCHRP, individual organization, etc.). Customers are not clear on who they should respond to and if they should send duplicate ideas to the various entities. Leni indicated they are trying to come up with shopping lists of research needs in Washington State. There are too many needs out there and they are trying to find a balance. We need to convey a clear message of what we are trying to accomplish with the research. Steve said SCOR may want to balance strategic direction with project direction. He also said that we need to raise the profile of the unfunded NCHRP topics, especially with UTC's. He felt this was low hanging fruit. Nancy indicated a focus in CALTRANS on key leverage points. They are looking at where the research can have a real impact. This leaves some items out of the mix. Again, there needs to be a balance.

Two websites were indicated as containing research in progress: RIP (UTC's and state DOT's are required to enter their research in progress. Others who enter information are FTA, FHWA, and Turner-Fairbank. TRB also enters information, but may be behind due revamping of their website. Who else should enter research in progress to make this a more complete search tool?); and pooled-fund studies (this database contains proposed, active and completed pooled-fund studies). Leni indicated there is a listing of ongoing and completed environmental research; she will send this information to Sue. Defenders of Wildlife is also a resource for environmental research.

Completed research databases include: TRIS, WorldCat, TLCat, and the pooled-fund study website.

Current coordination/collaboration efforts were briefly discussed. Laurie said that TERRA (Transportation Engineering and Road Research Alliance) was not a database of research needs, but is a collaboration effort. It was recognized that more discussion on this topic needs to occur.

The Washington bubble charts were shared with the group as an example of capturing the players in a particular area of transportation research to assist with coordination of research; these two charts will be distributed to the group. Nancy said she would share information on the roadmaps that CALTRANS has been developing. Leni mentioned that SCOE developed a fishbone chart of who is involved in environmental research; she will send this information to Sue.

There was a presentation by Robin at the 2007 CUTC meeting; it was suggested this should be a future agenda item.

There was a discussion that we need collaboration among those entities and efforts attempting to foster collaboration. How do we foster collaboration without a restrictive process that enforces coordination or restricts the kinds of connections people can make? It was expressed that one role for this committee could be in developing a coordination/collaboration clearinghouse.

7. Develop Statement of Objectives (SMART - Specific, Measurable, Agreed Upon, Realistic, and Time-Bound)
 - a. What are some easy wins (low hanging fruit)?
 - b. Need to prioritize.

Some general discussion was held on possible objectives. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

8. Reporting to RAC Leadership – Report at monthly RAC Leadership Group or as often as there is new information to report.

9. Next Meeting – RAC Summer Meeting, 8/8/07, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm (Pacific), conference call option will be available for those not able to attend the meeting
 - a. Do we want to set up a regular meeting time/day? If so, what works for you?

The group expressed a desire to meet again prior to the RAC meeting (8/8). Sue will query availability and set up a meeting.

Action Items

- Sue will set up a meeting prior to the 8/8/07 RAC meeting.
- Sue will reformat the purpose statement for this group using bullets and will distribute to the group.
- Sue will suggest leadership group discuss potential gap in task groups on the topic of implementation.
- Sue will ask the funding group about addressing match sources for UTC funds.
- Leni will send Sue the list of ongoing and completed environmental research and the SCOE fishbone chart; Sue will send this information to the rest of the committee.
- Nancy will send Sue information on CALTRANS roadmaps; Sue will send this information to the rest of the committee.
- Crawford will check into the possibility of search unfunded NCHRP topics by keyword across years; Crawford will also check to see if contacts can be added for each problem statement.
- Sue will send the Washington DOT bubble charts to the group.