

# **Charter of the AASHTO Special Committee on Research and Innovation**

December 5, 2017

## **Name**

The name of this committee shall be the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Special Committee on Research and Innovation.

## **Purpose**

The Special Committee on Research and Innovation promotes high-value transportation research, technology, and innovation to enhance the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. The committee supports AASHTO member agencies, councils, committees and the transportation community in identifying, conducting, delivering, and facilitating deployment of high-value research results, as well as sharing and encouraging deployment of innovations that address both critical short-term and long-term national needs. The committee also oversees the National Cooperative Highway Research Program to ensure that it produces practical, applied research to address the needs of AASHTO members and the nation, and provides a high return on investment. The committee will champion accelerated implementation of technology, innovations, and improved operating practices among AASHTO member agencies, local agencies, and their industry partners to improve the nation's transportation system.

## **Membership**

Membership on the Special Committee shall consist of a chair, vice-chair, four representatives from each of the four AASHTO regions, and the chair of the AASHTO Innovation Initiative technical service program. The Special Committee shall also include a non-voting secretary appointed by the Transportation Research Board. Of the regional members, two members from each region shall be senior executives within their member departments, and two shall be research engineers or specialists who are members of the Research Advisory Committee, which reports to the Special Committee. The Special Committee will strive to achieve functional diversity within its membership as vacancies are filled. The regional representatives of the Special Committee shall be appointed by the President, subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee, for a four-year term with the option for reappointment for an additional four-year term.

The membership of the Special Committee shall also include ex-officio, non-voting members from USDOT, as well as associate members, as approved by the Special Committee Chair.

## **Committee Structure**

### **Officers**

The officers of the Special Committee on Research and Innovation shall be a chair and vice chair. The chair and vice chair terms of office shall be for a two-calendar-year period, which terminates at the end of the first Special Committee meeting after their term has lapsed. Committee chairs and vice chairs may be appointed to succeed themselves for additional two-year terms.

### *Chair:*

The Special Committee Chair shall be a member of the Board of Directors. The primary roles and responsibilities of the Chair include the following:

- Leading and providing direction to the Special Committee and its subcommittee
- Overseeing the policy and financial concerns of the Special Committee

- Coordinating with the Board of Directors on behalf of the Special Committee
- Chairing (or designating a chair of) the Steering Committee

*Vice Chair:*

The Chair of the Research Advisory Committee, which reports to the Special Committee on Research and Innovation, shall be the Special Committee Vice Chair. As such, the Vice Chair shall have expertise in research and/or research program management. The primary roles and responsibilities of the Vice Chair include the following:

- Overseeing the operation of the committee, including conducting the business meetings and coordinating with the subcommittees and task forces
- Coordinating with other committees on the development of research problem statements for submission to the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP)
- In case of a vacancy or absence of the Chair, serving as Chair of the Special Committee

**Steering Committee**

As the Special Committee is regionally-based with limited membership, the full committee shall act as the Steering Committee. As such, responsibilities shall include:

- General management of committee business
- Addressing strategic and emerging issues within the committee scope
- Oversight of and coordination with the AASHTO Innovation Initiative technical service program
- Communicating and coordinating with other appropriate AASHTO groups and outside stakeholders

**Subcommittees**

The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) is a subcommittee of the Special Committee on Research and innovation. RAC supports the activities of the Special Committee and is committed to being a proactive committee promoting quality and excellence in research, as well as in the application of research findings to improve state transportation systems. Each AASHTO Member Department may appoint up to three members to RAC.

RAC's responsibilities include the following:

- Working with the AASHTO Member Departments to facilitate the development of research problem statements for consideration by Research and Innovation and incorporation into the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP).
- Participating in rating NCHRP problem statements each year and provide the results to Research and Innovation for its annual selection procedure.
- Undertaking an organized program to identify ongoing and planned state-controlled research being sponsored by Member Departments.
- Providing advice and recommendations on transportation research matters to Research and Innovation.
- Serving as a resource to Member Department research managers regarding the conduct of research and technology transfer activities.
- Advocating for transportation research by promoting the value of research, the implementation of research results, the transfer of new technologies, and the benefits of peer exchanges.

Additional subgroups of the Special Committee may be established as follows:

- A subcommittee may be established by the chair of a committee, with approval from the Strategic Management Committee. A subcommittee is a permanent subdivision charged with a specific field or topic within that committee's purview.
- A task force may be established by a committee chair as a temporary, "ad hoc" group to address a specific short-term, priority task or activity. The committee chair shall advise the Strategic Management Committee of the establishment of any task force.
- A community of practice may be established by a committee chair to address a specific discipline or topic. Communities of practice may consist of participants from one or multiple committees, and may include other appropriate stakeholders. The committee chair shall advise the Strategic Management Committee of the establishment of any community of practice.

### **Technical Service Programs**

The AASHTO Innovation Initiative (A.I.I.) is a technical service program that reports to the Special Committee. A.I.I. advances innovation by actively seeking out proven advancements in transportation technology and investing time and money to accelerate their adoption by agencies nationwide. Each year, the program selects technologies, processes, software, or other innovations that have been adopted by at least one agency, are proven in use, and will be of significant benefit to other agencies.

The A.I.I. Steering Committee provides direction and oversight for the AASHTO Innovation Initiative program. The committee administers the A.I.I. program and reports regularly to the Special Committee on Research and Innovation through the committee chair.

### **Reporting**

The Special Committee on Research and Innovation shall report to the Board of Directors on all matters, including technical documents and proposed policies.

### **Meetings**

#### **Committee Meetings**

The Special Committee typically holds two in-person meetings each year: in the spring to formulate the NCHRP program; and in the fall to receive status updates on NCHRP research and to conduct other business. An additional in-person meeting may be called in any given year by the Chair to address issues of a special or urgent nature. Research and Innovation members are also invited to attend meetings of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) during the TRB annual meeting in January, as well as the national RAC meeting each summer.

Representation by a majority of Member Departments on the Special Committee, exclusive of the U.S. Department of Transportation, shall constitute a quorum to initiate and to transact general business. A majority vote of those members present, exclusive of the U.S. Department of Transportation, on matters of general business shall be considered binding on the committee. Adoption of a draft policy or technical document requires a two-thirds favorable vote of the Member Departments on the Special Committee, exclusive of the U.S. Department of Transportation, prior to being considered by other appropriate groups within AASHTO.

### **Strategic Plan, Annual Accomplishments Document, and Annual Work Plan**

The special committee shall establish a strategic plan and a work plan to help guide its activities. The strategic plan shall be consistent with the AASHTO goals and objectives as outlined in the Association's

strategic plan. At a minimum, the special committee's strategic plan will be reviewed and updated as needed when AASHTO completes a new strategic plan.

The committee will maintain, at a minimum, a one-year work plan that describes the activities that will be implemented, the individual(s) or subgroups overseeing implementation, and a schedule for completion. The work plan shall be submitted to the Strategic Management Committee prior to the AASHTO annual meeting each year.

Annual accomplishment reports shall highlight the accomplishments of the committee since the previous AASHTO annual meeting, and shall be submitted to the Board of Directors and the Strategic Management Committee prior to the AASHTO annual meeting each year.

### **Ethics**

All meetings of the committee and its steering committee, subcommittee(s), task force(s), and technical committee(s), will be conducted in accordance with the AASHTO policies governing conflicts of interest.

### **Amendments**

The charter of the Special Committee on Research and Innovation may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the special committee membership and then a two-thirds affirmative vote by the Board of Directors.