Value of Research
Minutes—July 26, 2017
Louisville, Kentucky

Attendees--Members:

Bill Stone—Missouri DOT (Chair)
Cindy Smith—Mississippi DOT (Secretary)
Megan Swanson—Illinois DOT (Chair, Marketing Working Group)
Enid White—Wyoming DOT (Co-Chair, Performance Measures Working Group)
Michelle Owens—Alabama DOT
Anne Freeman—Tennessee DOT
Kevin Pete—Texas DOT
David Ooten—Oklahoma DOT
Ned Parrish—Idaho Transportation Department
Linda Taylor—Minnesota DOT
Elisha Wright-Kehner—Arkansas DOT
Ryan Culton—Illinois DOT
Dave Huft—South Dakota DOT
Dale Peabody—Maine DOT
Tyson Rupnow—Louisiana DOTD
Sam Cooper—Louisiana DOTD
Randall Soderquist—New Mexico DOT
Kimbrali Davis--New Jersey DOT
Flavia Pereira—Connecticut
LaDonna Rowden—Illinois DOT

Attendess--Associate Members:

Natassja Linzau—TRB
Jack Jernigan—FHWA
David Pamplin--FHWA
Brian Hirt—CTC & Associates

Welcome/Introductions:

Bill Stone opened the meeting, and introductions were made. The minutes from the May 10, 2017, conference call were reviewed and approved. Bill is still looking for a co-chair as well as a new secretary to replace Cindy Smith. (After this meeting, we were pleased that Anne Freeman of Tennessee DOT volunteered to be the new secretary).

High-Value Research 2017 Feedback

Submissions--Bill showed the spreadsheet of High-Value Research (HVR) project--107 total projects were submitted. We encourage at least one submission per DOT, and this year 41 participated. The HVR website had some challenges. We started the submission process a bit late—it is usually January 31-March 31, but this year, we didn't open it until February 8. We did extend the deadline to April 7, 2017.

Website--Natassja Linzau discussed that the new HVR website had server crashes, particularly in the last days of HVR submission, due to volume, but they have since extended capacity. The crashes happened more during the later days. They have resolved most of these issues, and there are enhancements being considered for next round.

HVR Website User Guide--Bill sent out a user guide for the new HVR website, which we need to review and update between now and next year's submittals. TRB is compiling historical data to reflect older projects and links to other websites. Bill Stone and Renee McHenry used to compile HVR, then they would interface with consultant to get reports, fix bugs, etc. The new system solved many issues, including issues with attachments. Feedback indicates that, once server issues were resolved, it was fine. Tyson mentioned the old template for subject matter expert (SMEs) to complete. He wants the SMEs to write a narrative rather than just copying the abstract, and for the SMEs to state what value the nominated project is to the state. Natassja advised that there is a blank template on the site, and this template could be put into user guide.

HVR Website—Reports/Subject Areas--In the old system, the consultant sent us all projects/info into a spreadsheet, then MoDOT divided these and sent them out. In the new system, region chairs can get projects directly in a report. Megan asked if can we allow submitters to use dropdowns to denote topic area(s) for their research projects. Previously, Renee would use RIP/TRID topics to tag project subject areas. Natassja said that people could select one or multiple, and that this is how they determined the most common areas for choosing the supplemental HVR projects. Megan asked if we could have checkboxes instead of dropdowns, and Natassja said they could. She also noted that we don't use Highways as a category since most all research applies to this.

HVR—Supplemental Topic Areas--Kimbrali Davis asked the question: what happens if you don't feel strongly about two projects for supplemental award nomination? Is this mandatory? Megan replied that, if a region feels that there aren't two viable projects in a given supplemental area, then this region could potentially just have only one. The potential is there for there not to have enough supplemental projects in the areas. Megan cautioned that regions may need to change how they vote, and that this is up to regions. Megan said that some members have expressed the desire to know second supplemental areas beforehand. Kimbrali then asked if the high-value/supplemental program help steer direction of research in agencies, and offered that targeting this could help grow research. Bill advised that we talked about indexing the compendium document, not only for ease of use but also for marketing. Dale asked if we can run reports by area or keyword after submission, and Natassja replied that we would have to tag past years' projects. We can only get out what's in there, but it's feasible. On the issue of finding out if there are enough viable projects in the chosen supplemental areas in each region, we may need to poll/query in advance. Enid suggested that, to appease both sides, we could go for three possible supplemental areas each year, which would result rotating these out. Megan will put this into questionnaire.

Update on TRB Synthesis Panel 49-07, "Managing Transportation Research Programs"

Bill and Enid gave a presentation on Synthesis 49-07, whose objective was to update Synthesis 300 (*Performance Measures for Research, Development, and Technology Programs,* published in 2001). This was combined with another problem statement regarding the skill set for management of transportation research programs. The objective was to research how a program is doing versus

individual projects. The study also looked at staff, positions, skills, and benefit to Ahead of the Curve training. The first panel meeting will be October 5, 2017. Please give Bill, Enid, or Ann any suggestions for the panel.

Task Force Strategic Planning

Looked at SCOR Strategic Plan drafted in 2014 and will be finalized soon. We can use this to build our task force strategic plan (TFSP). Bill distributed copies of bullets from SCOR's SP to get us thinking what we could do. See attached HVR Action Plan document for brainstormed ideas. We did not get to discuss all these due to a limited amount of time for the meeting.

Miscellaneous

Each state's logo is now on the HVR project page, and the logos can be used for project articles in brochures.

Next Conference Calls/Adjourn

Conference calls are bi-monthly on the second Wednesday at 11:00 am to noon Central time. The next conference calls will be September 13 and November 8, 2017.

The meeting was adjourned as we had run out of time.