AASHTO RAC CCTF TKN Working Group Meeting Minutes 5/3/2018 10:30am-12noon CT

Co-Leads: Jennifer Harper (MODOT), Renée McHenry (MODOT)
Participants: Bobbi deMontigny (MTDOT), Sue Sillick (MTDOT), Cameron Kergaye (UTDOT), Carol Paszamant (NJDOT), Hafiz Munir (MNDOT), Karen Waters (ILDOT), Kathy Szolomayer (WADOT), Lamara Jones (NCDOT), Bob Sweet (NTKN), Michael Molina (OKTL), Ron Curb (OKDOT), Enid Whyte (WYDOT), Laura Wilt (ORDOT), Cindy Smith (MSDOT), Kevyn Barnes (Univ of TX Center for Transportation Research), Andy Lemer (TRB).
Minutes prepared by: Renée McHenry

Update/AASHTO Letter

Since November, Jen and I sent out two email updates to the group to report primarily on our continuing efforts regarding the letter to AASHTO about Digital Publications (or E-Pub) Issues.

- The Feb. 1st email contained notes from the Nov. meeting and asked for feedback regarding the final version of the AASHTO Board letter.
- The Feb. 20th email reported on developments. RAC recommended that the letter be sent to the Exec. Comm. and asked that it be vetted by the R&I Committee.

We did not convene for our next March meeting since there wasn't enough of substance to meet about.

Jen and I met with AASHTO Res & Innovation Committee on March 28th. They agreed that we should proceed with the letter pending comments from Brian Ness, the R&I chair. The Committee suggested that we develop a communications plan to prep the Exec. Comm. Members prior to the AASHTO Board meeting at the end of May.

In mid-April, Jen and I sent them a list of Exec. Com. members along with their respective research administrators and librarians along with a briefing document. We liked their suggestion that we enlist their help to get the Exec. Com. up to speed on the letter, why it's needed and that it would be addressed during the Board meeting.

Just today, we received notice that the letter has been tweaked by Brian Ness. An introductory summary was added. His will be the primary signature. But Jen's and Bob

Sweet's names will be included as contacts under next steps. Both Jen and I feel that the changes were minor. No changes were made to our issues or recommendations.

Once they decide what letterhead the letter should go out on, it will be sent to Bud Wright, who is the AASHTO Exec. Dir.

At that point, Jen and I can start reaching out to the state research contacts so they can prep their CEOs.

Bob Sweet expressed frustration (that others are also feeling) with how long this process is taking. What else can we do to accelerate the process?

Summer AASHTO RAC meeting

Both Jen and I will be attending the summer RAC meeting in July in Wichita, KS. However, we won't be having a stand-alone Working Group meeting. Since we are a Working Group under the Coord & Collab Task Force, Jen and I will give an update on our doings during their meeting.

What we were able to do is ask for a time slot during the regular conference for presenting on TKN-KM-library related issues.

So there will be an hour devoted to these issues (Tuesday, July 24, 2018 11:00 a.m.-12:00 noon) and will be comprised of 3 presentations.

Mary Moulton will provide an update from the National Transportation Library on recent service and platform changes as well as public access implementation.

Frances Harrison from Spy Pond Partners will discuss the project findings for Transportation Research Program Databases pooled fund study TPF-5(181) which is now 10 years old. Leni Oman from Washington State DOT requested room on the schedule for this update.

Finally, we would like to take some time to discuss some important challenges that libraries are facing with the research administrators who we work closely with and in many cases, may be our bosses.

I've been hearing from colleagues about transportation libraries being "in crisis" and what we should do about it. For starters, just think about how the number of state DOT libraries has dwindled in the last 5-10 years. Some libraries have been closed permanently. In other cases, collections have disappeared or been gutted. This presents problems on so many levels. Where do the physical or digital state DOT research reports end up? Where are the repositories, esp. if state library repositories don't exist? What about submissions to RIP and TRID if there are no librarians?

In the days of the library pooled fund when it was active, we had more of a vision and plan for transportation information and where we going next. The NTKN has become more active and unifying but is there more we can do to support state DOT libraries?

Transportation libraries are under threat (in crises? facing challenging times?). Are we a dying breed? Is this news to you? What's causing this trend? Let's discuss how can Research Administrators and the library community can work together to overcome these challenges.

Discussion

Enid (WYDOT): This is the second meeting this week where this issue has come up. We need to keep it on a front burner. Where are the collections going? Who is helping send reports out (and correctly)?

Laura (ORDOT): Some of these activities don't always fall under the library. Would the MnDOT Library ROI study help us? Maybe we should send a survey to state DOTs (what do they get from libraries and what would the negative effect be on not having one). What is the value of interacting with the library?

Carol (NJDOT): Agreed that survey was a good idea but concentrate more on user needs (who are we not serving and why) and knowledge services. Collections by themselves are not the biggest asset of library services. "We" are the biggest asset. Bob (NTKN) agreed about us getting hung up on collections (something upper management may not care about).

Karen (IDOT): Maybe we should shy away from "what would happen if the library goes away." It often comes down to the decision of just one person. We won't be able to convince everyone. Carol added sometimes they just want our space. Karen continued that we should have a positive approach. Knowledge services is a big piece. But there is a cost. These services are not free. Someone has to manage the digital publications. We should focus on the "human" element.

Bob (NTKN): The library is only one piece of it. There's nothing going on at the agency that couldn't be improved with more knowledge. It's important to bring together different roles and players.

Karen (IDOT): Like an information hub. Centralize people at one point instead of just being a library.

Sue (MTDOT): Likes the idea of a survey but wanted to know what marketing efforts others have done and how they show their value to the DOT.

Carol (NJDOT): Most of our requests are for study material for the civil service exam. Aren't we part of "workforce development"? This is the next crop of staff that will grow into management roles (plays into recruitment and retention). She sends articles to Employee Development about new leadership books. What about portraying us as an information partner? They just finished their first annual report in 2016 (?). They collaborate with as many other units as possible.

Michael (OKDOT): Comes from a public library background where there's a lot of reinventing yourself. What about a survey of marketing and promotion activities that others do?

Laura (ORDOT): What about institutional memory? This is a whole other aspect. The legislature will want to see information on something. Someone may know that we did a report on that "x" years ago but we don't have access to it.

Carol (NJDOT): She is getting questions from agencies that wish they had libraries (NJ Transit) or after libraries close (like NYSDOT).

Karen (IDOT): Every time a library in our network closes, it puts a burden on our remaining libraries. Libraries can be taken from granted (they'll always be there). When libraries might be closed, perhaps we should have the DOT libraries send letters. ETKN did this when CT closed.

Bobbi (MTDOT): Has a state library background. They are used to this scenario and have template letters that can be used for advocacy.

Laura (ORDOT): Another thing to keep in mind is a game plan for those who have never had a library. Something that would include simple steps to begin with (where do you start).

Kathy (WSDOT): What about a peer exchange on how to set up a library? WSDOT library is working on a strategic plan. You always need to remind people that we are here. They did a user survey (which raised awareness), did a focus group with execs, asked about an ideal library program now and in 5 years. They are working on a report (modeled after MN). She will send to us.

Renée (MODOT): The library pooled fund played an advocacy role in conjunction with regional TKNs when we heard libraries were closing.

Bob (NTKN): NTKN is working on a communications plan that will address many of these items. We will be reaching out to both DOT researchers and regional TKNs.

Michael (OKDOT): Should we look at ways the library can help an organization's KM efforts?

Carol (NJDOT): Research programs often have the same problems on another level (being gutted). Barbara Harder's 7 steps to a robust research program might be applicable. Are we tech transfer?

Sue (MTDOT): Their librarian's title includes Technology Transfer Technician. Karen said IL was similar.

Cindy (MSDOT): Part of the issue is that everyone thinks Google will find anything they want. This may be something we need to show people, that transportation information professionals can go beyond that. I know Leni Oman talked a lot about that. Research managers need to be supportive.

Lamara (NCDOT): What about getting the support of research managers

Andy (TRB): We should not just be viewing ourselves as librarians when thinking about the context of knowledge and information management. Library schools should rebrand themselves and think in terms of knowledge management coordination and information management programs. How can you make information accessible for those who need to use it? This whole issue is important to the agency, its system performance, project development and especially workforce development and management.

Kevyn (UT CTR) via email. The following are her thoughts based on the comments and suggestions made during the call.
- Libraries/Information hubs offer more service than just collections.
- Sometimes we don't recognize all the benefits that we are providing until it is pointed out to us. (RE: Carol's co-worker's positive spin on workforce development)
- Sometimes users don't recognize that they are using services of a library when they actually are. (RE: Cindy's comment about the perception that everything is available through Google. For instance, I try to make it clear that one of my jobs is to make sure TxDOT materials are indexed through Google so people can discover it there, even though they are actually accessing it from the library. We have ~20,000 downloads of TxDOT research PDFs directly from Google search results each month hosted through the library and I communicate this often.)
- Some libraries are looking to offer more services but don't quite know what.
- DOTs without libraries or without an understanding of what their library provides need something simple that conveys the value.

She recommended that …
(1) AASHTO RAC gather from each DOT Library a bullet list of services that the library provides to its DOT, in the most concise and value-positive language they have. Particularly including the less obvious services.

(2) The services can then be evaluated to come up with even more concise language for each one.

(3) Because some libraries may then realize that they do provide services that they overlooked, a survey with the compiled list could go out to the DOT libraries so they can select the ones that they provide. Less formed thought: Maybe it could even be a scale instead of yes/no—"we are the only provider of this service" vs "we sometimes do this"

(4) This survey should also go to DOTs without organized library units so they can answer if they have a centralized unit that handles all of those tasks for them. This might get them thinking if they don't.

(5) Create an easy-to-read visualization of what services are offered by a central library/information hub. It would be important to include the "empty" states, too.

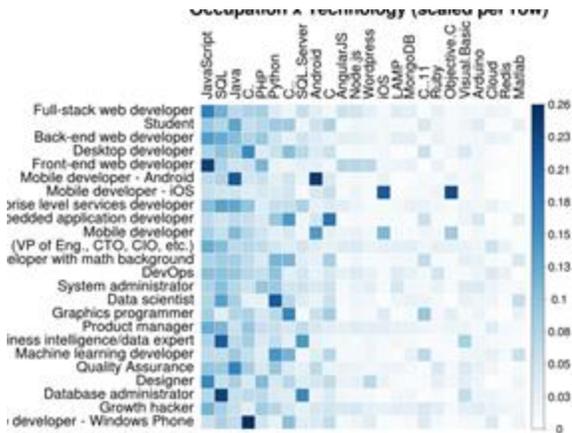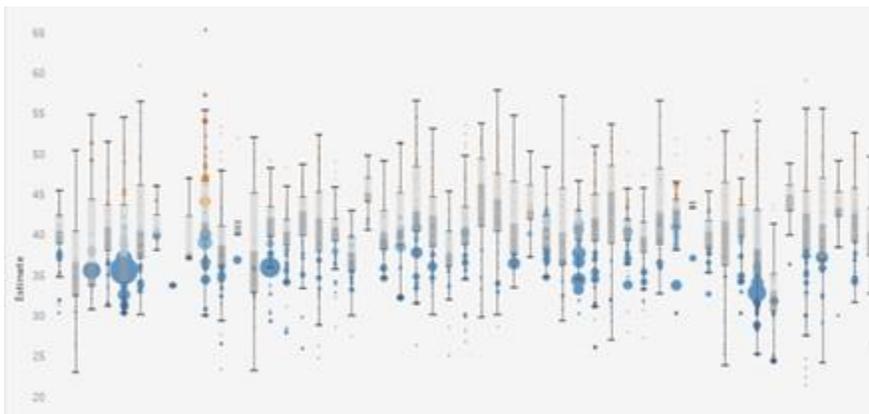(6) This visualization can help other libraries and research programs see where they could go. SEE EXAMPLES BELOW.

TABLE 2. National Car-Sharing and Ride-Summoning Companies by State of Operation

Although there is always the fear that delving too deep into numbers might not give us the results we hope to find, I'd also be interested to know a comparison between the amount of money each DOT invests in its library and the value of its research program, rate of successful completion of research projects, and/or number of published reports in TRID. And see if that has changed for those who have closed or greatly depleted their libraries. I'm also curious to see if some DOTS have lagged behind in submitting or updating content to RIP—would TRB contact DOTs to confirm that if submittals seem low or non-existent?

Group/Other Updates

AASHTO KM Committee
Andy Lemer provided more information about AASHTO's KM Committee. The Committee met May 7-9 during the 2018 AASHTO Agency Administration Conference in Oklahoma City, OK. They have a draft charter. Their strategic plan must be completed by an August deadline. Frances and Leni Oman (WADOT) were on the conference agenda. King Gee is the staff member on the Committee. The chair of the committee is from VT (Sheehan?). David from OKDOT commented that the conference took place in their "back yard." There were a handful of their people who attended but Research was not part of it. Both Laura Wilt and Cindy Smith said they were on the committee as members.

NCHRP Projects
The Phase I report for NCHRP 20-97 project on the findability of information is complete. They are working on starting the demonstration phase and are making progress. They are having difficulty finding states who want to be guinea pigs.

The thesaurus (TRT) enhancement project is trying to coordinate with Academy plans. The TRT is not compliant with ISO standards and needs to be fixed.

WTKN
The WTKN is working to attract and energize members.

ETKN
The ETKN lost the MassDOT Library. They've lost 3 libraries recently.

MTKN
The MTKN is working on a strategic plan and is hoping to have it in place by the end of the year. We are also working on transitioning LibGuides from the old pooled fund site to the new NTKN site.

Library pooled fund
Michael said that OKDOT was open to the possibility of being the lead state for a new library pooled fund. Ron commented that they are looking at the previous pooled funds

and the latest proposed pooled fund and are trying to determine what could be done in the next five years.