

**AASHTO – RAC Value of Research Taskforce  
Conference Call Meeting Minutes  
May 9, 2018  
11:00 – Noon CST**

1. Welcome & Roll Call – Bill Stone asked Amy or Anne to call the roll. Amy called the roll. Attendees for the meeting were the following people:

Flavia Pereira	Bill Stone	Lynn Hanus
Enid White	Anne Freeman	Sue Sillick
Brian Hirt (CTC)	Amy Kosanovic	Kimbrali Davis
Pat Casey (CTC)	Timothy McDowell	Hafiz Munir
Michelle Owens	Kimberly Davis	Casey Langford
Renee McHenry	Dale Peabody	

2. Review & Approve March Meeting Minutes & Action Items – Bill highlighted the actual webinar that was held during the last meeting where Natassja Linzau and Renee McHenry presented on the HVR website and the Sweet Sixteen process. Bill also spoke on policy related matters related to Sweet Sixteen. Flavia Pereira and Enid White made a motion to approve the minutes and the minutes were approved from the March meeting.
3. High Value Research and “Sweet Sixteen” Submission update with statistics – Bill Stone began to demonstrate where you could go on the HVR website to view all reports and statistics. He showed all the submissions for 2018. He also showed a graph that showed all submissions from 2018-2013. Can also see how many have been submitted per state. There were 97 projects submitted for this year, which is a little lower than before.
4. Topic areas in the “Sweet Sixteen” Submission process – Bill Stone
  - a. Search functioning/indexing – Next, **Bill** discussed topic submissions and querying the topics. Pointed out all the topic codes on the HVR website available. Also showed what’s available in RIP and TRID. They would like to work with the HVR website and CTC on how to be able to search. Subject areas should be at the submission process and the states should be required to give each project a topic. They usually throw out a broad topic like highways because it’s too broad. This year, 91 of the 97 projects

were submitted as highway projects. The two topic areas that were ultimately selected were pavements and safety. This has been a lot of work on Bill's end to give each project a topic, so he thinks it should be the responsibility of the states to complete going forward. For example, a project was submitted last year that they tagged as structures because it mentioned rivets, but in reality it was a maintenance related project. He went on to show in the spreadsheet that there are many projects that are not selected for high value or supplemental topic areas, but that are in the compendium and they would like a way to be able to market them better and have better ways to search and know what's out there. He's working with CTC and Natassja to find ways to be able to better search the compendium and maybe search, for example pedestrian projects over the last three years. In order to do that, they need to determine what topic areas should be included. HVR website is also not a public website, so it's currently not available to be searched. However, they've thought about highlighting a topic every quarter online where the information would be available. He then asked for thoughts from the group on which topic areas to keep. He also mentioned using an alternative way to set it up using mode and topic or have the states select the subject areas.

**Dale Peabody** spoke up and confirmed that all the meeting was available due to technical difficulties with internet connection. He also confirmed there was value in being able to search and was fully supportive of this effort. He liked personally the idea of the states being able to go in and check a box to denote the topic area.

**Bill** spoke up after Dale and said that his structures example was Dale's project. That's why Bill thought it would be best for the states to select the categories in the process. Obviously the process would have to start in baby steps. He asked Pat or Brian from CTC if they could give an update about an index as a table of contents to start. How would that look? Would it be in a bookmark setting?

**Pat Casey** said the challenge was to get the categories small enough where you could have an actual table of contents. Then you could have internal bookmark links to the compendium write-up of projects that fell into certain categories. A database would be most appropriate to be able to search on topic and criteria. Doing it with a publication is a challenge and not so easy to address. Pat asked Brian to elaborate on the subject.

**Brian Hirt** described what searching might look like in the compendium. One way would be to have either two tables of contents or a table of contents where it would list the state and project name information alphabetically and then an index that would list the topic area with a link or

a page number. Maybe also reorder the compendium by general topic and not by state. No matter which way it's ordered, the hardest part is to tag projects in an expedient and accurate way. Ultimately, the submitter knows more than anyone what the categories should be for the project.

**Bill** spoke back up indicating that based on patterns over the last few years, it would be fairly easy to narrow the list of topics down.

**Susan** spoke up and liked Brian's suggested of organizing the compendium by topic. It makes it easier for her to send it out to others to share to certain staff by topic.

**Brian** spoke up again about marking projects by more than one topic. He felt states would have to mark projects by a primary topic first and then the secondary topics of each project could be included in the index section. The distinction would have to be made at the beginning that the primary was one or the other, not both.

**Bill** pointed out that the indexing that Renee did on the spreadsheet that was being shown on the screen showed that each project was averaging about 2.5 topics per project. He pointed out that it leads them back to the mode and topic classification, but it would still complicate matters because it would still be two subjects.

**Hafiz Munir** spoke up that they also have these categories and sub-categories for their projects in their automated tracking system. He asked how that would compare to what Bill is proposing. **Pat** spoke up and said they could compare the two classification systems to see which might work better. Hafiz said that you could have endless categories, but by comparing the different lists of categories you could begin grouping different projects together. If there are less numbers of categories, more people might be likely to use it.

**Bill** used an example of how three categories listed such as energy, energy and environment, and environment could be cleaned up into one, in agreement with what Hafiz was saying.

**Hafiz** spoke up again stating the reason they used an automated system that has categories and sub-categories is so that they can pull up reports quickly when they need to based on subject matter.

**Bill** stated that's what they are trying to do as well on a nationwide view. He also asked if anyone else was doing something similar to what Hafiz is doing or what he is attempting to do nationwide?

**Flavia** spoke up that they use general categories to keep it simple instead of very specific categories. For example, they don't subdivide, but would classify all pavement-related projects as pavement projects.

**Bill** recommended working with Hafiz and CTC and Flavia and wanted all send their lists. The next step would be to narrow down a list that all would be comfortable with, determining what would be the right amount of topic areas. Finally, making the HVR website more user friendly with CTC's help where some of these other projects could get the recognition they deserve. After working with those mentioned above, Bill will get back with everyone to keep all updated. Bill also recommended discussing these topics at the summer meeting at the breakouts. Wants to try to make this happen where it will be in place for next year. Everyone agreed that these recommendations were reasonable.

5. Wrap up – there were no other topics to be discussed. Bill closed with thanking everyone for joining.

**Next Conference Call: To be held at the RAC-TRB Summer meeting in Wichita Kansas**