

November 18, 2004

TO: Chairs of TRB Standing Committees, Chairs of TRB Section and Group Executive Boards

FROM: Mark Norman, TRB Director of Technical Activities

As I mentioned in my recent email to you, TRB will be reviewing and updating its "Critical Issues in Transportation 2002" during the coming year. This document can be found at [http://gulliver.trb.org/publications/trnews/2002\\_critical\\_issues\\_article.pdf](http://gulliver.trb.org/publications/trnews/2002_critical_issues_article.pdf). Because of the focus given by our Standing Committees on critical and cross-cutting issues over the last few years, the TRB Executive Committee is requesting input from our Standing Committees as the first step in updating this important document. It would therefore be appreciated if you would include this on the agenda for your Committee, Section and Group meetings in January.

Specifically, the TRB Executive Committee would appreciate the following input as it relates to the 14 critical issues contained in the 2002 document:

1. Should any of the 2002 critical issues that directly relate to the scope of your Committee, Section, or Group be dropped, revised, or reconfigured to make them relevant to today?
2. Are there any new/updated data and/or rationales that should be included in any of the existing critical issues?
3. Are there any issues that were not included in the 2002 document that your Committee, Section or Group feels should be added?

- In making suggestions for new critical issues, please note that critical issues are defined as "important, unresolved aspects of transportation that are national or international in scope, on which there are a variety of viewpoints, for which the impacts of possible actions are uncertain, and for which decisions will be made at the policy level."
- For any new critical issue that you wish to be considered, please include a brief paragraph that summarizes the issue.
- Also please note that the number of critical issues that will be included in the updated document is expected to be the same or fewer than in the existing document, so it will not be possible to include all suggestions received.

The schedule for providing our input into the update of the TRB critical issues document is as follows:

- A. January 9-13: Input is solicited and discussed at Standing Committee, Section and Group Executive Board meetings

B. January 31: Chairs of Standing Committees, Sections and Groups that wish to provide input for consideration should do so by this date. Input should be submitted to TRB headquarters (further details on submittals will be provided to you).

C. February: TRB staff provide the input received from the committees in each Section to the appropriate Section Chair to help synthesize the input received

D. March: The TRB Technical Activities Council will review and refine the input

E. April: The input will be provided to the TRB Subcommittee on Policy and Program Review (SPPR) for their consideration and discussion at the SPPR Spring meeting

F. April – December: The SPPR and the TRB Executive Committee will use the input from our Committees/Sections/Groups to help update the TRB critical issues.

Thank you again, and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

SPECIAL NOTE TO SECTION CHAIRS (and to Group Chairs without Sections):

Please note that the current TRB Technical Activities Leadership Guide includes the following program responsibilities for Section Chairs:

1. Identifying critical transportation issues within their Sections on an annual basis and ensuring that committees address them in their strategic plans (These critical issues should represent a forward looking synthesis of research themes cutting across committee scope boundaries at a higher level than individual research needs.);
2. Providing input and reporting on committee actions related to critical transportation issues identified by the TRB Executive Committee, Technical Activities Council, and Group Executive Board

It would therefore be appreciated if Section Chairs would encourage your committees to discuss the update to the TRB 2002 critical issues at their January meetings. We will also be looking to the Section Chairs to take a leadership role in helping us to synthesize the input received early next year (see step C above) before it is provided to the SPPR and TRB Executive Committee. The information gained from this effort can also be expected to assist you in carrying out the program responsibilities as contained in the Leadership Guide.

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