ENewsletter

ABJ00 Data and Information Systems Section

Policy and Organization Group (POG): Strategic Review of Standing Committees 2007

The POG completed a review of its standing committees, building on the review that it undertook in 2006 as part of its Triennial Self Evaluation (TSE) process. The POG sections include: Research and Education, Management and Leadership, Data and Information Systems, and Transportation Policy. On July 9, 2006 in San Diego, the POG Executive Board spent the entire morning discussing the state of the Group's committees. Each section chair shared committee issues, and the Group as a whole discussed strategies to strengthen individual committees as well as to strengthen committees' relationships with each other. Action plans were developed for section chairs to follow up with TRB staff to address specific committee problems. POG members agreed this was a valuable process, and plan to carry out an even more extensive review in 2009 during its TSE process.

The summary of issues for the Data and Information Systems section is below.

The eleven committees and task forces in the Data and Information Systems section continue their active involvement individually and as a section. Two active subcommittees at the section level work on cross-cutting issues and are a catalyst for strengthening committee relationships. Several national data issues have been addressed by these committees.

Bottom line for the POG was that its 30 committees remain in their current form. The committees address important topics with unique scopes and are successful in delivering standard committee outputs and special initiatives.

POG 2008 Annual Meeting Sessions

Cross-cutting sessions for the POG at the 2008 annual meeting will include the following. It's not too early to start thinking about cross-cutting sessions for 2009 to ensure that the critical issues of our section are being addressed.

(1) Globalization and its Impact on U.S. Transportation Planning and Policy

   Presentations on Trends in Global Trade and Transportation; Impact of Globalization on North American Economy and Industrial Competitiveness, Implications of Globalization on all Aspects of Planning: Environment, Land Use, Financing

(2) Partnerships in Design: Role of Well-Designed Transportation Facilities in Enhancing Communities

   Presentations on Economic Benefits, Health and Environmental Benefits, Public Participation.

"We need a **data-driven**, performance based approach to building and maintaining our Nation's infrastructure assets."

Mary Peters
Secretary of Transportation

before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, U.S. House of Representatives, 9/2007

Inside this issue:

Paper Submissions to Section Committees

A total of 170 papers were submitted to Data and Information Systems committees. The top attractors of papers were:

- ABJ30 Urban Transportation Data and Information Systems — 33 papers

- ABJ40 Travel Survey Methods — 25 papers

- ABJ35 Highway Traffic Monitoring — 21 papers

- ABJ60 Geographic Information Science and Technology — 21 papers

- ABJ70 Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Computing Applications — 21 papers.

Other committees receiving submitted papers were: ABJ10 National Data Requirements and Programs — 4 papers; ABJ20 Statewide Transportation Data and Information Systems — 4 papers; ABJ35(1) Archived Data Users Service (ADUS) — 13 papers; ABJ50 Information Systems and Technology — 12 papers; and ABJ90 Freight Transportation Data — 11 papers.

3rd International Conference on Performance Measurement

The TRB-sponsored Performance Measurement conference in September 2007 had a **data track** for the first time. Below are key points of the four data sessions:

- Data as an Asset: Data as an asset means the information provided has value — it enables transportation agencies to do things faster, better, and cheaper. Data is used to identify the goals, objectives, and key performance indicators in developing strategy.

- Visualization: The general vision is to have an automated system that compiles real-time traffic and transit data from agencies around the region, puts it together in a common format, and shares it with agencies, the media, and the public. Real-time information dissemination is for incidents, traffic management, and traveler information. Archived data is used for R&D, planning, and performance measures.

- Data Collection to Support Performance Measurement: Data collection by public agencies and private firms using similar technologies — GPS, sensors, surveys, cell phones. Greater emphasis being placed on integrated databases and on the display of the information for planning and incident management purposes.

- Forecasting Performance: Future research will focus on linking tools and forecasts to decision making; conducting before and after evaluations of forecasts to test validity; developing methodologies to determine whether one model is better than another.

Improving National Transportation Geospatial Data

ABJ60 (Geographic Information Science and Technology) is sponsoring a workshop on December 14, in Washington, DC, to examine the potential benefits and costs for the transportation community from improvements to the national geospatial information infrastructure for transportation. Sessions on Emergency Management and Security, Safety, Corridor Management and Congestion, Routing and Navigation, Environment and Planning. Reg Souleyrette (co-chair of ABJ60) is workshop chair. Co-sponsoring committees include: ABJ10 (National Transportation Requirements and Programs), ABJ20 (Statewide Transportation Data and Information Systems), ABE40 (Critical Transportation Infrastructure Protection). For more information, visit *www.TRB.org/conferences/2007/Geospatial.*

Credibility; Vision; A Plan; Finance
(excerpt of address to the FHWA Annual Meeting by Alan Pisarski)

Alan continues to spread the message of the importance of data and information systems…..

"There is a sense that the federal-aid highway program — the entire surface transportation program — is lacking in vision. The Commission that is working now, the Congress, and AASHTO have all addressed the need for vision. Of course your vision for the future only has meaning if you are a credible sources, an organization of incredible expertise. So here we have it — a sequence of steps to the future: Credibility, Vision, A Plan, Finance. If one goes back 50 years and the start of the Interstate the credibility of the agency, its leaders and of engineers in general was great….Imagine the President on the phone on a frequent basis with the Agency head. Imagine the agency head sitting with the President looking at the data and looking at maps. Not just an occasion for vision but again for immense credibility…When President Roosevelt sent his message to Congress [about the Interstate system] he spoke of the immensely valuable data that had been produced to develop the plans and concepts. Imagine the President of the United States not only actually talking about transportation but also about transportation data! I can't get anyone at DOT to talk about data much less the President. As most of you know, I have spent most of career focused on data and its importance. I could make the linkage here to the immense credibility the agency enjoyed back then and the data it developed — it was a very important factor in its credibility. It was also what historians called the progressive era where there was great faith in the technical expert and the belief that all problems were solvable with expertise and information — almost a quaintly naïve notion today. *(Tom Palmerlee has the entire transcript if you're interested.)*

Research Problem Statements for Meeting Freight Data Challenges

In July, a TRB workshop explored current freight data challenges and defined priority research needs. Five research problem statements originated in the workshop and were developed by members of the steering committee. The first has been selected for funding by AASHTO under the NCHRP Quick Response Planning Research Program. The last four have been submitted to the National Cooperative Freight Research Program (NCFRP).

(1) Scoping Study for a Freight Data Exchange Network: Products would include a feasibility assessment, cost estimates, and implementation steps.

(2) Integrated Assessment of Freight Data Needs for Management and Policy Decisions: Products would be a compendium of the data needed to address high priority freight issues.

(3) Specifications for Freight Transportation Data Architecture: Product would be the basic content of a freight data architecture.

(4) Successful Partnerships for Data Development: Product would identify opportunities, motivations, incentives, and mechanisms to encourage partnerships to collect and use freight data.

(5) Technology Road Map for Freight Data Acquisition: Product would be a road map to support a business plan that identifies enabling technologies for freight data collection and evaluates technologies in current use as well as those that are on the horizon.

Upcoming Events

October 22-23, 2007	Research Issues in Freight Transportation — Congestion and System Performance Conference, Washington, DC
November 6-8, 2007	New Directions in Asset Management and Economic Analysis, New Orleans, LA
December 14, 2007	Working on Improving National Transportation Geospatial Information: Working together for Better Decision Making, Washington, DC
January 13-17, 2008	87th Annual Meeting, TRB, Washington, DC
April 8-9, 2008	Highway Economic Requirements Modeling and Data Integration Conference
April 10-11, 2008	Traffic Data Workshop: Successful Strategies in the Collection of Data for Corridors and Planning
May 13-14, 2008	Open Architecture for Data Integration Peer Exchange, by invitation, Irvine, CA
August 6-8, 2008	North American Travel Monitoring Exposition and Conference, Washington, DC

POG Annual Meeting Sessions (cont)

(3) Transforming Transportation Organizations: Strategic Executive and Data Partnerships

Presentations on successes in strategic executive-data partnerships and what research is needed to ensure future successes.

(4) Partnering to Respond to the Perfect Snow Storm — The Colorado, New York, and Pennsylvania Experience

Presentations by DOT representatives from these states.

(5) Local and Statewide Coordination on Safety Data Programs

Presentations on Coordination regarding Safety Data, Safety Data Systems from the state and MPO perspectives.

(6) Institutional Arrangements to Advance Public-Private Partnerships: Part 2 Protecting the Public's Interest

Presentations on Techniques to Protect the Public Interest in Long-Term Concession Agreements and the Role of Public Agencies in Protecting the Public Interest

Other joint sessions by Data and Information Systems Section Committees include:

Data Needs for Transportation Surety: Preparedness, Response, and Recovery (ABJ10, ABE40, AT035)

A Memory is a Terrible Thing to Waste (ABJ10, AHB15, ABG40)

Using Vehicle Infrastructure Integration (VII) Data Part 1: New Application Opportunities afforded by VII, Part 2: Cross Cutting Data Discussion (ABJ10, AHB15, AHB30)

Travel Data Users Forum: How will the Changing Cost of Energy Affect Personal Travel? (ABJ30, ABJ10, ABJ20)

How Can we Measure Links Between Land Use, Infrastructure, Physical Activity, and Health (ABJ40, ADB10)

Picking the Right Alternative: Enhancing Collaborative Decision-Making with Decision Support Technology (SHRP II CO1 Update) (ABJ50)