

Nearly 30 people attended the midyear meeting of Transportation Research Board (TRB) Committee ABC40, Transportation Asset Management (TAM), on August 31<sup>st</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> in Washington, DC. In addition, at various times we had between 6 and 12 remote participants attending the meeting using TRB's webconferencing tools. Needless to say, I was thrilled with the level of participation.

For those of you who didn't get to attend, or those of you have already forgotten what we discussed, I'm posting this brief summary of the key results from the meeting. You can see copies of all the presentations by logging on to our website, TAM Today. Follow the links to the TRB Committee materials and you'll find folders containing all of the presentations. **I've also buried assignments in this summary, so please check to see if you have something you should be working on!**

### Opening Session

This session provides us with a summary of the ongoing TAM activities in the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and TRB (including its National Cooperative Highway Research Program ). We were especially fortunate to be able to benefit from Patricia Bugas-Schramm's connections that led to a presentation by Mr. Jim Kolb, a Senate Staffer working on the new highway legislation. The session also benefitted from a presentation by Sue McNeil on the committee's prior strategic plan and organizational structure. There were several points raised that I think are especially important for ABC40 to consider over the next year:

- There is little doubt that the new highway bill will include language that supports the use of performance management for maintaining transportation assets. There will likely be an emphasis on relating investments on critical assets to expected improvements in performance. In other words, agencies will be expected to be able to document the expected improvements in performance associated with different investment options.
- In anticipation of the increased focus on performance management, AASHTO has begun differentiating the roles of the Performance Management Committee and the TAM Subcommittee. According to what I've heard in several presentations, Performance Management is being described as the overarching framework for designing, constructing, and preserving our nation's transportation infrastructure. TAM focuses on the design, construction, and preservation of the physical assets (e.g., pavements and bridges) and performance measures are tools that are used within asset management to report conditions, to set goals, and to evaluate investment trade-offs. This seems to be consistent with the AASHTO Subcommittee on TAM's definition that was accepted several years ago, which also mentions the focus on physical assets:
  - *Transportation Asset Management is a strategic and systematic process of operating, maintaining, upgrading, and expanding physical assets effectively throughout their lifecycle. It focuses on business and engineering practices for resource allocation and utilization, with the objective of better decision making based upon quality information and well-defined objectives.*
- AASHTO's Performance Management Committee is focusing on six areas, each of which is supported with a task force: safety, preservation, congestion, system operations, freight, and

environment. Within these areas, recommended performance measures are being identified using a tiered structure. Under this structure, performance measures that have a common definition, can be found in a national database, and have been evaluated in a comparative analysis study are considered to be tier 1 measures. If any one of those three factors is missing, it's considered a tier 2 measure, and if two or more of the criteria are missing, a measure is considered to be tier 3. Examples of these performance measures are provided in Kirk Steudle's presentation, but roughness is an example of a tier 1 performance measure for pavements. Ideally, we would have better metrics available for managing the highway network (such as a structural condition indicator), but there is no uniform measure currently being used to easily address this need. However, the development of improved performance measures was reported to be an important research area for the FHWA.

### **Setting the Stage**

The presentations during this portion of the meeting introduced other considerations impacting the use of TAM tools in state highway agencies. Michael Bridges provided a summary of the new Asset Management Guide (Volume 2), Jeff Price summarized current issues they are facing in Virginia, and Butch Wlaschin summarized some of the issues his office has observed during their visits to state highway agencies over the last few years. Challenges associated with the lack of consistent definitions, the lack of access to quality data, and inadequate communication strategies were discussed. Andy Lemer (TRB) also provided information on the current research efforts related to TAM and presented information on social networking to help set the stage for the breakout group on communication.

### **Breakout Groups and Workshop Summary**

A good deal of time was spent in breakout groups, each of which was charged with developing recommendations for short-term and long-term committee activities that should be included in the updated strategic plan. Several individuals (**Jason Bittner, Francine Shaw-Whitson, and Adjo Amekudzi**) volunteered to work with me in developing the updated strategic plan, which will be circulated prior to the 2011 TRB Annual Meeting. However, based on the discussions at the midyear meeting, you can expect the following recommendations to be included:

- There will be relatively minor changes made to our vision, mission, and scope.
- The goals will be modified to include the following:
  - Facilitate the implementation of Transportation Asset Management
  - Provide service to TRB and other organizations to advance asset management needs, disseminate new knowledge, and implement innovation
    - Add a strategy on collaboration with FHWA
  - Utilize communication strategies that deliver appropriate information to TRB and other members of the asset management community in a timely manner.
    - Including conferences, sessions, etc
    - TAM Guide focus on implementation

- Implement outcomes of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program efforts and specifically promote the use of the AASHTO Transportation Asset Management Guide
- Ensure a qualified, diverse, and active committee.
- The recommendations provided by the breakout groups will be incorporated into the strategic plan in terms of action items. **The communications breakout group** will work with **Brad Allen** to conduct a survey of committee members and friends prior to the 2011 Annual Meeting to develop communication strategies. **Jason Bittner** will lead this effort.
- A recommendation will be made to create three subcommittees, each of which reflects one of the subject areas discussed at the meeting: data, tools, and implementation (formerly referred to as policy). The subcommittees will be comprised of active groups of committee members and friends responsible for accomplishing the goals outlined in the strategic plan. A chair will be appointed to each subcommittee and time will be provided for the subcommittees to meet beginning with the 2011 midyear meeting.
- The subcommittees will work directly with coordinators who help fulfill committee obligations. The following coordinating roles will be established:
  - Conference Coordinator – Francine Shaw Whitson
  - Paper Review Coordinator – Jason Bittner
  - Research Needs Statement Coordinator – Ken Petty
  - Synthesis Coordinator – Omar Smadi
  - Communications Coordinator – To be determined.
- After the 2011 TRB Annual Meeting, committee members and friends will be asked to sign up for one of the three subcommittees and these groups will be charged with finalizing their short- and long-term action items. The subcommittees can use webconferencing tools throughout the year to support these efforts.

### Research Problem Statements

A small subset of attendees met on the morning of September 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss the development of research problem statements (using the attached form). The following assignments were made (Leader's name is in italics):

- Benefits and Costs of Retiring Assets – *Paul Thompson, Tashia Clemens, Omar Smadi* (Draft Received)
- Risk assessment for Ancillary Structures – *Adjo Amekudzi*
- TAM for ITS – *Jeff Price, Joe Gregory* (Draft Received)
- Use of Cross Asset Optimization Results and the Impact on Performance Measures – *Bill Robert, Paul Thompson, Omar Smadi, Joe Gregory*
- TAM and Sustainability – *Terry McNinch, Simon Lewis*
- Risk Management and Its Use for Setting Investment Targets – *Larry Redd, Adjo Amekudzi, Alan Kercher, Thomas Van*
- Asset Management and Climate Change Adaptation – *Sue McNeil, Jason Bittner, Les Hawker*

In addition, **Katie** will explore the possibility of funding for a peer exchange based on one or more of the research problem statement topics with **Matt Hardy** of AASHTO.

### **Annual Meeting Plans**

The final business item involved making plans for the Annual Meeting, which must be finalized no later than October 1, 2010. **Therefore all session descriptions, including the names of speakers and moderators must be delivered to Katie and Jason no later than September 23, 2010.** The activities that are being planned include the following:

- **Jeff Price** is coordinating efforts for a Sunday morning workshop titled “How to Implement a TAM Program in Your Organization.”
- We will be co-sponsoring a session featuring the best papers from the AISIM meeting held over the summer.
- **Bill Robert** volunteered to work with Jack Stickel and the Data committees on a session focusing on data quality and performance measures.
- **Patricia Bugas-Schramm** is working with the Metropolitan Policy, Planning and Processes Committee to organize a session on improving the links between planning and programming activities for managing assets.
- **Katie Zimmerman** will organize a session on risk management .

### **Thanks**

The meeting was a great success, due in large part to the active participation of the committee members and friends. However, I would be remiss if I didn’t recognize the following contributions:

- Thanks to **Tom Palmerlee** and **Matt Miller** for the fantastic job organizing the meeting. This meeting represented one of the first uses of webconferencing tools for conducting TRB committee activities and based on the feedback I’ve received, it was a success. Tom and Matt did a great job of tending to all the organizational issues that had to be addressed so we could focus on committee business.
- Thanks to **Patricia Bugas-Schramm** who managed to pull some strings at the last minute to get Jim Kolb on the agenda. Jim brought a different point of view to the discussions and he was a great addition to the meeting.
- Thanks to **Jeff Price, Omar Smadi, Bill Robert, and Jason Bittner** who agreed to serve as facilitators for the breakout groups. They agreed to take on this task and they were able to get good information from the participants.
- Thanks to the organizing committee, which included **Jeff Price, Omar Smadi, Bill Robert, Jason Bittner, Patricia Bugas-Schramm, Butch Wlaschin, Jack Stickel, Andy Lemer, Tom Palmerlee, and Matt Miller.**
- Thanks to **Kirk Steudle** and **Butch Wlaschin** for their continued support of our committee, as demonstrated by their participation in the meeting.

- Thanks to the nearly 40 committee members and friends who took time out of their busy schedules to help us set the direction for the next several years. It's great working with people like you.