



Mid-Year Meeting Notes

Committee on Ecology and Transportation

TRB Committee on Ecology and Transportation (ADC30)

Mid-Year Meeting Notes

Date/Time: July 17, 2016 / 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM (MDT)

Place: Solitude Room at Sheraton, Downtown Salt Lake City, Utah

Next Meeting:

Attendees (on site): Alex Levy (VHB – Committee Chair), Dan Buford (FHWA, HQ), Jamie Collazo (Georgia DOT), Kathleen Kurgan (AASHTO), and Jeff Simmons (Stantec – Committee Communication Coordinator)

Attendees (via conference call): Dan Smith (University of Central Florida), Jeff Gagnon (Arizona Game & Fish), Kris Gade (Arizona DOT), Meghan Hedeem (Georgia DOT), David Hedeem (Georgia DOT), Jimmy Kagan (Oregon State), Patty Cramer (Utah State University)

Distribution:

Prior to the meeting, Alex Levy disseminated a proposed agenda (attached), which provided the framework for discussion. Highlights of the ensuing conversation are provided below.

- The meeting was initiated with introductions by all in attendance at the meeting site, and remotely via conference call/Skype.
- Alex also reviewed the current committee members noting the new members.
- Alex indicated that meeting notes for the 2016 Annual Meeting had not been developed to the best of his knowledge, and it was unknown who was going to prepare them. Kris Gade indicated she would prepare draft minutes based on her handwritten notes, and send along to Alex for review and comment.
- Alex posted the Committee’s mission statement as a reminder.
- There was a discussion regarding committee rotation requirements per TRB requirements they require 1/3 of members rotate every 3 years) and it was noted that our committee had rotated approximately 1/2 of the membership just recently. Alex thanked outgoing committee members and emphasized the tremendous contributions each had made, while some continue serving. It was recommended that all members and friends regularly visit “MyTRB.org” and maintain their personal contact information, and whenever there is a change in employment and/or contact information, make sure it is updated. Once a person’s contact information in MyTRB is incorrect, emailed communiques bounce-back and it can be difficult or impossible to reconcile without intensive searching through peer networks
- Alex noted that the cost of TRB meeting registrations are going up due to reductions in funding, and as a result, registration fees may rise 5%-10%. Given the difficulties some members and friends have getting support from their employer for attendance, it was encouraged that the costs of attending may be more palatable if one is organizing sessions, workshops, or delivering presentations. However, representatives of sponsoring organizations (e.g. AASHTO members) or Sustaining Affiliates continue enjoying complimentary registration
- The TRB Annual Meeting will have many noticeable changes in security starting in 2017. All attendees, whether

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or not presenting/participating, either with or without paid registrations, will be required to register and display a badge at all times inside the Convention Center venue. However, credentialing for committee meetings and other functions in the adjoining Marriott may not be as strictly enforced. It is anticipated that security and police officers are likely also going to more visible going forward.

Subcommittee Updates

- **Jeff** provided an update on regarding communications. It was noted that the newsletter had been finished, and was uploaded to the Committee's Weebly website. Jeff thanked everyone for submitting interesting articles and noted that a call for the next newsletter will likely be out late November or early December. Everyone should have received notification of the availability of the newsletter via Mail Chimp, and if there were issues with receipt of the notice or anyone did not receive it at all, they should email Jeff or Alex.
- **Alex** reiterated that the Committee Weebly site is operational. We had to switch to a new website because NCState, who had previously hosted our website, had budget cuts and so had to stop hosting. Thanks go to Bridget Donaldson, who set up and designed our new Committee website.
- **Dan Smith** provided an update on renovation/remodeling of the Committee poster. Dan requested input from the members, and noted that the new layout/design was based on comments received at the last IENE meeting on our original poster. Namely, viewers indicated that there was too much text on the original poster, and we were too focused on our mission statement/strategic goals. The suggestion from commenters was that any new poster should include more original artwork, photos, reports supported by the Committee, etc. Dan also indicated that one goal is to convert the new poster to a standard poster size (36x48), as TRB is the only conference he is aware of that has poster boards that are up to 8 feet long. There is also an effort to convert the final product to a PowerPoint file format for ease of use/printing and future modifications. Dan and Alex will coordinate on how to move forward, and to look for the original design files.
- **Todd Williams**, Committee Research Coordinator was not present and therefore could not provide an update. Alex noted that the Wildlife Society is holding an upcoming meeting in Raleigh. (A subsequent research needs session for ADC50 was held at the mid-year workshop on 7/19/16. In common with ADC30, a need was identified for a **synthesis problem statement**: how contractor-responsible, Project Specific Locations: i.e., borrow, waste, and staging areas, are addressed. These are sites that fall outside traditional NEPA analysis, but are subject to the same provisions for affects assessment and environmental regulation.)
- **Kate Kurgan** gave an update on AASHTO SCOE....
- **Fraser Schilling** was not present and therefore could not provide an update on what is going on with ANB20-2 regarding wildlife and vehicle collisions. This is an important topic, and we should hear more about what is going on at the annual meeting, and it may also be a workshop topic in future. While animal-detection/driver-warning technologies have all been based on stationary systems, there are ongoing advances for autonomous and connected vehicle technologies that should be explored. Alex indicated that our new international member, Andreas Seiler expressed considerable interest in the subject as a 2017 workshop idea, but the chair of the Committee on Vehicle-Highway Automation (AHB30) indicated that his committee was already overbooked with annual meeting commitments and suggested developing the idea for the 2018 annual meeting, immediately following the 2017 meeting.
- **Kris Gade** – working on SCOE committee on natural resource research topics – wants to run research topics by ADC30 to avoid doing redundant research – Kris will coordinate with Todd and the rest of ADC30 members. Kris wants to tap into academia more for developing/performing research. Kris noted that she had just learned that the US Forest Service is working on pollinator research related to forest roadside areas. The challenge we face is how we help DOTs use the latest scientific research, even if it is being done outside of typical transportation circles.
- **Alex** noted that we need a replacement for Lars Carlson, who served as liaison coordinator, nearly since the committee's founding. The role is to coordinate and find synergies with other committees. Twice a year, solicit info from committee members and friends about their engagement with other committees and organizations, then report hot topics and common themes to group. This is an important role to keep tabs on what is going on with

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other groups and to improve collaboration. Based on a suggestion from Andreas Seiler, Alex also expressed an interest in having our group make connections in the rail sector, stating that - with TRB rail committees a relationship has not been forged Jeff is on the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) Environmental Committee (Technical Committee 13) and offered to discuss TRB at the upcoming AREMA annual meeting as well as the Railroad Environmental Conference (RREC) and report back to the group. (New committee member, Meg Hedeem with Georgia DOT has agreed to step into the Liaison Coordinator role).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3 pm MDT.

The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of all items discussed. If any discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact the writer immediately.

Respectfully submitted by Jeff Simmons

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ADC30 Committee Communications Coordinator*

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Attachment: Proposed Meeting Agenda

- c. All in attendance
Full ADC30 Committee

