2008 to 2010 Strategic Plan
Transportation Research Board
Committee on Public Transportation Planning & Development (AP025)
Adopted January 15, 2008

Background and Context:
The 2008 to 2010 Strategic Plan was prepared by the Committee on Public Transportation Planning & Development (AP025) within the framework of the Transportation Research Board’s (TRB) adopted Strategic Plan, the 2005 Millennium document and the adopted Work Program of the Public Transportation Section. It builds upon and refines the Committee’s adopted 2003 to 2007 Strategic Plan.

In furtherance of the TRB’s Strategic Plan, all TRB committees are required to periodically assess their membership and to establish and refine their overall mission, objectives, strengths, challenges, opportunities and activities within the context of present and future (now three years; formerly five years) operating and policy-setting environments. The self-assessment is intended to be participatory and comprehensive, resulting in preparation and adoption of a Committee Strategic Plan for TRB evaluation. In addition, the updated Strategic Plan will facilitate the Committee’s Triennial Review.

In fulfillment of this charge, and recognizing the need for a Plan update, the Committee on Public Transportation Planning & Development established a Strategic Plan subcommittee at the January 2007 TRB Annual Meeting to conduct a survey of its membership and also to prepare an updated Draft Strategic Plan. The survey was conducted between February and April 2007, and the responses provided an important contribution to the Strategic Plan update. (A copy of the 2007 Survey Analysis is included as Appendix I of the Plan.) The Draft Survey Analysis and Strategic Plan were completed in July and August 2007, respectively. Each document was subsequently discussed at the Mid-Year Committee meeting in Denver, and posted on the Committee’s website to solicit any additional review comments. The Plan was presented at the Committee’s pending meeting at the TRB Annual Meeting in January 2008, where it was proposed for adoption. Following adoption, the Committee will present the Strategic Plan to pertinent TRB staff and committees, and welcomes the opportunity to discuss the contents and to respond to any questions.

Committee on Public Transportation Planning & Development (AP025)

I. Mission Statement:
The Committee adopts the following Mission Statement to guide its overall work program within the structure of the Transportation Research Board:

To examine, discuss and disseminate public transportation ideas and issues from planning, development, operational and project implementation perspectives.
II. Goals:
The Committee will strive to accomplish the following goals in fulfillment of the adopted Mission Statement:

- Foster topics for future research, promote widespread dissemination of findings and recommendations, with operational applications where possible;
- Identify, articulate, and stimulate follow-up activities on emerging trends, new ideas and innovations;
- Assist in defining public transportation’s roles, contribution and future direction within the overall fields of community development, transportation and infrastructure systems;
- Coordinate and partner with other TRB committees, organizations and governmental entities (both nationally and internationally) to accomplish the Committee’s overall mission;
- Promote fellowship and mentoring among the Committee’s Members and Friends through research, conferences, newsletters and web site information.

To meet these goals the following scope of activities is followed.

Committee Scope: The committee's scope is to examine, discuss and disseminate public transportation ideas and issues from the planning, development, operational and project implementation perspectives. It strives to foster topics for future research, promote widespread dissemination of findings and recommendations, with operational implications where possible. The committee considers emerging trends, new ideas and innovations as they influence public transportation planning and development and assists in defining public transportation's roles, contribution, and future direction as it relates to the larger Intermodal environment and the overall fields of community development, transportation, and infrastructure systems. The committee considers impact of factors such as land use, technologies, market and patronage, pricing, service innovations, public policy, tools and techniques for product planning, and changes in the planning environment, including employment, activity patterns and related factors.

III. Environmental Scan
The following summaries of the external climate for public transit (including emerging, critical and cross-cutting issues), as well as internal Committee issues and activities (as of late-2007), are intended to provide a context for development of the Strategic Plan update.

a. The External Climate for the Committee’s Activities
The current environment for public transportation planning and development activities is dynamic and continuing to evolve. Pressures for change and pertinent change agents reflect cross-cutting international and local economic, fiscal and policy issues, the multi-level intergovernmental setting for land use and transportation planning, as well as the continuing demand for and response to community development markets and day-to-day transit operational issues.

- Policy-makers, private sector interests and the public continue to demand and recognize the multiple benefits of a first class transportation system for both goods movement and personal mobility needs. However, current prospects for strong and sustained Federal policy support and funding to achieve this goal remain uncertain, and the picture at the State and local levels, particularly in terms of financial resources, is mixed.

- The pending reauthorization of the “Safe, Accountable, Efficient, Flexible Transportation Equity Act-A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), scheduled to occur by the end of Federal Fiscal Year 2009, will have a profound effect on the guiding policies and funding priorities for all surface transportation modes and programs, and its likely five year life will extend into the time frame for the Committee’s subsequent 2011 to 2013 Strategic Plan. Although less pronounced than previously, there remain philosophical and policy divisions over how to fund national transportation needs, infrastructure improvements, as well as what the nation’s transportation investment priorities should be. These different policy perspectives have been exacerbated by the realities of the “post-9/11 world”, with its necessary and continuing, short-term focus on increased security concerns and funding priorities. These new perspectives, realities and competing priorities pose the greatest short-term threats to the availability of additional funding to enable the continuation and expansion of many public transportation planning and development-related programs, including a more robust, national research program.

- There is a strong coalition of support for retaining the policy and programmatic gains that resulted from the enactment of both the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and TEA-21, as part of any reauthorization legislation in 2009. These acts, along with SAFTEA-LU, contain significant numbers of earmarked transit projects. Earmarking has a significant effect on transit planning. On one hand it usurps the role of planning in finding the best solution for a community’s transportation problems, while on the other hand it provides a windfall of funding that needs to be carefully used and implemented through a sound planning process. As a result, there remains a strong public backlash against the uncontrolled earmarking of local transportation projects, which received widespread negative publicity during the enactment of SAFTEA-LU. In addition, the competition for scarce federal, state and local resources threatens to undo the gains made over the past 20 years, particularly the strong emphasis on public transit research through such ventures as the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP).
Within the overall debate about the Federal role in transportation policy and funding support are broader issues of the allocation of state shares of Federal dollars, deficit reduction and the Highway Trust Fund’s fiscal integrity. Other significant modal issues are the continued national role and funding for AMTRAK and inter-city passenger rail service, reauthorization of airport user fees and the use of this revenue stream for both land side (including multi-modal) and air side projects (including security-related improvements). These issues are likely to continue to overwhelm questions about the future funding, content and policy direction of national transportation research.

State and local policies and programs on public transportation planning and development are mixed, varying by geography, developmental character and history. Given the influence of ISTEA, TEA-21 and SAFTEA-LU, most are quite supportive of the need to develop multi-modal and intermodal transportation strategies, including a strong if not central role for public transit. Reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU is scheduled for FY 2009, and the opportunity for policy, program and funding changes (both positive and negative from the Committee’s perspective) are real. As part of the reauthorization debate, the Committee believes the reality of the nation’s diverse lifestyles and commuting patterns precludes reliance on traditional public transit service approaches, which are insufficient to meet future metropolitan area and rural travel needs. More emphasis on innovative service patterns and new technologies will be needed to help public transit fulfill and maximize its role.

More positively, there continues to be widespread local official and citizen interest in growth management strategies, including neo-traditional, “smart” land use, development and transportation approaches, like transit-oriented development (TOD). These development concepts and practices are predicated on a stronger role for public transit to help promote a greater sense of community, a focus on the pedestrian scale and better linkage of land use and transportation planning. At the same time, among some elected officials and the public, there remains a strong suspicion of government-imposed strategies to manage growth; neighborhood and local resident responses to proposals that strive to increase densities, dwelling unit diversity or other, non-traditional development practices and a backlash against governmentally imposed, behavioral change actions and programs that seek to place restrictions on the use of single occupant automobile travel for various trip purposes.

Several emerging issues have become more significant since the adoption of the Committee’s previous Strategic Plan. Each will have an impact on the use of public transit, while reinforcing the need for more efficient development patterns, communities and transportation systems.

a. Climate Change. First is the growing recognition that we face a difficult and uncertain future in response to climate change and global warming issues. Although the debate continues on the significance of the problem, recognition of the negative consequences of current approaches has begun to shift public opinion and policy responses. Public transit leaders should position the industry as part of the solution with appropriate technology changes that
reflect public transit’s contribution to the overall climate change issue (such as use of alternative fuels).

b. Energy. Second are the continued forecasts for declining fossil fuels and the reliance on foreign sources in the future and the need for investigation and implementation of alternatives. Although continuing price shocks and scarce supplies have not made much of a dent in driving patterns, the perception that business as usual will not be satisfactory for the long-term is beginning to take hold. Public transit should respond as an industry to demonstrate a more marketable product to attract and capture potential new riders which can lead to reductions in fuel use.

c. Technology. Third is the continuing impact of technology on communication, lifestyles and transportation, as well as the impacts on the overall economy. Technology, like Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), will affect how transportation systems are linked (through communications, fare collection, scheduling, etc.) and should result in more efficient operations and economies of scale.

d. Population Dynamics. Demographic forces will also continue to affect the demand for future public transportation, but at opposite ends of the life cycle: aging Baby Boomers will continue to have the greatest impact on the lifestyle and economy of the nation, accompanied by immigration and growth in households without children. Aging but healthier boomers will most likely retain their strong feelings about the need for personal choices and the “freedom of the road.” But they will need alternatives to be available to transition to if the ability to drive is lost. Immigration trends could generate public transit ridership growth (already evident in cities like New York and Los Angeles), as new residents from transit-oriented (rather than car-oriented) cultures seek transportation to jobs and leisure activities, and as a key driving force for suburban migration (family expansion) becomes less significant for a growing segment of the population. More people will be reaching retirement age, and are likely to increase demand for transit services and land use patterns that will allow them to “age in place” and make more diverse trips.

e. Crumbling Infrastructure. Recent catastrophic collapses of bridges and tunnels have highlighted the need to have strong programs to maintain, reconstruct and rehabilitate an aging transit infrastructure. Significant portions of fixed transit systems in the United States were constructed in the 1890s and are in need of major overhaul and replacement. These projects will require significant funding and a strong role of transit planning to bring them up to 21st century standards.

f. International Trends. The community of transit planners and managers is becoming global. The committee sees greater interest and participation from people outside the United States and this provides an opportunity to share information in a wider world. While problems in many places are similar, there are important differences as well that should be seen as an opportunity to increase knowledge and understanding
It is anticipated that the emphasis for public transportation research activities at the TRB and in academia will continue to be focused on “practical” and “real world” questions and issues that can yield beneficial information to support policy formulation or daily operations. Thus, the “market” for the kinds of issues that the Committee usually pursues continues to grow, and the need for continued research on emerging trends, issues and practical applications is high.

The need to maintain and expand a strong public transportation research program, with increased funding, at the national level continues to be critical. A concerted effort, through a broad coalition of support, is needed from academic, private consulting and public agency practitioners to make the case during the pending reauthorization debate. The Committee’s diverse activities can play a role in helping to accomplish this key objective.

b. The Internal Climate for the Committee’s Activities

In the 2007 membership survey, Members and Friends revealed some interesting responses about their involvement with the Committee and its activities.

Respondents expressed interest in continuing to interact with their peers, nationally and internationally, in the field to share experiences, keep abreast of current developments and to make a contribution to the advancement of public transit and new ideas.

Committee members view their involvement with paper reviews, conference sessions, committee meetings and the strategic planning process quite positively.

However, there was also an expressed desire for more focus and less generality on specific public transit issues and research projects, including development of more useful, policy-oriented information for decision-makers, introduction of more cost-efficient planning methodologies, while striving for increased opportunities for outreach on an international basis.

Concern was also expressed about the need for increased interaction with other TRB committees, through meetings and conferences, and the need to attract and retain new active Committee members, including more women, minorities, young professionals and private sector representatives, given the potential retirement of currently active, “old hands”.

IV. Previous Committee Approach and Objectives

The following Approach and Objectives were proposed by the Committee in 1993, (but never formally adopted) to guide its activities. This statement served as the departure point for the 1998 to 2002 Strategic Plan (which included an October 1997 membership survey). The Strategic Plan was subsequently adopted by the Committee at the January 1998 Annual Meeting, and included in the Committee’s 2003 to 2007 Strategic Plan.
1. Assemble a committee of diverse, interested individuals who are willing to continually seek out and use a network of other professionals and academics across the country (and in other countries) to keep us current on innovations in public transportation options and institutional arrangements.

[At the time of the adoption of this plan, the committee includes people from transit agencies (5 members), consulting firms (6), universities (9), metropolitan planning organizations (1), national governments (2), and state government (2). There are two international members and three emeritus members at the time of the adoption of this plan. They represent 12 states and three foreign countries. In addition the committee has a broad list of committee friends who act as members in all respects.]

2. Develop an on-going set of research ideas and topics for investigation, coordinated with TRB’s strategic research initiative, which will lend themselves to development into calls for papers, conference sessions, TCRP problem statements, special conferences and publications. Specific objectives would include:

- Complete a set of updated Committee research statements for TRB.
- Develop a Call for Papers each year (which could be co-sponsored with other committees) and orient TRB staff to our committee’s interests so that we receive and review papers that lend themselves to cohesive sessions.
- Strive to improve long-term paper quality by developing paper review guidance and encouraging our paper review teams to develop consolidated paper feedback, so that final papers reflect committee standards.
- Develop at least one or two TCRP problem statements each year for submittal to TRB.
- Sponsor one committee or “state of the art” session for each Annual Meeting.
- Develop topics for the biennial, mid-year Public Transit Committees Conference.
- Maintain research statements in an electronic database.
- Initiate/expand use of webcasts, e-sessions, e-newsletters, blogs and other technology tools to reach those who cannot attend meetings.
- Actively participate in the TRB electronic research topics database, through a specific subcommittee on research.

3. Increase inter-group liaison by:

- Committee member organizational involvement in ITE, ASCE, AASHTO and APA activities related to Committee interests (for example, public transportation and land
use, transit mitigation measurement, pricing strategies and multi-modal decision-making).

- Committee member involvement as “Friends” of related TRB committees (for example, Bus Transit, Planning Methods, Paratransit, Ridesharing, Statewide Multimodal Planning and Intergovernmental Relations and Policy Processes) for potential joint topics and investigations, as well as preventing overlaps or gaps in topics.

4. Increase Committee communication throughout the year by using/expanding technology -- fax, conference calls, teleconferencing -- as well as encouraging Committee attendance at the annual, mid-year conference of the Planning, Economics, etc., Committees.

V. Performance Assessment

Through the July 2007 membership survey (see Appendix I) and discussion at the Committee’s meetings at the 2007 and 2008 Annual Conferences and the 2007 Mid-Year Conference, the following Strengths; Limitations; Challenges/Threats; and Opportunities were identified and accepted by the Committee.

a. Strengths

- The Committee’s Members and Friends have a broad, cross-cutting focus that transcends public transit’s traditional modal interests and disciplines. Consequently, the Committee can develop solutions and approaches that would not be possible with a narrower focus. However, the Committee’s work requires coordination and cooperation with other TRB committees and organizations to be successful.

- The Committee’s unique role is to focus on research and programs related to planning techniques and implementation of service delivery options. This central role should be continued and expanded in response to the changing environment described in Section III.a. of this Strategic Plan.

- The Committee’s history and recent practice are strongly based on cooperation, collaboration and consultation with other disciplines and committees, some of which were formed from the broader Committee. Thus, the Committee is well positioned to continue and expand an emphasis on multi-modal and intermodal approaches.

- The Committee’s membership must continue to work with representatives from other public transit and modal interests, both within the TRB structure and outside, and to work proactively on creative partnerships, both domestically and internationally, that can expand the Committee’s role and scope.

- The web site and related communications media have enhanced awareness of Committee activities and increased opportunities to attract new Members and Friends.
• The Committee’s role and responsibilities in the TRB structure and research agenda is well established and respected, and the preparation and review of research papers is thriving.

• The subject matter of the Committee’s activities continues to enjoy widespread support and interest among transportation and land use professionals, as well as related public and private sector interests who are involved with public transportation planning and development policies, actions and decisions. Additional information dissemination and research involving topics under the Committee’s broad scope are needed to help shape both future policy and implementation activities and to “make the case” for a strong role for public transit in community development and service delivery.

b. Limitations

• New and continuing uncertainties about the level of research and planning funding over the next three years may, in the short term, inhibit the ability of the Committee to expand much beyond its traditional roles and activities.

• The realities of competing work demands, time, cost and distance inhibit the ability of Committee members to interact and participate in a year-round, ambitious agenda of activities and outreach to potential partner organizations and committees, particularly on an international scale.

• Limited resources may serve to impede additional efforts to broaden new communications approaches, both within the Committee and through outreach to others.

c. Challenges/Threats

• The Committee needs to maintain membership diversity, and to continue to seek active members as the opportunity to add/replace members occurs.

• Development of a balance for Committee activities, between a broad range of interests and the need to develop a more focused agenda, remains a key challenge.

• Achieving more active and timely participation in Committee activities and active recruitment of new members, from a variety of disciplines, to accomplish the Committee’s overall agenda.

• The demand for presentation of research papers far outstrips the supply of rooms and time slots at the annual meeting. This can lead to rejection of papers that could benefit by discussion and exposure at the meeting. New formats and approaches need to be explored to increase the ability of the committee to allow authors to get feedback on their work.
- The impact of potential future funding shortfalls can limit active public sector member participation at committee meetings and on the overall TRB and Committee research agenda and related activities. It is also particularly difficult for committee members representing transit agencies to secure travel funding for committee meetings.

d. Opportunities

- Increasing the use of new technologies and other innovative approaches (mobility manager concept, transportation/land use linkage, new intergovernmental/interagency relationships) to enable transit services to better serve existing and emerging markets.
- Continuing the Committee’s role to identify a future-oriented research agenda and to disseminate results that are useful to practitioners and policy-makers.
- Pending reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU and possible new directions and programs for transportation research and funding.
- As in 2002, when a successful special effort was made to increase membership, resulting in the addition of nine new members, the Committee can use the enthusiasm and fresh ideas of new members as a catalyst to re-initiate old activities and to begin new ones.
- Exploration of new institutional relationships for the committee, both nationally and internationally, to accomplish needed public transportation improvements and services and investigation of innovative development approaches.

IV. Gap Analysis

From the analysis of the 2007 Member Survey and the Strengths, Limitations, Challenges/Threats and Opportunities outlined above, the following gaps in Committee activities by various Constituencies and Service provision were identified. The intent of the Gap Analysis is to identify those constituencies of the Committee’s work who could be better served or more fully involved than at present and strategies to accomplish greater involvement. Also, the Gap Analysis is intended to identify current Committee services that could be improved, expanded, reduced or eliminated, as well as potential new services.

a. Constituencies

In the responses to the 2007 Member Survey, the Committee’s “customers” were defined as public transit agency practitioners and policy makers, the academic community, researchers, federal transportation agencies, TRB, TCRP and planning and development agencies, including MPOs and citizens interested in public transit.

- The Committee’s current (September 2007) membership is predominantly composed of academic members and transportation planning and engineering consultants. Public
transit agency, public planning agency/State DOT staff and representatives of research institutes make up the remainder of the Committee membership. A TRB staff liaison provides a link to the TRB and TCRP programs. Transit policy makers and planners are represented but transit agency operations staff are not represented.

- Increasing public transit agency and planning and development agency representation would be desirable. The addition of a “policy-maker” representative continues to be a low priority, since the outcome of the Committee’s activities is primarily intended to maintain a focus on technical issues and practitioner needs that may influence the direction of policy formulation.

b. Services
In the responses to the Member Survey, expectations of the Committee’s customers were defined as:

1. Information on emerging trends and new ideas;
2. Policy support and objective research with practical, easily implemented recommendations; and
3. Papers, publications and panels at conferences.

c. Accomplishments
In furtherance of the Objectives in the adopted 2003 Strategic Plan, the Committee has accomplished the following:

- Worked closely with other TRB Committees, including participation in TRB Mid-Year meetings, arranging the 2007 mid-year conference in Denver and developing Annual Meeting paper and presentation sessions, Calls for Papers and other proposed research topics.
- Maintained and expanded a centralized paper submission and review process (through the Committee Secretary who is also the Publications Chair), which has increased the quality of accepted papers and provides effective, constructive feedback to paper authors.
- Prepared proposed TCRP research topics (an average of two per year) with at least one project accepted for research (TCRP H-3 -- Incentives to Attract Auto-Users to Transit).
- Continued to work closely with other TRB Committees to develop various “state of the art” panel sessions for the TRB Annual Meeting.
- Participated in planning committees, developed topics and participated in panel sessions at several mid-year specialty conferences, such as LRT and BRT.
- Continued member involvement in the activities of other organizations (like APTA and ITS America) and TRB Committees on both a formal and informal basis. New Committee members will expand ties to these organizations.
• Increased use of alternative means of communication (fax, Internet and E-mail Reflector) and information dissemination to facilitate member communication and to undertake the Committee’s work program.

d. Items Not Addressed
None.

V. Action Plan
The Action Plan that follows will enable the Committee to continue its traditional roles within the structure of the TRB, while endeavoring to accomplish a broader mission in response to the findings and opportunities revealed by the strategic planning process.

a. Core Strategies
• To continue to provide a forum for the advancement and communication of research on emerging public transportation issues and ideas.

• To strengthen the Committee’s role as a catalyst for identifying and promoting public transportation planning and development’s contributions to overall transportation research and policy formulation.

• To encourage and expand opportunities for participation and interaction by the Committee’s members, friends and other interests in the fulfillment of its Mission.

• To develop an outreach and communication program that encourages more widespread awareness of and participation in Committee activities by the broader transportation community, both nationally and internationally.

b. Actions
1. Continue to maintain and expand the diversity of the Committee’s membership to maintain membership by at least one representative of a planning and development agency and a transit operating agency.

2. Continue to develop a research agenda of both “state of the art” and practical topics of importance to the current operation and future development of public transportation for the TRB research topics database. More specifically:

• Prepare an annual set of updated Committee research statements for TRB.

• Continue to improve the number and quality of submitted papers by monitoring and refining the current paper review guidance process, encouraging paper review teams to develop consolidated paper feedback and continue to develop a periodic (annually if possible) Call for Papers, co-sponsored with other TRB committees, where appropriate.
• Continue to develop at least one or two TCRP problem statements each year for submittal to TRB.

• Continue to create opportunities to incorporate the findings of TCRP research projects into TRB Annual Meeting sessions.

• Continue to organize at least one significant policy or research topic panel session for each Annual Meeting, working in partnership with other TRB committees or related organizations where possible.

• Continue to develop potential topics and panel sessions for the specialty conferences. Assist in attempting to revive the Public Transportation Committees’ Summer Meeting on a biennial basis.

3. Increase inter-group liaison:

• Strive for more formal Committee member involvement in ITE, ASCE, AASHTO, APTA and APA as well as similar international organizations related to Committee interests. Formally appoint Committee liaisons to other organizations.

• Continue and expand Committee member involvement as “friends” of related committees for potential joint topics and investigations, and to prevent overlaps or gaps in proposed topics.

4. Continue to expand Committee communication throughout the year by using technology – web page, email reflector, blogs, conference calls, teleconferencing, -- as well as encouraging Committee attendance at the mid-year conference and the Annual Meeting.

VI. Evaluation and Monitoring

The following actions will be taken to ensure the timeliness and usefulness of the adopted Strategic Plan:

• Progress to accomplish the goals and actions identified in the Strategic Plan will be monitored periodically but no less frequently than annually.

• Discussion of Strategic Plan implementation will be a specific agenda item at the Committee’s meeting at the TRB Annual Meeting.

• Dissemination of the Strategic Plan, Survey Analysis and Committee actions that result to all Members and Friends (electronically).

• The Strategic Plan will be formally evaluated, updated and refined every three (3) years, in accordance with TRB Committee requirements.

Conclusion
The Committee reiterates its belief that the Strategic Plan development process has been very useful as a means to evaluate what it has accomplished and to discuss where it should be going over the next three years. The Committee looks forward to the challenges and opportunities outlined in the Strategic Plan, recognizing that accomplishing an ambitious or even modest action agenda can only occur with the dedicated, volunteer support of the Committee’s Members and Friends.

Questions about the proposed Strategic Plan and additional information about the Committee should be directed to the Chair. A copy of the current Committee Roster is also attached (see Appendix II).

APPENDIX I

Public Transportation Planning and Development Committee (AP025)

Strategic Plan Development Survey

Summary Analysis of Survey Results – July 2007

**Background:** The Committee on Public Transportation Planning and Development is undertaking a strategic planning process, leading to the development of an updated, three-year Strategic Plan by January 2008. The Strategic Plan will set the future direction for the Committee, within the framework of the Public Transportation Section and Transportation Research Board (TRB) Strategic Plans.

As part of the Plan development process, the Strategic Plan Development Survey was emailed and posted on the Committee’s web site from February to April 15, 2007, seeking Member and Friend views about current and prospective Committee activities, as well as potential opportunities and challenges over the next three years. A total of 34 Committee Members (29) and Friends (5) were eligible to receive the survey as of April 2007, and 13 surveys were completed and returned, including those completed during the annual committee meeting.

**Survey Analysis:**
1. Are you: a Committee Member or a Friend of the Committee. The response rate of 13 of 34 total Committee Members and Friends was 38.2%.

2. (a) Why did you originally become active in the Committee?
   (b) What were your expectations?
   a. Predominant responses: Interested in interacting with peers in the field who have similar work and experience interests, and keeping abreast of current developments, “best practices” and “lessons learned” related to setting policies that encourage transit planning concepts that help to link public transit and land use planning perspectives.
   Other responses: Making a contribution toward advancement and dissemination of practical and emerging public transit research, policy planning and development issues; advancing the role, profile and state of practice of public transit.
   b. Predominant responses: The Committee should foster more discussion on coordination between transportation and land use planning, including applied research on transit issues that translate real world transit planning problems to research subjects, while seeking to resolve public transit policy and technical issues.
   Other responses: Partnerships between transit agency and academic communities should be encouraged, providing the opportunity to meet colleagues and build a network of other transportation professionals. Better convey concepts and ideas to the public and elected officials that result in more successful, well-used and cost-effective transit projects that better serves the public. Support efforts that improve community planning and that foster a multi-modal transportation system.

3. Have your expectations been met, exceeded or not met? (No answer: from 2 new members and two friends) Why or How?
   Positive: Very good committee with quality members who are experienced and responsive. Involvement in paper reviews, attending Annual Meeting sessions, committee meetings/discussion. Need to develop an ambitious strategic plan and a good conference in Denver.
   Concerns: Committee seems to have lost energy and purpose. Meetings emphasize process rather than exchanging ideas about public transit issues or information sharing. Committee appears to have trouble keeping in touch with other TRB committees that have over-lapping interests (a common issue for all TRB committees).
   Other: Too soon to tell; difficult to measure since we only meet once a year.

4. (a) Who are the “customers” of the Committee’s work?
   (b) What do they require of us now and in the future?
   a. Predominant responses: TRB and Public Transportation Committee; public transit agency practitioners, academic researchers and institutions; the transit industry; other professionals, policy makers and citizens interested in public transit; government agencies (and staff) that deal with public transit (including
oversight and finance); and local, state and national transportation funding
decision-makers.

**Other responses:** MPOs and local municipalities; planning and development
agencies; consultants, students, and elected and appointed officials; TRB Annual
Meeting participants, readers of Committee’s papers; the traveling public; and,
indirectly, planners and developers.

b. **Predominant responses:** Leadership in program development, identification
and dissemination of best practices and promising new ideas; developing good,
solid, credible, objective and useful information for decision-makers to improve
public transportation services and the surrounding environment, assessing future
industry needs and continuing to analyze emerging issues, linkages to other
subject areas (such as land use, congestion pricing, integration of traffic
engineering and parking management) and development of enhanced planning
and development tools.

**Other responses:** Assistance in asking pertinent questions related to broadening
understanding of public transit and improving it. Frame new research, develop
Calls for Papers and develop workshops, sessions and conferences. Inform and
disseminate information that the Committee produces to help develop a well-used
and cost-effective transportation system, with information that helps to create
more livable developments integrated with a cost-effective transportation system
(with less impact on greenhouse gas emissions). Recommend policies supporting
the merits of multi-modal planning concepts and improved land use/transportation
decisions. Assess strategies that promote public/private partnerships to provide,
manage and implement transit service and capital expansions.

5. **What are three (3) major issues or topics that should affect public transportation
in the next three years?**

1. **Land Use/Transportation Linkage**

**Predominant responses:** Assess emerging market issues that will affect future of
transit (growing regional decentralization, immigration, aging population, climate
change, sustainability, and energy supply). Seek to better influence the land
use/transportation connection to support a sustainable, multi-modal transportation
system. Determine how to effectively integrate public transit into
development/redevelopment at the start of any planning process, including
complementary land use policies (in-fill, urban development, zoning, parking
space requirements for housing development).

**Other responses:** Communicate with decision-makers to show the need for well-
planned, integrated transit to reduce auto use and its predicted effects on global
warming. Increase emphasis on pricing and auto restrictions rather than continued
congestion relief projects. Develop new concepts and approaches for public
transit planning that build upon changes in urban planning practice (smart growth,
integrated regional land use/transportation planning, sustainable transportation,
TOD and healthy cities). Advocate transit-friendly investments in other modes,
like station cars, intermodal facilities, multi-modal electronic payment methods,
and incremental expansion of transit into urbanizing areas or the periphery of
existing urban areas. Coordinate with MPOs and regional planning groups on
streamlining the transit planning process for mega project proposals. Assess ADA regulatory changes and impacts on transit service operations.

2. **New Technologies**

Promote leveraging of ITS operations data for transit performance measure and service change improvements. Explore new transit planning methodologies that build on technological developments (data from automatic passenger counters (APC) and automatic vehicle locators (AVL), mainstreaming GIS and new, flexible service concepts made possible by ITS). Integrate parking management with public transit strategic plans.

3. **Funding Needs**

Seek ways to increase the level of transit funding (such as public/private partnerships), including financing related to land use/planning decisions and increased ridership that results from higher gasoline prices. Support ways to meaningfully tie small and medium-sized transit operating agencies into the MPO planning process, given minimal available resources. Support funding for low-cost operational strategies that can increase transit service and ridership, and investigate non-traditional modes and land use/development linkage. Seek sustainable transit funding in the context of state/national budget deficits and projected decreases in the Highway Trust Fund account.

6. **What are your three (3) top goals for Committee activities over the next three years?**

1. **Research Agenda:** Promote practical transit research and training programs that address the future of the industry. Identify research needs; review and support innovative land use/planning approaches, practices and products and incorporate them into current practice and methodology development.

   **Specific research proposals:** (1) Develop innovative practices and partnerships, particularly those that maximize new information technology and cost-effective system management; (2) integrate public transit planning with the traffic management and parking demand management processes; (3) promote universal benefits and cost-effectiveness of BRT (which is flexible and adaptable); (4) disseminate information on reducing auto use, greenhouse gas emissions and the effects of climate change; and (5) expand the mobility manager concept to provide more flexible and adaptable paratransit service for changing local/regional travel needs of the elderly and those with disabilities.

2. **Committee-Related Actions:** Maintain Committee’s role as facilitator, reviewer and disseminator of research in the field that promotes the role of public transit planning and development. Strive for more substantive committee discussion and information sharing on emerging trends affecting transit planning during meetings and throughout the year. Build network of transportation professionals with interest in the field; undertake outreach to gain new Friends and new active Members, ensuring that all categories are well-represented (extending discussion and committee activities beyond the U.S.). Continue striving for broader member participation in developing research problem statements (including link to TCRP). Continue active paper program and the mid-year conference. Strive for more space and sessions at meetings.
3. **TRB-Related Actions:** Maintain Committee’s role as an active presence within TRB, fostering more interaction on the committee’s work within TRB, other organizations and the public involved with or concerned about transit. More interaction, programs, co-sponsorship or special topic conferences with other TRB committees or public transit groups (like APTA). Continue participation in summer joint meetings and in co-sponsored Annual Meeting sessions.

7. What are the three (3) top challenges facing the Committee over the next three years?

1. **Promoting an Outreach Agenda:** The Committee needs to: (1) encourage more public transit and reduction of auto use by educating decision-makers/media/the public about the importance and need for public transit for the long-term future and the benefits of multi-modal planning concepts; (2) promote regional planning and coordinated comprehensive planning by transit agencies and municipalities to help determine a cost effective transit network; (3) identify research on cost-efficiency improvements in service provision; (4) explore how to effectively and visibly tie public transit planning and development into the current national dialogue and interest in the environment and health; (5) strengthen regional/local planning guidelines and consistency requirements. More funding will be needed for implementation of pilot or test case projects that demonstrate the benefits of innovative strategies.

2. **Committee-Related Actions; Internal:** Highest priority is to ensure a diverse and active membership, attracting and retaining members, (increasing the number of women members and maintaining the proportion of public transit agency staff in the face of potential funding and time constraints). Resources are needed to accomplish the Committee’s agenda. Establish clear goals and strategies. Develop good papers and sessions for TRB.

3. **Committee-Related Actions; External:** Information/knowledge sharing with more transit and planning agencies (try to benefit more than just TRB participants and researchers). Work with other TRB committees and with groups outside TRB (local/foreign). Balance needs of practitioners and researchers with respect to planning tools. Encourage Committee members to assist in adding proven new technologies that are tied into methods that increase public transit use (for existing and new systems).

8. What are the three (3) top opportunities facing the Committee’s work over the next three years?

1. **Potential Research Agenda:** (1) Emerging and maturing of advanced technologies (ITS and GIS) that are expanding the availability of data for planning purposes and the range of service delivery options that can be planned; (2) growing sensitivity to issues of climate change, sustainability and energy supply among the public, policy makers and government agencies, which highlight the inter-relationships of land use/transportation and the role of public transit; (3) continuing problems stemming from travel demand increases with increasing roadway congestion, which could lead to greater interest in public transit and planning; (4) greater interest in decreasing reliance on imported oil,
which should lead to increased interest in public transit and planning; and (5) new
technologies and the impact on provision of flexible services, passenger
convenience, and public information.

2. **Committee-External:** Get out front on key issues facing public transit and
planning, and promote research through the TRB database, University Research
Centers and international exchanges. Seek improved techniques to manage, recall
and evaluate information through technology to enhance public transit planning
and research. Consider application of various ITS approaches to existing transit
systems and evaluate outcomes related to improved efficiency, cost, reliability
and overall operations. Through the Internet, disseminate success stories about
planning and transit operations and suggest further research into possible potential
improvements. Present TRB applied research at APTA and related conferences.

3. **Committee-Internal:** Add new members to contribute new ideas, concepts,
techniques and innovations. Encourage TCRP Problem Statement and research
panel participation. Undertake research/papers on key topics facing the transit
industry. Expand use of technology to fulfill the Committee’s agenda. Make
Denver mid-year conference an annual or bi-annual activity. Update Committee’s
Strategic Plan.

9. What two (2) activities would you like to see the Committee doing that it is not
doing now?

1. **Internal:** Distribute Committee Membership Roster. Prepare an electronic
newsletter. Provide more web site and Internet information. Hold more substantive,
discussions/roundtables at Annual Meetings. Make more active use of Committee’s
web resources by Members and Friends.

2. **External:** Promote specialty conferences, peer exchanges and retreats. Consider
and develop ways to better inform others about the Committee’s work (other
committees, MPOs, decision-makers, the media). Develop, involve, promote and
participate in joint programs and conferences with other, related organizations.
Consider how the Committee’s interests and issues can be introduced to college
students early in their programs.

10. Please rank the priority of the following activities from (1) through (n).

(Note: Rank and votes received are shown)
First (tie): Annual Conference Committee meeting; Paper Review; Research
Identification and Sponsorship and Panel Sessions at the TRB
Annual Meeting (5 votes each)
Fifth (tie): Coordination with other TRB Committees and Specialty
Conferences (4 votes each)
Seventh: Mid Year Conference on Selective Topics (3 votes)
Eighth: Committee Newsletter (2 votes)
Other: None

11. (a) What areas/topics do you feel are the responsibility of the Committee?
(b) Do they overlap with the efforts of other committees, and if so, how?
a. Develop overarching public transit issues not covered by other committees, including: (1) innovative transit planning applications and case studies, dissemination of information on comprehensive planning issues related to transit for a 20 year or longer horizon; (2) coordinated land use and transportation planning; (3) encouraging best practices in the transit planning process, analytical methods and performance measures; and (4) focusing on TOD and transit design as it influences user demand, surrounding land use patterns and ease of expansion. Prepare paper reviews and session development proposals and promote new research, including high priority research needs.

b. Due to the Committee’s broad focus, some degree of overlap is present (as it is with at least half of the Public Transportation Group and most committees in the Social, Economic and Cultural Issues section). There is also overlap in areas related to more detailed travel demand forecasting and simulation methodologies (but this overlap should be viewed as an advantage rather than a problem). More coordination is needed to resolve duplication and to clarify roles.

12. (a) Does the Committee membership reflect the necessary mix of stakeholders and professionals to fulfill its mission, goals and objectives? Yes 8 No 2

No Answer 3 (new members)

(b) Who is over represented or under represented?
Need to maintain or add more transit agency representatives (5 responses). Academics and consultants are somewhat over-represented (however, academics add insight and are attuned to new concepts of effective land use and transit). Consider more women, minorities, MPO and State DOT representatives, and perhaps add municipal government representatives.

13. (a) Do you use the Internet for planning information or other uses? Yes 13 No 0

(b) How do you believe the Committee could help to expand use of the Internet for planning-related purposes?
There is a great opportunity to help organize a user-friendly and quality content Internet framework. Make available on the web various papers presented at TRB conferences for those unable to attend or for those seeking information about new or developing concepts related to planning and transit applications. Use of the Committee member reflector and website tools exist, but we need to think how to use them more extensively. The Internet is already well-used for planning purposes, but more links are needed with broader resources. Publish the Committee newsletter on line. Use and grow the list serve.

14. Frequency of Committee Activities Involvement. In the past three years:
(a) How many TRB Annual meetings have you attended: 3 (10); 2 (2); 1 (1)
(b) How many mid-year meetings have you attended: 3 (3); 2 (0); 1 (2); 0 (7); N/A (1)
(c) How many times have you assisted in paper reviews: 3 (12); 0 (1)
(d) Prepared a paper: 3 (1); 1 (2); 0 (9); N/A (1)
(e) Presented or published a paper: 3 (1); 1 (2); 0 (9); N/A (1)

Other (specify): Participated in Strategic Plan and Survey analysis; TCRP panel member for four studies; membership on another TRB committee

15. Any other comments or ideas not covered above?

(1) Committee should incorporate the need to reduce auto use because of the negative effects; (2) put approved papers on the web; (3) add international perspective on best practices and intermodal planning; (4) increase the Committee’s role in TCRP problem statements to reflect planning issues.