

**NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
DRAFT AGENDA – ANNUAL COMMITTEE MEETING**

Wednesday, January 14, 2015, 8:00 A.M. – 11:59 A. M.

Marriott Marquis Washington, Chinatown (M3) - Check program to confirm location

Note: Actual schedule will vary based on availability of presenters / discussants

1. Introductions and Review of Agenda (5 minutes)
 2. Review of last year's activities (30 minutes)
 - Paper Reviews (Hemily)
 - Reminder: *How to Write a Successful Paper for TRB Public Transportation Planning Committee* (attached, also available on AP025 Web Site: <http://www4.uwm.edu/cuts/trb/index.html>)
 - Research Sub-Committee (Conklin)
 3. Committee Research Coordinators Council (Conklin 5 minutes)
 4. PT Young Members Sub-Committee (5 Minutes)
 5. Reports from TRB, TRB Public Transportation Group, TCRP (20 minutes)
 6. Report of FTA Planning Activities (Jeff Price, Planning Office, FTA) (20 minutes)
 7. Report on FHWA / Volpe Center Research (Bill Lyons, Volpe) (15 minutes)
- Transportation Planning for Healthy Communities
http://www.planning.dot.gov/healthy_communities_desc.asp
- Phase 1: "Metropolitan Transportation Planning for Healthy Communities"
 - Phase 2: "Statewide Transportation Planning for Healthy Communities," (2014), companion to:
 - Phase 3: we are beginning research of data, performance measures, and technical tools available to incorporate comprehensive public health goals within transportation planning processes
- Economic Development in Transportation Planning
"A Multimodal Approach to Ecoic Development in the Metropolitan Area Transportation Planning Process," (2014) http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/EconDevelopmentFinal_8-11-14.pdf
- Transportation Planning for Megaregions :
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Transportation Planning for Megaregions," (2014). To be rolled out at TRB and posted on the FHWA megaregions web-site at:
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/megaregions/>
"The Role of Regional Planning Organizations in Transportation Planning Across Boundaries," (2014)
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/megaregions/reports/regional_planning_organizations/index.cfm

09:40 (brief break)

9.50 Committee Meeting resumes

8. Reports from Other Organizations (15 minutes)

- UITP: Sylvain Haon, Director of Knowledge and Membership Services
- World Transit Research on-line (Graham Currie, Monash University)

9. Discussion of Challenges and Future Activities (60 Minutes)

- Challenges
- Follow-up to Panel Discussion on (Ir)Relevant Research
- Backstopping What We Have Learned (Seminal Studies / Papers)
- Exemplary Practices
- Partnerships with Other Organizations (e.g APTA, UITP, APA, Rail-Volution)?
- New Themes to Grapple With:
 - Transit and Shared-Use Mobility
 - Use of Transit ITS Data for Planning
 - Public Transportation Planning in Emerging Countries ?
 - (Impact of Vehicle Automation on PT Planning)

10. Other Potential Research Topics (10 minutes)

11. Research / Reports / Events of Interest (10 minutes)

- Other Reports on current research and issues of interest

11:25 End of formal meeting

11:30 Subcommittee on AP025 Paper Reviews - Brainstorming on Potential Initiatives

11:50 End of Sub-Committee Meeting

AP025 SPONSORED AND CO-SPONSORED SESSIONS

COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 8:00AM-12:00PM	Public Transportation Planning and Development Committee Brendon Hemily, Hemily and Associates, presiding	Marriott Marquis, Chinatown (M3)	AP025
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AP025 SESSIONS

Monday 10:15AM-12:00PM	Session 286 The Two Worlds of Transit Planning Practice and of Academic Research: Growing Gulf or Possible Bridges? Lectern Session, Panel Discussion	Convention Center, 144B	AP025
Monday 10:45AM-12:30PM	Session 320 Factors Affecting Transit Mode Choice and Ridership Poster Session	Convention Center, Hall E	AP025
Monday 10:45AM-12:30PM	Session 321 Transit Ridership Forecasting Methodologies Poster Session	Convention Center, Hall E	AP025
Monday 10:45AM-12:30PM	Session 322 Analytic Tools for Transit Service Planning or Analyzing Network Flows and Connectivity Poster Session	Convention Center, Hall E	AP025
Monday 10:45AM-12:30PM	Session 323 Equity Analysis of Transit Service Poster Session	Convention Center, Hall E	AP025
Tuesday 8:00AM-9:45AM	Session 514 Public Transportation Planning and Development: Food for Thought on Networks Design, Accessibility, and Investment Policy Lectern Session	Convention Center, 149	AP025

CO-SPONSORED SESSIONS:

Monday 8:00AM-9:45AM	Session 223 Transformative Applications of Transit Data Catherine Theresa Lawson, State University of New York, Albany, presiding Lectern Session	Convention Center, 149	
Tuesday 2:00PM-3:45PM	Session 651 Transformative Transit Data Research and Applications Catherine Theresa Lawson, State University of New York, Albany, presiding Poster Session	Convention Center, Hall E	

How to write a successful paper for the TRB Public Transportation Planning and Development Committee (AP025): Experience from the Paper Review Process

Each year the Public Transportation Planning and Development Committee receives a large number of papers to review for possible presentation and publication by the Transportation Research Board (TRB). These papers range from highly theoretical to very practical. It is refreshing to see that there are a lot of people interested in public transport and want to share the results of their work with others.

We will attempt to describe how the review process occurs and some problems that we encounter. The purpose of this is to help authors understand how their papers will be handled and to lead to better documentation of research results that can aid the profession and practice of transit planning.

Reviewer Responsibilities

Paper reviews require a commitment of time and we are very grateful that people are willing to help. Good reviews help the profession and are a good way for reviewers to keep up with the latest developments in their field.

TRB provides guidance for reviewers at:

<http://pressamp.trb.org/submissions/ReviewerMenu.asp?event=756&view=ri>

These are useful to look at to help you do a good review

Papers are assigned to reviewers in middle August. There is roughly one month to collect the reviews and to make decisions on the papers, which is an extremely tight schedule. If you are assigned a review and do not feel you can do the review for whatever reason, let the review chair know as soon as possible. By promptly letting us know, the paper can be reassigned to someone else. Every attempt is made to match reviewers to papers, but it can be difficult. Each paper has a mix of reviewers, some new and some very experienced. After the program is finalized, copies of all reviews are shared with the authors and reviewers. This can be a good way to compare your review with others.

A good review should critically examine the good and bad points of the paper and provide thoughtful comments that can be used by the authors to revise the paper and/or their research. Of course there should be a match between the ratings and the comments. It is confusing to the paper chair and to the author if the comments don't match the ratings (the comments are highly critical but the paper is rated 'excellent' for example). Even worse are no comments by the reviewers. What should the author do to fix the paper?

The Review Process

Each paper must receive a minimum of 3 reviews, and is assigned to at least 4 reviewers. The committee makes recommendations to TRB for acceptance, revision or rejection. Reviewers shouldn't be from the same agency as authors and it is a semi-blind review in that the authors will not know who reviewed their paper, but the reviewers do see the authors' names.. Typically about one half or so of the papers submitted are recommended for presentation and only 22% (as set by TRB) of papers submitted for publication can be

recommended for publication. The inside cover of TRB's Transportation Research Record journal gives information about the process used to select papers as well.

The committee takes the process of review extremely seriously. We try to match the papers received to the specific interests and skills of the committee members and friends who are assigned reviews. Matching papers one-by-one to the interests and skills of the individual reviewers makes it more interesting to reviewers, and thereby helps to maximize the number of reviews that actually get done. Time spent on one-to-one personal matching also serves to have as many good and credible reviews as possible in order to maximize the objectivity of the evaluation. The process, from receipt of papers, to assignment, to reviews, to decision, must take place in just over a single month. TRB has strict procedures and deadlines for decisions and it is vital to get a good set of credible reviews for each paper.

The results of the paper reviews can be difficult to deal with. Roughly one third of the papers are clearly not good enough and easy to eliminate, while typically a bit less than a third receive good reviews leading to obvious acceptance. The papers that fall in the middle area represent a significant challenge by receiving mixed reviews and scores, sometimes with diametrically opposite opinions from different respected reviewers; these papers make for difficult decisions.

To deal with these difficult papers, the following factors are taken into consideration:

- Scores both overall weighted score and score specifically for presentations, (which the authors do not see),
- Reviewers, including the number of reviewers, knowledge of the reviewers in terms of their skills, interests, and known biases, and the quality of what they have provided in the past,
- Comments from the reviewers, including those comments that authors see and those that they don't,
- Divergence between comments and scores (more common than one would think),
- The paper review chair's personal judgment on the degree of innovation of the paper topic or technique,
- The topic itself, in terms of its interest to the committee, and possible value to include, despite mixed scores and reviews, etc.

All this becomes difficult because papers have been trending away from the balance that we traditionally have had between analytic and practitioner-oriented papers. The committee has needed to draw on a wider set of reviewers from different backgrounds in order to get enough reviews to make decisions.

Some Common Problems

Over time, we have observed issues that often come up in the review process that affect the paper outcome. Based on that experience, we have identified some common problems and compiled some hints for better papers that can be used when conducting your research and reporting the results.

Literature review

All research reviewed by the committee needs a good literature review. Failure to do this is usually a fatal flaw. At a minimum consult past work published and/or presented by TRB and TCRP before setting off. Each is easy to search. They will lead you to other material that will help you in your research. Copies of TRB publications are usually available at universities affiliated with TRB, and government agencies that oversee transportation such as a Ministry of Transport or state Department of Transportation. Individual papers published in the TRR are accessible online to authors of papers being prepared for consideration for presentation and/or publication by TRB. New research should build on the insights and experience of past work. Do not look only at material that appears on the internet. Useful work has been done pre-internet; an effort should be made to go back to look to see if there has been something relevant to your research.

Only a case study ("show and tell")

We can learn a lot from a good case study of how a service or procedure has been implemented, but a paper about it should be more than just a description of what you did. Look for lessons learned from your case study that can be applied to other places, look for techniques that can be generalized, and make the paper useful to people in other places that may have similar problems.

Big model, little application

Theoretical work to optimize such things as network design of nodes and links, route spacing, stop location, feeder services and the like will use complex models that take multiple pages and equations to explain. Bear in mind that this work can be a challenge to some reviewers and take special effort to explain the model assumptions and constraints in simple terms. It is especially important to have a realistic example to illustrate how the model works. It is much better to use a real location with larger data to aid in understanding how the model can work in complex situations. If you wish merely to present the theory behind the model, perhaps TRB Committee AP025 is not the proper venue for your work.

Jargon and acronyms

When we do research we often use shortcuts internally to describe parts of our work. The problem is that the reviewers of the paper don't know the terms that you use. Check your paper to make sure that you don't overdo shortcut terms and properly define them in both the abstract and the paper.

Confusing paper organization

Be clear how your paper is organized and use headings extensively to lead the reader through the paper. Although each paper is unique and they may require a different organization, most papers tend to follow the following sequence:

- Describe the problem,
- State your objectives,
- Review past work and the literature,

- Describe your approach and assumptions,
- Describe the data used,
- Discuss the results and limitations, and
- Draw conclusions.

Conclusions are too broad

Be very careful that your conclusions are fully supported by your work and avoid speculation as to why the results are what they are. Papers get poor reviews when the authors take their results and speculate too far into what the research means. Stick to the facts that the research demonstrates. Make sure the conclusions you draw are backed up by the actual analysis and not speculation. Check the title of the paper and the abstract to be sure that they are not too general and accurately reflect what you actually did.

Language issues

The committee receives papers from throughout the world. This is great in that we can learn much from people in different situations. However, authors need to bear in mind that the language used by TRB is English and a simple translation can lead to an awkward presentation. This can get in the way of a review as it can take considerable effort to understand what has been done. It is very useful to have a native speaker of English and/or technical editor to look at the paper to clarify the language.

Ridership and level of service; Which is cause and which is effect?

Sometimes research will use data on users, transit service and the community to find underlying factors that affect transit usage. This may be done using a variety of approaches. This research typically shows a strong relationship between ridership and level of service. Thus it is suggested that by increasing the level of service, more ridership will result. The problem with this conclusion is that transit level of service is typically set to accommodate the demand for the service; it is an effect of ridership, not its cause. If you are doing any statistical analysis or model fitting, be sure that the factors you include are truly causal. It helps to talk about your work with transit agency planning staff to avoid such problems.

Multiple papers, single topic

Sometimes the committee sees multiple papers from the same project, sometimes in the very same year. The first paper is “An approach to ... based on a review of the literature”, the next paper is “Results from ...”, then another paper “Further results from...”, etc. In some cases authors have duplicated substantial portions of previous papers into their next paper. It is recognized that for some people, such as academics, a long list of publications is desirable. Nonetheless paper reviewers can be skeptical of this tactic. Make sure that each paper makes a new contribution to the state of the art and practice.

The mode share myth

Often papers begin by quoting some general statistics about the role of transit in a community, that it is “only X% of the trips”. This is usually is a meaningless number that

depends on what one chooses for the denominator. X% of what? All trips at all times even in areas with no transit services? It affects the credibility of the research and usually adds nothing to the paper. People who conduct transit research need to understand that when transit service is targeted to specific areas and/or user groups, mode shares can be high. What are needed is good transit planning strategies to make usage even higher in specific markets and for specific market segments.