

Research Advisory Committee (RAC) Leadership Teleconference
Thursday, March 13, 2025
2:00 – 3:00 pm, EDT
Meeting Notes

Attending: denoted with ✓

	Cameron Kergaye, Chair		Rebecca Ridenour - VC/R4 & VoR Co- Chair		Ex Officio
✓	Cindy Smith RAC / VC		Task Force Co- Chair		Tim Klein US DOT OST
✓	Brian Wall – Chair R1		Sharon Hawkins - Admin Co-Chair	✓	Abdul Zineddin -FHWA
✓	Tyson Rupnow – Chair R2 /Admin Co-Chair		Vacant - C&C Co- chair		Craig Thor - FHWA
	Jen Harper – Chair R3	✓	Joe Horton - PM&Q Co-chair		Joey Hartmann- FHWA
✓	Kevin Pete – Chair R4	✓	Amanda Laib - PM&Q Co-chair	✓	Heather Shelsta FHWA
✓	Glenn Page - AASHTO		Jenni Hosey - VoR Co-Chair	✓	Connie Tang - FHWA
	Monique Evans TRB/CRP – RAC Secretary			✓	Raju Mooney - FHWA
✓	Giri Venkateela VC/R1				Tricia Sergeson - FHWA
	Curtis Bradley -VC/R2; C&C Co-chair			✓	Lotse Townsend - FHWA
✓	Vicky Fout -VC/R3			✓	Waseem Dekelbab – TRB/NCHRP
✓	Evelyn Bromberg – WisDOT			✓	Dave Jared – TRB/NCHRP
✓	Catherine Walker – MnDOT			✓	Deborah Irvin – TRB/NCHRP
				✓	Victoria Sheehan – TRB/NCHRP

Additions to the agenda

None

Notes from the previous meeting

February meeting notes were approved.

AASHTO Report – Glenn Page

Meetings

- Upcoming meetings – Spring Meeting May 12-15, Hartford CT.
- AASHTO listing all upcoming meetings on a single website under the meetings tab on the AASHTO website.
- 2025 meetings schedule being listed here [AASHTO Meetings and Member Services - Meetings/Events Calendar](#).
- RAC 2025 meeting site will go active shortly.
- Meeting planner has sent out link for hotel reservations..... start making those.
- 2026 RAC meeting – limited availability on dates and locations requested in New Jersey. Need to consider other locations in Region 1.

Legislative

- Surface Transportation reauthorization mark-up in the house will start this summer. As such, AASHTO is moving up its timeline for completion of Council white papers and completion of its position paper, from November 2025 to May 2025. At the AASHTO Spring meeting the AASHTO TPF and Board of Directors will finalize the organization's position paper for reauthorization.
- AASHTO staff continue to work with other agencies and evaluate the Executives Orders impacts on committees/programs.

Other

- AASHTO/NCHRP staff continue to meet in a series of meetings to map/discuss AASHTO/NCHRP process to identify opportunities for improvements.
- No additional information on AASHTO IT staffing. Some technology initiatives remain on hold. More information coming.
- Continuing website updates – slow but making progress, still lots to go.
- Continuing adding new and updated content to new sites.
- Continuing membership rosters updates – RAC done getting close with others.
- AASHTO continues to identify unfilled committee chair and vice chair positions.

TRB Report –Waseem Dekelbab

- Waseem acknowledged a technical issue in the NCHRP ballot, where a problem statements were mistakenly left out, but the issue has since been corrected.
- He encouraged attendees to reach out if they continue to face difficulties with the ballot.
- Contrary to earlier reports, no NCHRP projects have been officially canceled. Instead, affected projects are under a “stop work order,” not termination.
- The NAS contracts office extended the stop work orders for another 60 days while they explore options and await clearer direction.

- Some state DOTs have requested a list of canceled projects, but Waseem clarified that there isn't one since none have been formally canceled.
- Further discussions with AASHTO are planned, particularly at the April 9 AASHTO R&I meeting, to determine next steps.
- He emphasized that NCHRP cannot unilaterally cancel projects—any such decisions must go through a formal process involving:
 - The oversight committee
 - AASHTO R&I
 - Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
 - The National Academies
- Waseem expressed concern about misconceptions that he or his team canceled projects or removed problem statements. He asked for support in clarifying that they manage the program but do not make such decisions independently.

OSTR- Tim Klein

No report.

FHWA Report – Raju Mooney

General Update:

- Travel and some speaking events have been paused for FHWA staff.

Staffing Updates:

- Heather Shelsta is the new Director of Turner Fairbank's Office of Research Services (HRRS). Heather is a long time FHWA employee. Previously, she was the Chief of the Talent Development Division, within the Office of Human Resources. Prior to that, Heather was the Director for Office of Resource Management at TFHRC.

Conferences, Meetings, and Research Updates

- Smartphone Travel Incentives Final Report – Report FHWA-HOP-24-078. FHWA has issued the final report for Smartphone Travel Incentives Study, with a focus on nudges and incentives. This study was designed to encourage drivers to reveal "what it would take" to convince them to change their travel decisions (<https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop24078/fhwahop24078.pdf>).
- **Pedestrian Realistic Artificial Data solicitation posted:** The solicitation for pedestrian realistic artificial data has been posted in sam.gov. The objective of this research is to determine availability of pedestrian counts, data gaps for pedestrian research to develop a realistic artificial dataset or RAD of pedestrian volume for different roadway types. The solicitation will also be used to develop use cases showing the use of pedestrian count RADs and promote the product to wide range of stakeholders as a tool for research, planning and operation of pedestrian facility.

Proposals are due April 7
(<https://sam.gov/opp/daaec024d7144810b7c22d84eb184790/view>).

- **Sharing TFHRC Research Products with Stakeholders** – FHWA staff conducted two national webinars in February to present foundational FHWA research and development of a suite of mechanist-based performance testing methods, indices, and analysis tools to assist State DOTs, mixture designers, and material producers with characterizing asphalt pavement cracking and rutting. The test methods were adopted by AASHTO as standards.

Region Chairs/Vice-Chairs Updates & Issues

AASHTO Region 1 – Brian Wall

- The regional meeting was held the first week of March. The main topic of discussion was the NCHRP ballot. The region also discussed the process for identifying a new regional chair and new secretary for the next 2 years. Nominations will be taken at the next regional meeting, followed by a vote and commencement of duties on July 1.
- The regional consortium is activated. The first meeting will be held in Princeton, NJ, in June 2025.
- The date and location of the 2026 RAC Summer Meeting in Region 1 are TBD; part of the consideration is the World Cup.

AASHTO Region 2 -Tyson Rupnow

- A Region 2 meeting is pending, and a meeting of the Southeast Transportation Consortium (STC) is scheduled for April 15-17 in Auburn, AL.
- A tri-state peer exchange is pending for Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia DOTs. Tyson is to discuss the potential topic with them on March 14.
- The three most recent STC projects are all under contract now, and an update on them is to be provided at the next Region 2 meeting.
- Region 2's leadership selection cycles are slightly off due to filling a vacant regional chair position. This is to be discussed further with RAC leadership.

AASHTO Region 3 – Vicky Fout

- Region 3 has three individuals who are looking for mentors: Heidi Spangler (MI), Michelle Lucas (OH), and Jennifer Spriggs (OH).
- If anyone is willing to mentor any (or all) of these individuals, please contact Vicky Fout. The two Ohio DOT staff are willing to be mentored together.

AASHTO Region 4 – Kevin Pete

- The next Region 4 meeting is March 20.
- The 2025 summer meeting agenda is coming together. The registration will have two separate fees: one for the meeting and another for anyone wanting to

participate in a local bus tour. The estimated cost for the tour is \$30. There is also a in/near hotel alternative outing being planned.

- For the View from the Top session, the panel coordinator has only received confirmation from Kevin Marshia (Yes); other responses: Alsadair Cain (maybe), Joey Hartman (maybe), Joel Jundt (no response), and Victoria Sheehan (no response). Those not responding “Yes” may still be determining their ability to travel.

Task Force Updates:

Administration –Sharin Hawkins & Tyson Rupnow

This task force will recommend administrative policy to the RAC Leadership Board, and identify, investigate, and manage RAC administrative matters as directed by the RAC Leadership Board.

- Administration TF met recently and agreed that much of this TF’s purview depends on any restructuring of the RAC TF’s.
- This TF is aware that RAC 101 material needs updating and that there is a need to review the various RAC guides and documents for updating.
- The future activities of this TF are TBD after the summer RAC meeting.
- A contract with Applied Research Associates (ARA) for Ahead of the Curve training has been signed.

Coordination and Collaboration- Curtis Bradley

Actively support, monitor, and develop methods, practices, and tools that allow for better coordination and collaboration of research efforts.

No update provided.

Program Management and Quality – Joe Horton/ Amanda Laib

This task force will actively monitor, support and encourage methods and practices designed to improve the management and quality of transportation research programs and projects.

- PM&Q TF met on March 13. The main focus of the meeting was preparation for the RAC summer meeting. A number of PM&Q items will be on the summer meeting agenda, and PM&Q is working on what will be presented. PM&Q is pursuing a session on TPF-related business.
- For the summer meeting, PM&Q would like more information from agency leadership on how the executive orders and changes to federal funding will impact TRB, FHWA, and SP&R funding.

Value of Research – Jenni Hosey/Rebecca Ridenour

This task force will actively monitor, support, and encourage methods and practices designed to demonstrate the value of transportation research.

- **High-Value Research (HVR) Submittals**
 - Twelve (12) projects have been submitted to HVR thus far. The submittal deadline is March 31 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern.

Other:

- Cindy Smith thanked everyone for their participation and leadership.

Adjourn:

- Next meeting: May 8, 2025.