

PURPOSES AND DUTIES OF THE TRB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The TRB Executive Committee is the senior policy body of TRB, composed of approximately 25 members appointed by the Chairman of the National Research Council (NRC). These members are selected so as to provide balanced representation of transportation modes, academic disciplines, private and public sectors, levels of government, geographical regions, and other relevant factors. Members are appointed for a term of three years and may be reappointed for one term. In addition, approximately 20 *ex officio* members serve on the Executive Committee; these members have no vote but otherwise participate fully in Executive Committee activity. *Ex officio* members include the representatives of the Board's various sponsoring organizations.

The Executive Committee meets twice a year, once at TRB's Annual Meeting in Washington each January and once in June. The Chair of TRB's Executive Committee, appointed by the Chairman of the NRC, serves a one-year term, and presides over the Committee discussions, which are directed toward obtaining consensus on issues wherever possible. When formal rules of debate are required, Roberts' Rules of Order are employed.

The Executive Committee performs a number of functions in serving four different constituencies — the National Research Council (NRC), TRB, TRB's sponsors, and itself.

Executive Committee Responsibilities to the NRC

The TRB Executive Committee is officially an advisory group to the Chairman and the Governing Board of the NRC, who look to the Executive Committee to provide oversight of TRB's activities. Such oversight is intended to ensure that TRB's activities are appropriate for the NRC and constructive to the transportation system and the nation. Reports (both written and oral) regarding ongoing and proposed TRB projects are brought to the Executive Committee at each meeting and are approved, rejected, or accepted after modification. The Board is also expected to note new opportunities for TRB to provide its services or projects and, where appropriate, to find ways to bring such projects into being.

The TRB Division Committee is charged to ensure that NRC procedures and policies are faithfully employed with respect to study and project committee appointments and report review. The membership of the TRB Division Committee is drawn from the membership of the TRB Executive Committee. The Division Committee is chaired by the TRB Division Chair, who must be a member of the National Academy of Sciences or the National Academy of Engineering and a member of the TRB Executive Committee. The TRB Division Chair serves as an *ex officio* member of the NRC Governing Board.

The Executive Committee has a Subcommittee on Planning and Policy Review (SPPR), which reviews and approves proposed projects and studies, develops lists of Critical Issues in Transportation, plans and develops opportunities for new Executive Committee initiatives, and generally handles those substantive transportation issues that require action during the interval between the twice-yearly meetings of the Executive Committee. The SPPR generally meets in April and October in Washington, DC.

The Executive Committee has a Subcommittee on International Activities, which provides oversight of TRB's international activities, including review of Memoranda of Understanding and Letters of Intent with international organizations, and monitoring progress in implementation of the Executive Committee's Strategic Plan for International Activities.

The Executive Committee has also established a Special Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which provides oversight of implementation of the Executive Committee's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

TRB's Expectations of the Executive Committee

Most TRB projects and activities are conducted by expert volunteers who agree to serve on TRB technical standing committees, study committees, panels, task forces, and other similar groups. At any one time, about 500 such groups are in existence, composed of more than 7,000 professionals serving without compensation. The Executive Committee, either directly or through the TRB Division Committee or the CAAS, provides oversight on the formation, termination, and membership of committees and on the review of projects undertaken and reports produced. The Executive Committee can also influence committee and other TRB activities by developing and monitoring strategic plans, preparing the critical transportation issues, and undertaking special activities of its own. From time to time, Executive Committee members are also called on to perform special duties, such as assisting with report review or fundraising for special projects.

The Executive Committee also serves as a symbol of the prestige attached to serving on TRB committees. Executive Committee members are selected in part because they occupy some of the most prestigious and influential positions in the industry. Their participation on the Executive Committee demonstrates support for research and cross-modal dialogue at the highest levels, and thereby provides motivation for the uncompensated service of otherwise highly paid experts on whom TRB depends for its products and services.

Sponsors' Expectations

At the core of TRB, and perhaps its most visible feature, is a collection of Technical Activities, which include more than 175 TRB standing committees, the TRB Annual Meeting, publications programs, field visits to organizations conducting transportation research, and information services. About \$17 million—approximately one-fifth of TRB's total budget—is spent annually on these activities, supported by funding from individual states, federal agencies, private transportation organizations, local governments, individual affiliates, publication sales, and conference registration fees. These funds are pooled and spent in accordance with budgets approved by the Executive Committee. TRB's sponsors look to the Executive Committee to ensure that these funds are spent in ways appropriate to TRB's mission and in ways that encourage research and its dissemination.

Executive Committee's Own Expectations

Although the responsibilities summarized above indicate that the Executive Committee has more than enough duties for a group that only assembles twice a year, members often comment that their greatest personal satisfaction in serving comes from participating in discussions of substantive transportation issues and that they would like to devote more time at meetings to such discussion. The caliber and diversity of talent represented on the Executive Committee make serving on it a unique experience for most members, providing an unusual opportunity to share different perspectives in far-reaching

discussions of major transportation issues. Thus, an effort is made to conduct the Executive Committee's official business expeditiously at meetings, in order to leave time for these other important activities of the Board. Executive Committee policy sessions and other discussions of substantive issues have led to the initiation of important TRB projects and other activities.

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