

# SHRP II

strategic highway research program

# Update

March 2006

Safety

Renewal

Capacity

Reliability

## It's Official

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In January 2006, J. Richard Capka of the FHWA, John C. Horsley of AASHTO, and Ralph J. Cicerone of the National Academy of Sciences (*left to right*) signed the Memorandum of Understanding that officially established SHRP II (*Standing, left to right:*) Brian McLaughlin, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; Stephen Godwin, TRB; TRB Executive Director Robert E. Skinner, Jr.; Dennis Judycki, FHWA; Anne Canby, Surface Transportation Policy Project; Allen Biehler, Pennsylvania DOT; Nicholas Garber, University of Virginia; Ann M. Brach, TRB; C. Michael Walton, University of Texas, Austin; Neil Pedersen, Maryland State Highway Administration; Rebecca Brewster, American Transportation Research Institute; John Njord, Utah DOT; Neil F. Hawks, TRB; and Henry G. Schwartz, Washington University, St. Louis.

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## Quarterly Update

The inaugural meeting of the Oversight Committee for the second Strategic Highway Research Program, SHRP II, took place at the National Academy of Sciences building in Washington, DC on January 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006. This update briefly recaps activities at that meeting and reports on progress since.

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*Well over 300 volunteers were nominated to serve on Technical Coordinating Committees. We appreciate the response.*

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### **Outcomes of Oversight Committee Meeting**

The focus of the Oversight Committee meeting was to evaluate proposed revisions to the scope of SHRP II research to accommodate funding levels in SAFETEA-LU. Specific modifications within each focus area are reported in the **draft minutes** of the meeting. Generally, changes involved deferring activities related to implementation, eliminating elements under study by others, and scaling back the extent of work or sample size in some areas.

The committee directed staff to prepare a first-year research plan that fits within the appropriation for the first year and is compatible with the various possible four-year funding scenarios. It is expected that a multi-year plan and budget can be prepared by the next meeting of the Oversight Committee.

### **Revised Schedule of Program Activities**

An ambitious goal of advertising the first requests for proposals by July 1, 2006, set the pace of planned program activities. Funding expected by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006, however, has not yet been received and achieving that goal now is less likely.

The first meeting of each technical coordinating committee was scheduled before May 1<sup>st</sup> so that the Oversight Committee could evaluate and approve the first-year research programs in time to issue the RFPs. This meeting schedule has been affected by the funding delay, and these changes may ripple out to the RFP release date. Once the funding is in place, these schedules will be revised and notices will be posted on the SHRP II Web site and will appear in the TRB e-newsletter.

### **Committee Selection**

A 15-member Technical Coordinating Committee is being formed for each of the 4 strategic focus areas. In the last 6 weeks, well over 300 nominations for volunteers to serve in these 60 positions have been reviewed and evaluated. Nominations are now **closed** and invitation letters will be issued soon.

Selection is based on a number of factors, which, in addition to identifying expertise, are meant to achieve a degree of balance in demographics and between public, private, and academic sectors.

The response throughout the transportation community and demonstrated willingness to serve the SHRP II program the SHRP II program are greatly appreciated.

### **Staffing**

The first four positions, managers for each of the research focus areas, have been advertised and interviewing has begun. Hiring will take place as soon as possible after funding is received.

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SHRP II is a short-term program of focused, cross-discipline research that will be the foundation for accelerated solutions in highway planning, development, construction, and operation.

SHRP II is administered by the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.