TRB Committee on Planning for Small and Medium-Sized Communities - ADA30

Research Subcommittee

Survey of Research Needs
Purpose

- Understand practitioners’ research needs and attitudes toward research
- Identify information they need to perform at higher levels
- Inform committee research emphasis, goals, and objectives
2014 Research Needs Survey

- 12 Questions
- 283 Respondents
- Validation of ADA30 research emphasis
- Validation of ADA30 goals and objectives
- Validation of ADA30 conference
- Strong indications of potential future research focus
- Strong indications of potential future communications needs
Questions & Responses

Interpretation of Responses
How do you learn about innovative practices in the field of planning for small and medium-sized communities? (select up to two)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRB-sponsored research (NCHRP, TRR, SHRP, etc.)</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other professional journals (ITE Journal, Transportation Journal, JAPA, etc.)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences and proceedings (TRB Annual Meeting, Tools of the Trade, etc.)</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinars</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet search tools</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss with co-workers</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not actively seek this type of information</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered: 278   Skipped: 5
How do you learn about innovative practices...
Other (please specify)

E-Contact + Networking = Other

State DOT
Listservs
Newsletters
Blogs
Twitter

State Assoc.
Working/Partners
Training

Answered Other: 28
You selected TRB-sponsored research, other professional journals, or conferences and proceedings as sources of information on innovation. On average, how often do you use these resources?

- **49**: Not very often (no more than 1-2 times a year)
- **102**: Often (several times a year)
- **41**: Regularly (several times a month)
- **6**: Not sure
You indicated that you do not actively seek information on innovation in planning. Please select the response that best indicates why. (Select up to two.)

- 2
  - I don’t have the time to look for or read about research

- 0
  - I get adequate information from my agency and/or stakeholders

- 1
  - I don’t consider researchers to be in touch with the needs of practitioners

- 2
  - I don’t know where to find such information

- 2
  - Other (please specify)
What type of research has been most useful to you in planning for small and medium-sized communities?

- Best practices / case studies: 163
- How-to guidance: 76
- "Cutting edge" innovation: 22
- Other (please specify): 6

Answered: 267  Skipped: 16
How valuable to your organization is research on planning?

- 114, Extremely valuable
- 139, Somewhat valuable
- 12, Of little value
- 4, Don't know

Answered: 269, Skipped: 14
Q 6 a.

Innovation in planning is mostly about advances in “technical tools” (such as travel demand modeling).

Answered: 253      Skipped: 30
Q 6 b.

There is not much that is new in the planning field.

- Strongly Agree: 3
- Agree: 26
- Neutral: 33
- Disagree: 143
- Strongly Disagree: 48

Answered: 253  Skipped: 30
Research can help planners learn how to best implement federal and state directives.
Research is not easy to understand.

Q 6 d.

Answered: 253    Skipped: 30
I don’t have time to spend on research and other tasks that are not required.
Q 6 f.

My organization sticks to the tried and true; innovation is seen as risky.

- Strongly Agree: 13
- Agree: 38
- Neutral: 46
- Disagree: 120
- Strongly Disagree: 35

Answered: 253    Skipped: 30
My organization encourages staff to spend time investigating what is new in their fields.
I rely on information from federal, state, and other agencies to stay up-to-date on what is new on planning.

Answered: 253  Skipped: 30
Research is theoretical and difficult to implement.
Research aims to provide usable information that can help transportation professionals improve their planning processes and products. What problems or information needs that might be addressed by research do you face in your profession?
<p>| | | |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Announce availability of new research publications.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>169</td>
<td>Provide brief summaries of research publications.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>165</td>
<td>Host webinars.</td>
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<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Offer workshops at conferences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Help bring workshops to my organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not interested.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
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</table>
How can relevant research be made more accessible...
Other (please specify)

Answered Other: 29
Is there anything else you'd like to tell the Committee on Planning for Small and Medium-Sized Communities about information and/or research needs?
Q 10

Which best describes your organizational affiliation?

- MPO, 105
- State Gov, 41
- Fed Gov, 19
- Not-for-Profit, 6
- Univ., 15
- Transit, 2
- RPO, 6
- Local Gov, 12
- Tribal, 2

29 of the 35 ‘Other’ answers were Consultants

Answered: 243   Skipped: 40
Which best describes your primary professional focus?

- Planning
- Other
- PI
- Transit
- Eng/Design
- Prrgmg
- Tech Spec

Answered: 243  Skipped: 40
Q 12

Are you an executive or mid-level manager?

137 Yes

106 No

Answered: 243     Skipped: 40
## Conclusions

**Time Management is Paramount**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electronic Communication:</th>
<th>Disseminate to Other Outlets:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>APA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Webinar</td>
<td>AASHTO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listserve</td>
<td>State DOTs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>AMPO</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ITE, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Summarize and Distil:</th>
<th>Best Practices &amp; Case Studies:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InfoGraphics</td>
<td>Focus Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>State of Practice</td>
<td>For Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
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<td>Conf. Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<th>Innovation: Implementation</th>
<th>TMA Practices</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Targeted Approach</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Conclusions

Research needs to be practical to their needs

Research needs to be comprehensible

Research is a necessary function

Survey their needs prior to conference and target papers
Next Steps for the Research Subcommittee

Update research section of strategic plan

Develop a digest of relevant research

Use digital media to inform and encourage dialogue

Identify topics for new research
Current

NCHRP 8-36 Quick Study submission

Problem statement accepted

RFP issued

Two committee members on review team