

Dear TRB Technical Activities Sponsors, Volunteers, and Partners,

The Technical Activities Division of the Transportation Research Board is engaged in a “strategic alignment” of its organizational structures and processes to strengthen their contribution to the mission of TRB and our parent organization, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. This mission, broadly, is to provide evidence-based scientific and technical information about, advice for, and solutions to key issues that that face our nation. For TRB, the mission is focused on issues related to transportation.

In its recently adopted Strategic Plan, TRB identifies itself as the place where “current, emerging, and critical transportation issues” can be identified and addressed by the global transportation community “to foster a high-performing multimodal transportation that enhances society.” The TAC strategic alignment has been undertaken to improve TRB’s ability to meet and sustain this strategic vision.

The strategic alignment not only addresses staff and volunteer structures, activities, and processes. It is also a response to the evolution of TRB’s financial needs and resources. Over the last year, much of the alignment effort has focused on reorganizing the TAD volunteer structure in ways that ensure that the talent of TRB’s thousands of volunteers can focus on 21st century critical, and emerging transportation issues with an organization that is flexible enough to respond to rapidly-changing circumstances. In short, we are developing a more sustainable organization that can retain the stability and continuity for which TRB is recognized internationally.

After a year of consultation with volunteers, sponsors, and staff, this effort has reached the stage at which TRB and the Technical Activities Council (TAC) is proudly able to release its newly aligned TAD volunteer structure. On our strategic alignment website (www.trb.org/AboutTRB/TADStrategicAlignment.aspx) you can find the following resources:

- The new volunteer structure—groups, sections, committees, and councils—along with a new coding scheme that was developed to accommodate the revisions.
- A chart documenting the disposition of each of the current committees in the restructuring.
- A chart of the new structure and its relationship to the current structure.
- A description of the new Coordinating Councils.
- A plan for providing a clearer structure for subcommittees and for making their work more visible.
- A list of topics that, while not obvious from the titles of the new committees, are expected to be handled within the committees, councils, and subcommittees.

Developing this new structure was an unprecedented effort of volunteers and staff; TRB and TAC are immensely gratefully for all the thinking, discussion, and hard work that brought us to this point. However, there is still much to do to fully implement the new structure and ensure that it is effectively addressing the important transportation issues and challenges facing us. Additional activities that will be carried out over the next year or two include:

- Development of more detailed guidelines and processes for coordinating councils and subcommittees.
- Development of guidelines and tools for strategic planning and ongoing review and refreshing of the volunteer structure.

- Working out the details of chair and committee rotations, chairs and members for new committees, staffing of committees, etc.
- An updated Leadership Guide and/or other resources for chairs.
- Development and delivery of training for volunteers leaders, including an expanded role for Section chairs to cooperate with TAC in strategic planning and coordination.
- Retooling of all relevant IT systems at TRB and updating of material on the TRB website.
- Make changes to Annual Meeting schedule and space assignments.

As is said about many things, change is like a coin: it has two sides and you can't have one without the other. Change can be difficult, uncertain, confusing—we don't have all the answers to how it will work out. But change can also renew energy, spark innovation, and open up possibilities that were obscured by our familiarity with the things we have "always done." This volunteer restructuring, and other elements of TAD's strategic alignment, are sure to involve both sides of the change coin. We are committed to work together to minimize the difficult side; and we are confident that this community of dedicated and enthusiastic experts will quickly discover the energy, innovation, and possibilities offered by taking a fresh look at a century-old tradition of national service.

Thank you for all you do to make TRB's mission a reality and to create this very special community.

Technical Activities Council

Technical Activities Division