



AASHTO Standing Committee  
on Public Transportation  
Strategic Plan  
2014-2016

July 9, 2014

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## Abbreviations

Term	Definition
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
APTA	American Public Transportation Association
CTAA	Community Transportation of America
DOT	Department of Transportation
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
MAASTO	Mid American Association of State Transportation Officials
MTAP	Multi-State Technical Assistance Program
NASTO	Northeast Association of Transportation Officials
NCHRP	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
SASHTO	Southeastern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
SCOE	Standing Committee on the Environment
SCOFA	Standing Committee on Finance and Administration
SCOH	Standing Committee on Highways
SCOP	Standing Committee on Planning
SCOPM	Standing Committee on Performance Management
SCOPT	Standing Committee on Public Transportation
SCOR	Standing Committee on Research
SCORT	Standing Committee on Rail Transportation
TCRP	Transit Cooperative Research Program
TRB	Transportation Research Board
WASHTO	Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

## Introduction

The Standing Committee on Public Transportation (SCOPT) is responsible for advising AASHTO's leadership and its member departments on national and state public transportation policy and legislative positions, and for identifying and responding to emerging issues and industry needs that affect the diverse public transportation responsibilities of the DOTs. While many national organizations advocate for public transportation, State DOTs have unique needs and interests that cannot be represented adequately by the organizations whose memberships is primarily transit operators of large, urban transit systems. Although the public transit responsibilities of state DOTs may vary from state to state, SCOPT is the voice of state DOT transit programs that:

- Administer state and federal grants for hundreds of local operators of rural transit who provide transportation to millions of rural Americans,
- Oversee the provision of state-assisted programs that provide hundreds of transportation options for millions of seniors and persons with disabilities, and may
- Operate state-run transit systems.

In addition, there is a growing recognition among State DOT executives and political leaders that public transportation is an important resource for addressing the major dilemma experienced by virtually every American transportation agency: meeting growing demands for passenger and freight transportation with rapidly dwindling abilities to build new infrastructure.

A primary purpose of this strategic plan is to establish a committee structure and a relevant action agenda that advances the public transportation interests of State DOTs and that reclaims SCOPT's leadership role within AASHTO. A secondary purpose is to protect and enhance the role of the AASHTO Multi-State Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) in providing technical assistance to State DOTs and their recipient transit providers.

This strategic plan includes a new mission statement for SCOPT, supported by goals, strategies, and an initial implementation plan. It includes a recommendation to restructure SCOPT in order to clarify roles and responsibilities for addressing policy and technical issues facing State DOT public transportation agencies.

The mission, goals, strategies and implementation steps included in this plan were developed by State DOT public transportation leaders. They provide an agenda for aligning the work of SCOPT and its key standing subcommittee, MTAP, toward creating a strong, unified voice for public transportation within AASHTO and externally to FTA and other stakeholders.

This Plan is designed to be updated every two years, thus ensuring its continued consistency with AASHTO's strategic direction, the current national political and legislative environment, and the needs of State DOTs with regard to public transportation.

## **SCOPT Mission, Goals and Strategies**

### ***Mission***

SCOPT shall provide AASHTO with public transportation expertise and leadership for advancing public transportation as a part of an intermodal transportation system. It will develop legislative, policy, and program recommendations related to all forms of passenger public transportation services including rural, urban, regional and intercity bus, travel demand management and commuter rail. In addition SCOPT will provide general strategic direction to MTAP to support this standing committee's responsibilities as an AASHTO technical assistance program.

### ***Goals and Strategies***

To support this mission over the next two years, the SCOPT 2014-2016 Strategic Plan identifies the following six goals:

1. Lead and influence national policy related to public transportation;
2. Advance public transportation as part of an integrated transportation system;
3. Strengthen SCOPT's leadership role within AASHTO and among other national organizations, institutions, and groups with complementary purposes and goals;
4. Identify and promote research and develop educational resources to support public transportation providers;
5. Provide world-class technical assistance and support to State DOTs in their delivery of public transportation programs; and
6. Increase the pool of State DOT professionals willing and able to work with SCOPT and to serve in leadership roles.

This section includes suggested strategies for each goal, to the extent they have been identified by the Executive Committee in discussions to date. These strategies provide starting points for the development of a full-fledged work plan over the coming months.

Although each goal is targeted to a specific aspect of the mission, the goals also interface and overlap. Therefore, some strategies can address several, if not all, of the goals. In particular, one cross-cutting strategy addresses each of the SCOPT goals: the development of a Communications Plan. This strategy, discussed broadly below, is also referenced within the discussions of each goal.

## **Cross-cutting Strategy – Develop a Communications Plan**

The Committee needs an overarching Communications Plan to increase awareness of SCOPT’s responsibilities, capabilities, and role within AASHTO, as well as to demonstrate its value and technical competency to FTA and other modal organizations. Within this broad audience are target groups related to the Strategic Plan’s individual goals. Each of the six goals requires some form of communication strategy.

Although it is important that SCOPT provide consistent communications that “speak with one voice,” individual messages can vary depending on the goals and target audiences they are designed to address. A Communication Plan offers a mechanism to ensure consistency among the various goal-oriented messages, while also tailoring information in ways that make sense to different target audiences. The Communication Plan will identify the target audiences, the key messages, and the purpose of each communiqué. It also provides a structure to monitor the effectiveness of the plan implementation process.

Outreach is a specific form of communication that is focused on engagement. The intent of outreach is to create connections that lead to long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. Given the SCOPT’s interest in leveraging resources and fostering partnerships, outreach is a key component of many of the strategies in this Strategic Plan and, thus, the proposed Communications Plan.

### **Goal 1: Lead and influence national policy related to public transportation**

SCOPT should be recognized as the public transportation experts within AASHTO, and through AASHTO, should be participating directly in any national dialogue related to and/or impacting public transportation. Emerging issues include changes to national policies, legislation or regulations.

- Strategy 1: Monitor emerging issues related to public transportation and assess interest among FTA and partners in establishing national policy through executive orders, legislation or regulation.
- Strategy 2: Communicate SCOPT’s leadership role within AASHTO to FTA and partners.
- Strategy 3: Provide SCOPT input and comment on proposed national policy and guidance, (i.e. FTA Law, Rules, Circulars, Dialogues, Webinars).

### **Goal 2: Advance public transportation as part of an integrated transportation system**

DOTs are increasingly focusing on public transportation as a key element of a multimodal transportation system that serves the traveling needs of the public. Whether through direct



funding or in partnership with regional agencies and transit operators, most State DOTs are incorporating public transportation into their plans for the statewide system and corridor improvements.

- Strategy 1: Assess the state of the practice at State DOTs for advancing public transportation as a part of an integrated transportation system. This will enable SCOPT to communicate examples of best practices and the overall contribution of public transportation to core DOT missions.
- Strategy 2: Use the Communications Plan to champion public transportation as a key element of integrated transportation systems within AASHTO and among State DOTs by identifying and communicating with key internal target audiences, such as the State DOT members of the Standing Committee on Planning (SCOP), the Standing Committee on Performance Management (SCOPM), and the Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (SCOFA).

### **Goal 3: Strengthen SCOPT's leadership within AASHTO and among other national organizations, institutions, and groups with complementary purposes and goals**

SCOPT is part of a larger community that provides support for public transportation. This goal recognizes that active participation in this community will strengthen SCOPT and its members. In addition to FTA, organizations such as the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the Transportation Research Board (TRB) provide guidance, training, outreach, and best practice examples for SCOPT members to use in their individual contexts. Within AASHTO, SCOPT can leverage the work of other Committees such as SCOP and SCOFA to integrate public transportation more fully into multimodal planning, programming, and service delivery.

- Strategy 1: Use the Communication Plan to identify committees, groups, organizations, and institutions that have the most potential for advancing SCOPT's goals, along with their shared interests. Establish a prioritization for the groups external to AASHTO.
- Strategy 2: Publicize AASHTO awards applicable to transit so that members take advantage of the increased awareness of SCOPT activities. SCOPT may also choose to establish meaningful public transportation awards with a strong outreach component to showcase best practices.

Potential next steps:

- Make a list of relevant AASHTO Committees and external organizations/groups
- Consider new outreach technologies and tools that can make SCOPT's work more accessible to external audiences.

- Seek opportunities to make presentations at conferences and workshops sponsored by SCOPT partners.
- Strategy 3: Establish and support specific people to serve as liaisons between SCOPT and other Committees, with the charge of staying informed on relevant topics and identifying opportunities to offer support and/or solicit the involvement of other Committees

Potential next steps:

- SCOPT leadership reach out to SCOP and SCOFA as initial Committee contacts
- Assign specific liaisons to other AASHTO Committees from SCOPT membership
- Identify and document priority meetings for liaison attendance and report back

#### **Goal 4: Identify and promote research and develop educational resources to support public transportation providers**

State DOTs generally have more needs than their staffs can address, so the research support provided by SCOPT is a particularly valuable resource. By forming a new subcommittee focused specifically on research, SCOPT can support the advancement of the public transportation practice and fill a critical need for State DOTs. The proposed Research Subcommittee will work directly with MTAP in considering research needs and training priorities.

- Strategy 1: Create and establish the charge for the Subcommittee on Research.
- Strategy 2: Review and provide feedback to MTAP on their training priorities and workplan.

Potential next steps:

- Identify member research and training needs and interests through surveys, web-based request options, annual calls for research ideas, or other solicitations.
- Maintain a list of current training opportunities and active research projects across the public transportation industry.
- Identify innovative leaders who maintain awareness of new issues for research consideration.

#### **Goal 5: Provide world-class technical assistance and support to state DOTs in their delivery of public transportation programs**

This goal is effectively the SCOPT strategic direction to MTAP as stated in the mission. MTAP will be responsible for developing and implementing the strategies and action plans necessary to meet this goal. MTAP will provide feedback to SCOPT and/or request support from SCOPT as

needed. Monitoring and tracking of MTAP's success occurs as a part of SCOPT review and tracking of implementation of the strategic plan.

## **Goal 6: Increase pool of state DOT professionals willing and able to work with and play a leadership role within SCOPT**

Public transportation professionals within State DOTs comprise the vast majority of SCOPT membership. The future of SCOPT will depend upon the enthusiasm and commitment of its members. To fulfill the ambitious goals of this Strategic Plan, SCOPT will need to engage fully its existing members and to recruit new professionals that can grow into leadership roles over time.

- Strategy 1: Identify SCOPT and MTAP volunteer opportunities and array them into a broad range of small to major roles or tasks that members can choose to support.
- Strategy 2: Solicit all current SCOPT and MTAP members to volunteer for at least one role or task.
- Strategy 3: Create new member orientation programs for SCOPT and MTAP that include the expectation of participating in at least one volunteer task per year.

Potential next steps:

- Provide incentives for meeting attendance such as travel reimbursements, scholarships, and opportunities to earn professional credits.
- Identify topics of broad or cross-cutting interest that attract a diverse audience of transportation professionals to webinars, peer exchanges and other meetings.
- Submit transit research results and case studies to larger conferences and meetings that attract broad audiences.

## **Organizing for Implementation**

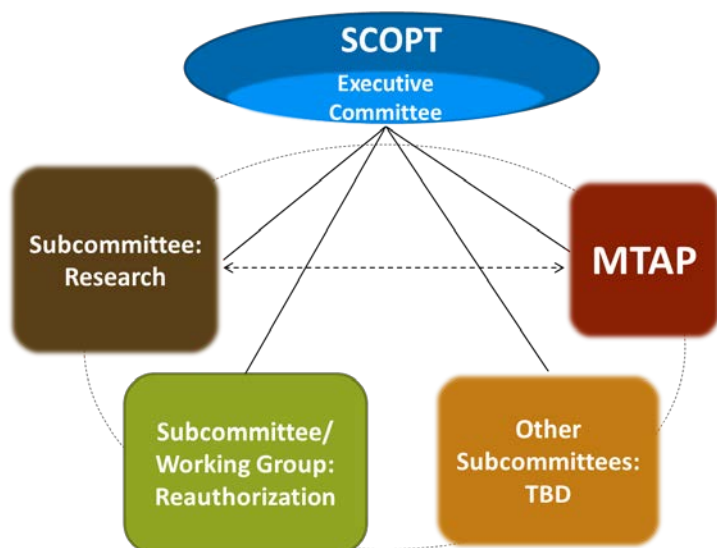
### ***Committee Structure***

The SCOPT 2014-2016 Strategic Plan calls for a refined organizational structure that aligns the committee's roles and responsibilities with the Plan's goals and strategies. Successful implementation of this Strategic Plan will require focused effort and mutual accountability from both SCOPT and MTAP. In order to ensure the efficient, effective use of time and energy among committee members, the proposed structure offers a clear definition of roles, responsibilities, and relationships among these primary groups.

Figure 1 describes the groups identified to date to support the implementation of the 2014-2016 Strategic Plan. The structure is designed to ensure that there is a timely execution of the SCOPT Strategic Plan, including a process and appropriate delegation of response to requests from

AASHTO, FTA and external partners. It includes permanent subcommittees but also recognizes that as plan implementation goes forward there may be a need to form additional permanent committees and/or short-term working groups.

Figure 1. Proposed SCOPT Organizational Structure



**Key Roles**

- The **Executive Committee** provides timely direction and decisions to clarify and coordinate the responsibilities of SCOPT and its subcommittees
- The **Executive Committee** also provides a mechanism for internal communication within AASHTO and external communities to agencies and partners.
- **SCOPT** provides input to **MTAP** on overall direction and coordination with **AASHTO** and **SCOPT** goals and strategies
- **MTAP** is a primarily self-directed standing subcommittee under **SCOPT** that fulfills an independently defined mission for technical assistance and operational support
- A new Permanent **Subcommittee on Research** is charged with coordinating and supporting **SCOPT**'s overall research agenda

**Full SCOPT:** SCOPT is responsible for defining the overall roles and responsibilities for the various individuals and groups involved in its work. It is also responsible for ensuring a clear delegation of authority and accountability to AASHTO staff and various subteams regarding long-term and task-specific activities to implement the 2014-2016 Strategic Plan. In general this delegation will be based initially on the agreement that the SCOPT Executive Committee leads responsibility for policy issues and MTAP leads responsibility for technical/operational issues. Table 1 provides a general delineation of these responsibilities.

Table 1. Responsibilities of SCOPT and MTAP

Responsibility	Goal	SCOPT Role	MTAP Role
Recommend / develop policies for public transportation	1	LEAD	Support
Provide feedback to the Federal Transit Administration on implementation issues and best practices	1	Support	LEAD
Provide feedback to the Federal Transit Administration and Congress on transit policy and funding issues	1	LEAD	Supporting
Provide research on public transportation issues	2	LEAD	Support
Promote transit as part of an integrated, multi-modal transportation system	2	LEAD	Support
Influence public transportation / share information with strategic allies	3	LEAD	Support
Coordinate / liaise among AASHTO committees and internal groups	3	LEAD	Support
Oversee implementation of the SCOPT strategic plan	3	LEAD	Support
Develop standards for public transportation programs	5	Support	LEAD
Provide technical assistance	5	Support	LEAD
Help State DOTs implement Federal Transit Administration programs	5	Support	LEAD
Collect information on cutting-edge equipment and practices	5	Support	LEAD
Disseminate information	4	Jointly Lead	Jointly Lead
Create a professional network for sharing of information	6	Jointly Lead	Jointly Lead
Engage in new member orientation	6	Jointly Lead	Jointly Lead

As implementation of this strategic plan unfolds, the full SCOPT will approve the revised SCOPT structure, written roles and responsibilities for the the Executive Committee, MTAP and any subcommittees, any permanent delegation responsibilities to the Executive Committee, MTAP and subcommittees, and the completed two-year work plan.

It is anticipated that the full SCOPT will meet no less than twice a year (via conference call and/or face-to-face) in order to review progress on the implementation of the 2014-2016 Strategic Plan and to discuss and approve recommendations from Executive Committee related to the strategic plan or other SCOPT business.

**Executive Committee.** The permanent members of the SCOPT Executive Committee include the following representatives:

- Chair and vice-chair of SCOPT<sup>1</sup>,
- Chair and vice-chair of MTAP,
- Chair of any permanent SCOPT subcommittee, and
- One member from each of the four AASHTO regions (NASTO, SASHTO, MAASTO and WASHTO).

The regional members will be appointed by SCOPT for two-year terms and may be reappointed without restriction. This broad representation on the Executive Committee ensures that both the policy and technical/operational needs of the public transportation community are represented in the routine management of SCOPT committee business and the implementation of the strategic plan.

The SCOPT Executive Committee will provide oversight for the subcommittees, and will coordinate activities among the subcommittees. Executive Committee members will also liaise between other AASHTO standing committees, and will report out to the rest of the group on regular basis.

A primary responsibility delegated to the Executive Committee is management and oversight of the Strategic Plan implementation. In this role the Executive Committee will be responsible for recommending to the full SCOPT a two-year work program for implementing the Strategic Plan. Once the work plan is approved, the Executive Committee is responsible for ensuring that it is implemented as approved and/or recommending modifications. The Executive Committee will delegate responsibilities to AASHTO staff and SCOPT subcommittees consistent with the roles and responsibilities approved by SCOPT.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.transportation.org/Documents/GovDocs\\_May\\_30\\_2014\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.transportation.org/Documents/GovDocs_May_30_2014_FINAL.pdf)

Bylaws, page 5, paragraph begins “The President, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee,”

The Executive Committee should establish a regular conference call schedule to meet no less than once a month to oversee progress on responsibilities delegated from SCOPT to the Executive Committee, various subcommittees and AASHTO staff. The meeting agenda should be published at least one week in advance of any calls. should meet no less than once a month via conference call to oversee progress on responsibilities delegated from SCOPT to the Executive Committee, various subcommittees and AASHTO staff. It is also be responsible for ensuring timely response to requests for information from AASHTO leadership, FTA, and external partners, and for acting on behalf of the full SCOPT for any matter that requires quick turnaround.

**Standing Subcommittee for Multi-State Technical Assistance Program (MTAP).** MTAP is an AASHTO technical assistance program serving state DOT public transportation agencies. MTAP's primary purposes are to provide technical assistance to help states implement Federal Transit Administration Programs, to provide feedback to FTA on implementation issues and best practices, and to create a professional network for sharing best practices. As a membership organization, MTAP ensures that its workplan and priorities are meeting the needs of its dues paying organizations. Toward this end, MTAP has an established organizational structure, approved workplan, and dedicated AASHTO staff supporting its mission.

MTAP supports SCOPT as the “voice” of state DOT public transportation within AASHTO and through AASHTO to external agencies and partners. MTAP is responsible for ensuring consistency of the MTAP goals and work plan with the SCOPT 2014-2016 Strategic Plan and, through SCOPT, any revisions to the AASHTO Strategic Plan. As a standing subcommittee of SCOPT and key participants on the Executive Committee, MTAP will have a significant role in SCOPT overall direction and decision making.

**Proposed Subcommittee on Research.** While the structure and roles of permanent subcommittees will be recommended to SCOPT by the Executive Committee as a part of the Strategic Plan implementation, there was strong support during the development of this Strategic Plan for a permanent SCOPT Subcommittee on Research.

NCHRP 20-65 Program is an independent Transportation Research Board program with a mission to support quick response research to support SCOPT. While there is a direct relationship between SCOPT and NCHRP 20-65 SCOPT does not have direct responsibility for or control of the NCHRP 20-65 program. There are both research needs and potential research funding that are beyond the scope of NCHRP 20-65 so there is a need to ensure that SCOPT is identifying needs and potential funding sources that can support a broad range of short-range and long-term policy and technical research needs. The purpose and key responsibilities of this subcommittee are described in the text box on this page.

While the research subcommittee will determine the most appropriate way for the SCOPT to identify and promote research ideas, it is not the intent of this Strategic Plan to require research ideas from SCOPT or MTAP members (or others) to pass through the subcommittee prior to being submitted to the NCHRP 20-65 program or other research venues. The subcommittee should be prepared and offer to review and comment on ideas prior to an individual agency submitting them to NCHRP 20-65 or other venue.

**Other Subcommittees.** As the Executive Committee identifies priorities and creates action plans to implement this Strategic Plan it may recommend the creation of permanent or short term subcommittees to SCOPT. For each recommendation, the Executive Committee should define the proposed committee's purpose, key functions, relationship with other subcommittees (particularly MTAP) , and the immediate needs for substantive work.

## ***Internal and External Relationships***

The SCOPT Strategic Plan mission, goals and strategies emphasize the importance of internal and external partnerships to successful implementation. Communicating and coordinating with internal and external groups can be very time consuming. Given that the implementation of this plan is dependent on the most efficient and effective use of volunteer time, SCOPT and the Executive Committee need to set priorities among outreach activities with many potential

### **Proposed Subcommittee on Research**

***Purpose:***

Create a central and permanent repository for short, mid and long term public transportation research ideas

- Support SCOPT in identifying, screening, preparing and prioritizing submissions to NCHRP and other potential research funding organizations

***Key Functions:***

Identify research programs or agencies to target for potential funding

- Solicit and track issues that have been identified as potential research topics throughout the year
- Support SCOPT and its subcommittees in preparing research proposals
- Rank, rate, and add value to problem statements under consideration for submission to NCHRP, TCRP, and others
- Evaluate research results to determine the value of already-funded research and propose recommendations for the direction of future research



partners, and to simplify and streamline overall communication and coordination with these groups.

## Internal Partners: AASHTO Committees

**Formal Committee Liaisons.** The vast majority of AASHTO’s substantive work is completed by committees and subcommittees, or by staff overseen by said committees. Therefore, it is critical for SCOPT to develop relationships with key committees that are discussing or promoting issues related to advancing public transportation as part of an intermodal transportation system. Two committees within AASHTO have an overlapping interest in this goal:

- Standing Committee on Planning (SCOP) with its focus on how DOTs will need to adapt their visions, plans, investments and programs to meet the long term transportation needs and quality of life goals of their state and nation; and
- Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (SCOFA) with its focus on the short-, mid- and long-term financial health of state DOTs, as well as their responsibilities and interests related to supporting the nation’s intermodal transportation system.

To advance SCOPT’s influence with these key AASHTO committees SCOPT needs to appoint formal liaisons that are recognized by the partners as the key “point people” for communicating and sharing insights with SCOPT. The liaisons will be responsible for attending SCOP and SCOFA committee meetings, influencing their dialogues, and reporting back to SCOPT about activities and discussions relevant to public transportation. They need to be able to represent the full range of SCOPT interests, so for these key committees the SCOPT liaison should be an established member of the Executive Committee. Appointed by the SCOPT Executive Committee, the liaisons will serve an unspecified term.

**Informal Committee Relationships.** There are five additional AASHTO committees that have responsibilities that touch on public transportation, as follows:

- Standing Committee on Rail Transportation (SCORT);
- Standing Committee on the Environment (SCOE);
- Standing Committee on Performance Management (SCOPM);
- Standing Committee on Research (SCOR); and
- Standing Committee on Highways (SCOH).

With these five committees a SCOPT member will serve as an informal liaison. The Communication Plan to be developed for the implementation of the 2014-2016 Strategic Plan should include each of these committees as target audiences and recommend mechanisms and clear assignments of responsibility for two-way communication on issues of mutual interest.

Among this group, **SCORT** requires specific mention. Commuter rail is becoming an increasingly important topic for many State DOTs. Currently there is no clear delineation of responsibility for commuter rail within the AASHTO committee structure. It rests in an area between **SCOPT** and **SCORT**. State DOTs need to consider important issues related to commuter rail such as safety and safety oversight and performance measures. **SCOPT** has reaffirmed its primary interest in and responsibility for commuter rail within the AASHTO committee structure. **SCOPT** needs to communicate its proactive interest in commuter rail to **SCORT**, monitor **SCORT**'s discussions of rail policy and operations for any potential effect on commuter rail, and coordinate with **SCORT** on developing recommendations related to commuter rail. In these ways, **SCOPT** will ensure that AASHTO's interests in both passenger and freight rail services are advanced.

### External Partners: Public Transportation Organizations

A wide range of organizations supports and advances public transportation, including the following key groups:

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Transportation Research Board (TRB), including but not necessarily limited to the NCHRP 20-65 and Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP)
- American Public Transportation Association (APTA), including but not necessarily limited to its State Affairs Committee
- Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)
- Easter Seals

Currently **SCOPT** has a direct relationship with NCHRP 20-65, which exists to support **SCOPT**'s quick-response research needs. While TCRP does not have a direct relationship with **SCOPT**, State DOTs are eligible to submit suggested research topics to TCRP. One of the responsibilities of the proposed **SCOPT** Committee on Research is to enhance these existing relationships and identifying additional opportunities to partner with TRB.

The communication with the other four organizations, FTA, APTA, CTAA and Easter Seals, is more complicated. In the past, AASHTO leadership has been the primary point of contact for discussions related to national legislative proposals and major USDOT regulations. For more technical issues MTAP has served as the primary AASHTO point of contact. In addition AASHTO has a Communications Office that is responsible for overseeing and coordinating some types of external communications. The role of **SCOPT** in communications with these national organizations is unclear, and tends to be issue- or topic-specific. The Communication Plan developed to support this Strategic Plan should provide a sound mechanism for the Executive Committee to discuss and differentiate the various roles and responsibilities for **SCOPT**, MTAP and AASHTO in working with these groups.

## Next Steps

The SCOPT 2014-2016 Strategic Plan includes a significant change in the structure and management of SCOPT. **In parallel with substantive work to flesh out the plan strategies and actions plans**, SCOPT needs to develop the organizational underpinnings to support successful implementation. For the Strategic Plan to be successfully implemented SCOPT needs to focus first on the following objectives:

- Strengthen SCOPT's leadership position with AASHTO and external public transportation partners
- Clarify roles and responsibilities and improve communication among SCOPT, MTAP and NCHRP 20-65 to ensure that the full range of issues -- policy, technical and research -- is addressed expeditiously
- Establish the structure and process to support prioritization, delegation and delivery of SCOPT's two year Strategic Plan work plan

The table below shows the implementation tasks that are needed to achieve these goals. These high-level tasks are generally listed in priority and time sequenced order.

<b>Organizational Structure Next Steps</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Approve new organization structure for SCOPT	Establishes Executive Committee Establishes Subcommittee for Research	Adoption of Strategic Plan by full SCOPT
	Establishes MTAP as standing subcommittee of SCOPT	Approval of MTAP
Appoint Executive Committee regional representatives	Provides full membership for the Executive Committee	Chair of SCOPT
Convene Executive Committee (Meeting 1) Structure and Working Protocols	Establish working protocols (schedule, standard agendas etc) Establish expectations for Chair, Vice-Chair, members and staff to ensure meetings are timely and well managed Validate the SCOPT Strategic Plan against the new AASHTO Strategic Plan, when adopted	Executive Committee supported by AASHTO and MTAP staff
Convene Executive Committee (Meeting 2) Two-year work plan development process and schedule	Identify process and schedule for developing the two year work plan to support implementation of the Strategic Plan including prioritizing strategies, preparing or delegating preparation of action plans, identifying implementation team leaders/members etc.	Executive Committee supported by AASHTO and MTAP staff
Convene Executive Committee (Meeting 3) Detailing of roles and responsibilities between SCOPT and MTAP	Discuss and document detailed description of decision-making process, roles and responsibilities among SCOPT and MTAP, including interaction with FTA (see Table 1)	Executive Committee supported by AASHTO and MTAP staff
	Agree upon roles, responsibilities, and decision-making process	Approval by SCOPT
Convene Executive Committee (Meeting 4) Subcommittee structure	Appoint chair and members for Subcommittee on Research	Approval of Executive Committee
	On-going: Appoint chair and members for any additional subcommittees identified as needed through the action planning process	

<b>AASHTO Committee Liaisons</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Appoint formal liaisons for SCOP and SCOFA	Prepare written expectations for formal liaison role	Executive Committee supported by AASHTO staff
	Contact SCOP and SCOFA chairs for agreement on role of formal liaison	SCOPT Chair
	Appoint SCOP and SCOFA liaisons	Executive Committee
Clarify responsibility for commuter rail with SCORT	Prepare written description of division of commuter rail responsibilities for SCOPT and SCORT	Executive Committee supported by AASHTO staff
	Obtain agreement from SCORT chair	SCOPT chair
	Prepare written description of expectations for informal liaisons for other AASHTO Committees (SCOPM, SCOR, SCOE, SCOH)	Executive Committee supported by AASHTO staff
	Appoint informal liaisons	Executive Committee

<b>External Organization Liaisons</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Establish role for external organization liaisons	Provide direction to Communication Plan development team on the following elements:  External organizations to be included in communication plan  Type of relationship (policy, technical or both) with each external organization  Coordination needed with AASHTO leadership or Communication Office	Executive Committee
	Validate roles and communication protocols identified in Communication Plan	Executive Committee
	Prepare written expectations for external organization liaisons	Executive Committee supported by AASHTO Staff
	Appoint external organization liaisons	Executive Committee

## Appendix A. Plan Development and Research Conducted

The development of this Plan relied heavily on input from SCOPT members, background research, and feedback from other important stakeholders. Each of the background activities is described in greater detail as part of this Appendix.

### Executive Committee

Developing the SCOPT Strategic Plan required input from SCOPT and direction from a small committee of current SCOPT members who helped guide the structure and content of the plan. The SCOPT Chair and Vice Chair were included as part of the Strategic Plan Executive Committee, as were the MTAP Chair and the Chair of the NCHRP 20-65 Panel. Several of the other members of the Strategic Plan Executive Committee were self-nominated, and the remainder was selected by the AASHTO liaison and SCOPT Vice Chair based on their background, understanding and involvement with SCOPT, and geographic location.

The eleven-member Strategic Plan Executive Committee participated in several phone calls throughout Plan development, and attended a one-day intensive workshop to discuss the content of the Plan, structure of the committee, and action items to implement the Plan. The Executive Committee was also tasked with reviewing the draft Plan and providing input to develop a final version.

### Background Research and Interviews

To develop a baseline understanding of SCOPT's current activities, roles, responsibilities, and relationships, background research was conducted to review relevant documents and speak with important individuals who have a strong working knowledge of the history of SCOPT. As part of the document review, many resources were assessed:

- Proceedings from SCOPT-sponsored conferences and events (available on the SCOPT website)
- Minutes from SCOPT meetings (available on the SCOPT website)
- Annual Surveys of State Funding for Transportation (available on the SCOPT website)
- Activities of MTAP, including the 2014 MTAP Work Plan (available on the MTAP website, and as discussed during meetings with MTAP members)
- Research projects supported through NCHRP 20-65 (provided by TRB)
- SCOPT Research Plan from 2007 (provided by TRB)
- Research Agenda and Potential Roles for the AASHTO SCOPT from 2005 (provided by TRB)

Individual interviews were also conducted with current SCOPT members, the MTAP Chair, the Chair of the NCHRP 20-65 Panel, staff with the Transportation Research Board at the National Academy of Sciences, the AASHTO liaison for SCOPT and the AASHTO staff member for MTAP, and past AASHTO staff.

## Survey

Prior to the in-person Executive Committee meeting, all members of SCOPT and MTAP were invited to take a survey to inform the content of the Strategic Plan. Specifically, respondents were asked to provide feedback on the draft Plan goals, SCOPT’s charge, and the roles, responsibilities, and relationships of SCOPT and MTAP. Twenty-seven responses were provided prior to the survey close deadline. The questions asked in the survey are provided below.

### Section 1: Background

1. Please provide your name and state
2. Please indicate whether you are a member of SCOPT, MTAP, or both

### Section 2: SCOPT Charge

3. Please review the SCOPT charge statement (which was provided in the survey), and provide comments if you feel that there are pieces of the charge that need to change or do not accurately capture SCOPT’s role.

### Section 3: Goals

Goals will serve as the basis for the SCOPT Strategic Plan. The following 5 goals were drawn from background research, and have been reviewed by the Strategic Plan Executive Committee. Please read each goal statement, and make comments if you feel that the goal matches/does not match your understanding of the intent of the Strategic Plan, or if you feel that these goals need to be changed in any way.

4. Goal 1: Participate in and influence national transit policy and major standards.
5. Goal 2: Advance transit as part of an integrated transportation system through SCOPT interaction with other AASHTO committees.
6. Goal 3: Improve SCOPT’s connection with other national organizations, institutions, and groups with complementary purposes and goals (i.e., APTA, CTAA, FTA, etc.)
7. Goal 4: Identify research and training needs to support the SCOPT strategic plan.
8. Goal 5: Provide enhanced technical assistance to state DOTs in their delivery of transit programs through partnership with MTAP.

### Section 4: Relationships, Roles, and Responsibilities

9. Which existing committees/subcommittees represent the most important relationships for SCOPT to have/develop? Why?
10. Which external organizations (e.g., FTA, CTAA, APTA) should SCOPT have strong relationships and open communication with? Why?
11. Below is a matrix to capture the existing relationships between SCOPT, MTAP, and the 20-65 Panel in terms of each group’s responsibilities. Please mark which group is the primary group responsible for each of the activities listed below. If any key responsibilities are missing, please note them in the open space.

	SCOPT	MTAP	20-65 Panel
Develop standards and recommend policies for public transportation programs			
Provide feedback to FTA on implementation issues / best practices			
Provide research on public transportation issues			
Disseminate information			

	SCOPT	MTAP	20-65 Panel
Create a professional network for sharing of information			
Provide technical assistance			
Collect information on new and improved equipment and practices			
Help states implement FTA programs			

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## **Appendix B. Appendix B: Meeting Minutes for Development of the Strategic Plan**

### **SCOPT Executive Committee Meeting May 21<sup>st</sup> – 9:00am-4:30pm**

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#### **Participants**

Shailen Bhatt, Delaware DOT

- Ed Coven, Florida DOT
- Monique Currie, Wisconsin DOT
- John Dockendorf, Pennsylvania DOT
- Sharon Edgar, Michigan DOT
- Ron Epstein, New York State DOT
- Bobby Killebrew, Texas DOT
- Tom Mauser, Colorado DOT
- Beth Nachreiner, Maryland SHA
- Brett Taylor, Delaware DOT
- Dinah Van der Hyde, Oregon DOT
- Gwen Chisholm-Smith, TRB
- Christopher Hedges, TRB
- Shayne Gill, AASHTO
- Andy House, AASHTO
- Janet D'Ignazio, ICF International
- Jenny O'Connell, ICF International

#### **Meeting Minutes**

##### **Introduction and Background**

###### **Presentation**

Janet D'Ignazio began the meeting by explaining the impetus for the project to develop a Strategic Plan for the AASHTO Standing Committee on Public Transportation (SCOPT) and the purpose of the meeting. She described the background research done to date by the ICF team, and presented a number of observations from the research. She then opened up the floor for discussion about the observations.

###### **Discussion: Observations**

*Meeting participants offered comments about specific observations. These comments are summarized below.*

Shayne Gill (AASHTO) noted that with regards to the observation that there are “no formal lines of communication or connection between SCOPT and other AASHTO committees,” there are actually some formal relationships. First, Secretary Bhatt is on a special intermodal committee that includes the Chairs of SCOH, SCORT, SCOPT, and others, and Ron Epstein is on a reauthorization steering committee with representatives from multiple standing committees. Second, there are several SCOPT members who are or have been formal liaisons to other standing committees, including SCOP, and members of other committees who are or have been liaisons to SCOPT.

A short discussion ensued about the “report back” structure for the liaisons, and the meeting participants acknowledged that while the liaisons are theoretically reporting back to SCOPT, they’re actually reporting back to MTAP because of MTAP’s monthly meeting structure. As a result, some information never makes it to the SCOPT members who are not also in MTAP.

**Discussion: On a scale of 1-5 (1 being very badly, 5 being very well), how effectively are SCOPT, MTAP, and NCHRP 20-65 providing a collective and aligned voice for state DOT public transportation?**

Ms. D’Ignazio posed this question to the group, and asked participants to provide a ranking for how well these three organizations are doing presenting this information for “your public transportation colleagues,” “your individual DOT,” “transit agencies that are recipients of Federal pass-through funds,” “AASHTO and its committees,” “non-profits and other non-transit agency Federal pass-through funding recipients,” and for the “transportation industry overall.”

In general, the rankings indicated that the state DOT public transportation community is communicating fairly well internally (with their colleagues and to the individual state DOTs), but is not doing a very good job projecting the message outward (to transit agencies and other non-profits, to other AASHTO committees, and to the industry overall).

Secretary Bhatt posed the question of how the participants would rank APTA if they had to. A conversation ensued about APTA’s role versus AASHTO’s role. Participants noted that APTA has a different charge than SCOPT, so comparing the two is not comparing apples to apples: APTA is industry focused, while SCOPT is state focused. Furthermore, APTA has a large budget for product dissemination (near \$800 thousand) that sets them apart from AASHTO.

Despite the differences, Secretary Bhatt commented that it might be worthwhile to borrow some of APTA’s strategies for SCOPT to more effectively communicate with constituents.

## **Constraints and Opportunities**

### **Presentation**

Ms. D’Ignazio presented the constraints and opportunities for change surrounding NCHRP 20-65, SCOPT, and MTAP. First, the NCHRP 20-65 Panel is part of the TRB organization so its current structure, governing guidance and membership appointment is not subject to change through the SCOPT Strategic Planning process. SCOPT can suggest or recommend changes but TRB is the decision maker. In addition,

Chris Hedges pointed out that NCHRP cannot make policy recommendations as a part of research. However, AASHTO and its committees SCOPT can use the NCHRP research to inform policy debate internally and advocate policy changes externally. There are relatively few constraints surrounding SCOPT's structure and charge other than its alignment with AASHTO's Strategic Plan and governance. Therefore, this Strategic Planning process can be used to help SCOPT validate or redefine its charge (mission statement) and establish its internal structure and relationship with MTAP and any AASHTO committees. Finally, MTAP is a dues based organization, so changes in its mission and internal structure will need to be confirmed in some way with its members. That said, the meeting participants felt strongly that the way in which MTAP communicates with and operates under the SCOPT umbrella can be revised.

### **Discussion: AASHTO Strategic Plan**

Monique Currie asked Secretary Bhatt whether the new AASHTO Strategic Plan could dramatically alter the content of the SCOPT Strategic Plan. Secretary Bhatt does not have a lot of information yet about the specifics of the new AASHTO Strategic Plan, but noted that discussions for this plan have dealt primarily with the question of whether the committee structures work well, and how to better connect the whole organization. Shayne Gill commented that based on what Secretary Bhatt noted, SCOPT can revise its charge statement through this Strategic Planning process, and can make additions later in order to make it fully align with AASHTO's new plan, if necessary.

Ms. D'Ignazio suggested that the SCOPT Strategic Plan include a formal next step for validating the SCOPT plan against the AASHTO plan once it is released.

### **Organizational Structure**

Ms. D'Ignazio introduced the topic of the relationships between SCOPT, MTAP and NCHRP 20-65 by asking the group to describe outcomes they would like to see as a result of the Strategic Planning discussions. She provided an example (first bullet) and the group brainstormed their ideas:

- A collective and aligned voice related to public transportation at state DOTs for communicating with AASHTO staff and committees internally and related industry organizations externally.
- Clearly defined relationship between SCOPT and MTAP.
- Clearly defined role for SCOPT that helps to close some of the APTA gaps and the AASHTO gaps.
  - SCOPT is a minority within AASHTO because they represent a subject that is not a strong focus of many state DOTs, and SCOPT is a minority within APTA since it represents state DOT public transportation which for most states does not include a direct responsibility for operating transit service. From that viewpoint, SCOPT already has a niche, but it needs to figure out how to capitalize on it within APTA and AASHTO.
- Increase SCOPT's influence to stakeholders who rely on AASHTO's buy-in, and demonstrate that AASHTO is a resource that state DOTs can use to collaborate, coordinate, and learn about public transportation.
  - Many states rely on national organizations to serve their state interests since states do not have the time or resources to do everything on their own. SCOPT could and should

be a leader on state public transportation issues so that others can align with them in the same way that transit operating agencies align with APTA.

- Better promote transit issues to the group of CEOs who are members of AASHTO through more robust participation in regional meetings.
- Engage more in the discussion about policy development and financing options for public transportation.
  - Doing so requires bringing transit issues to the table and engaging non-transit professionals to increase awareness and understanding. SCOPT should be the go-to group for transportation policy information, guidance, and discussions, and there should be a more formal structure in place to reinforce that role for SCOPT.
- Advocate for the public transportation agenda within AASHTO and within the state DOTs, not just with outside stakeholders or decision makers. SCOPT should be the group that gives state transit directors the support and guidance that they need to advance the agenda for the entire mode.
- Grow the state authority relationships so that state systems are not being represented by one large system. That is, focus on statewide public transportation issues, and do not get bogged down by large metropolitan transit agencies.
  - Host peer exchanges to help support an understanding about the relationship between the state DOT and transit agencies.
  - Develop an approach for how SCOPT can reach down into the states and influence transit.
- Create technical assistance, support, and peer exchange to help state DOT transit professionals advance their role within SCOPT and within the state DOT.
- Support AASHTO's goal of doubling transit ridership by 2030.
  - Doing so might in part be a matter of improving AASHTO's understanding of public transportation.

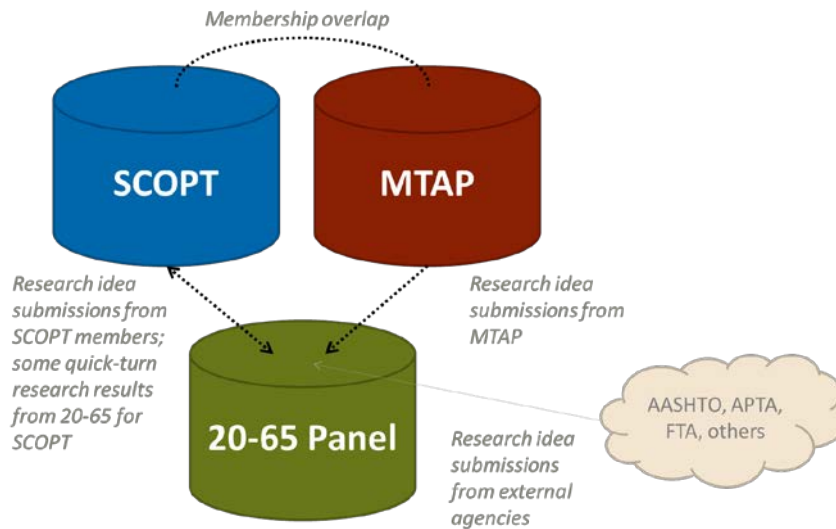
### **Discussion: MTAP Constraints and Opportunities**

Because there was some confusion among the group about the history of MTAP and its position within AASHTO and relationship to SCOPT, Shayne Gill provided a brief history of MTAP's origin. MTAP was created independently of AASHTO, but has since been brought under the AASHTO umbrella. The coordination that does exist between MTAP and SCOPT occurs primarily because the two have duplicate membership. AASHTO staff play a strong role in helping to keep the two groups coordinated. Bobby Killebrew added that as SCOPT has been less active, MTAP picked up some of the responsibilities that probably should fall within SCOPT's role. Finally, Ron Epstein commented that MTAP provides stability in a changing environment of CEOs, but noted that although MTAP should have independence, SCOPT leadership should be invited to participate in their discussions.

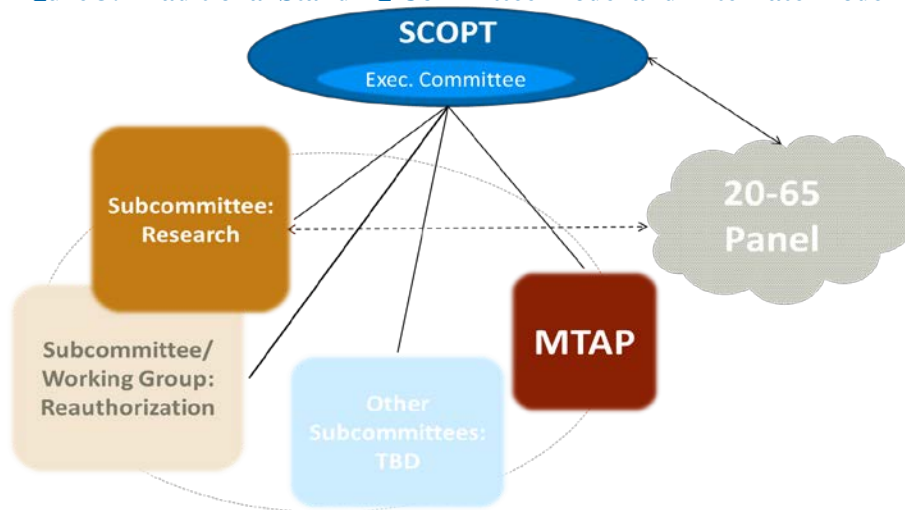
## Relationship Presentation

Ms. D’Ignazio presented a view of the current relationships between SCOPT, MTAP and NCHRP 20-65 based on the background research and interviews. This structure is shown in Figure 1 below. Ms. D’Ignazio then presented the traditional standing committee structure for AASHTO as a potential alternative to SCOPT’s current model. This structure is shown in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Current Relationships**



**Figure 3: Traditional Standing Committee Model and Alternate Model for**



## Discussion: Alternate Structure

### *Executive Committee*

Most meeting participants agreed that without a core group of motivated and committed people, the Strategic Plan would not be implemented. However, many people expressed concern about the same few people being asked to participate in all important meetings and calls, and the “meeting fatigue” that can result. Shayne Gill commented that seven years ago, SCOPT had an Executive Committee, but the members were the same people who were on the MTAP steering committee, so they were having multiple calls a month during which they were discussing the same topics.

Meeting participants proposed two potential solutions for this problem. The first is to have alternates for important people who play a big role in SCOPT and MTAP so that if they leave or retire, it does not take a long time to replace them. The second is to make an effort to expand participation among states to serve in some of these executive committee/steering committee positions.

### Proposed Key Functions

The SCOPT Executive Committee will provide oversight for the subcommittees, and will coordinate activities among the subcommittees. Executive Committee members will also liaise between other AASHTO standing committees, and will report out to the rest of the group on a regular basis.

### *Subcommittees*

#### **Subcommittee on Research**

Gwen Chisholm-Smith and John Dockendorf commented that the option of having the Chair of the Subcommittee on Research also serve as the Chair of 20-65 can only be a suggestion to TRB. All participants understood and agreed.

Meeting participants discussed the value of having a SCOPT Subcommittee on Research. Janet D’Ignazio explained that key responsibilities of a Subcommittee on Research could include encouraging SCOPT committees and members to identify research, coordinating the call for research within SCOPT, and reviewing and rationalizing research ideas submitted to recommend priorities that SCOPT should support. When asked why research ideas need to be rationalized, Ms. D’Ignazio noted that one of the issues uncovered during the background research for the Strategic Plan was that SCOPT and MTAP do not have a collective voice; rationalizing research ideas would help to ease that challenge, even if the NCHRP20-65 Panel modifies or rejects the SCOPT research priorities.

Under the current structure, all of the research ideas submitted by SCOPT members are individual ideas that are not discussed collectively. MTAP has some group discussions about research ideas, but many of these are independent as well. Having a process for discussing research ideas might fortify and improve the ideas and would help to coordinate SCOPT’s collective voice. Furthermore, the Subcommittee on Research could also help to identify and establish relationships with other potential research programs, such as TCRP.

### Proposed Key Functions

Ultimately, meeting participants agreed that there is value in having a Subcommittee on Research that helps to rank, rate, and add value to problem statements; track issues that have come up as research ideas throughout the year; identify research programs or agencies to target for potential funding; and evaluate research results to determine if the research has been helpful and inform discussion about future ideas.

### **MTAP as a Subcommittee**

There was some general confusion about what it would mean for MTAP to be a subcommittee under SCOPT. Ms. D'Ignazio proposed that as a subcommittee, MTAP would take some direction from SCOPT; would have a direct voice within SCOPT; could be somewhat influenced by SCOPT in terms of MTAP's work plan; and would take actions that align with SCOPT's overall goals. Within that framework, the Strategic Plan implementation will need to formally define exact roles and responsibilities.

Shayne Gill commented that while MTAP currently develops their own budget and work plan, AASHTO — for administrative purposes — already views MTAP as a subcommittee of SCOPT. In general, meeting participants agreed with the proposed structure with MTAP as subcommittee within SCOPT, but participants identified several challenges with this model. First, Dinah Van der Hyde noted that with MTAP as a subcommittee, the SCOPT Executive Committee could choose to trump MTAP's ideas if there is disagreement among the group. Second, Tom Mauser raised the point that MTAP is pool funded and as such, the members have certain expectations. As a solution to these issues, Sharon Edgar proposed that the Strategic Plan implementation pursue the alternate structure with MTAP as a subcommittee, but caveat the proposal by establishing an action item that will give MTAP the opportunity to work with SCOPT to define clearly the roles and decision making relationship between the two groups.

### Proposed Key Functions

MTAP's key functions are still to be determined, but as a subcommittee they should remain highly independent and self-directed with some SCOPT oversight.

### **Other Potential Subcommittees and Focus Areas**

Meeting participants proposed several other ideas for potential subcommittees:

- Funding and Finance – important for elevating SCOPT's policy position
- Legislative Advocacy – important for elevating SCOPT's policy position
- Federal Regulatory Policy – important for elevating SCOPT's policy position
- Health and Human Services Coordination
- Performance Management
- Safety and Security
- Asset Management

The group agreed that functions to support Finance and Funding, Legislative Advocacy and Federal Regulatory Policy were essential to SCOPT's revitalization. Ms. D'Ignazio indicated that the



implementation plan developed to support this Strategic Plan will need to include recommendations for how this could be defined and structured.

There was also a brief discussion about whether SCOPT is too narrowly focused. Ron Epstein suggested that if SCOPT broadens its focus, it might be easier to solicit greater participation. There are gaps that exist within AASHTO, such as public transportation safety and safety oversight, performance measures and commuter rail which are not currently covered by members of SCOPT, SCOH, SCORT, or any other AASHTO committee. The group agreed that the most significant gap is commuter rail. In discussions that occurred later in the day it was noted that the current SCOPT charge from AASHTO includes “commuter rail” as one of SCOPT’s responsibilities. It was noted that Secretary Bhatt should approach the chair of SCORT to clarify the role and responsibilities for commuter rail between the two committees.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### SCOPT and MTAP Roles and Responsibilities

The meeting participants discussed each of the roles and responsibilities included in the Strategic Plan survey, and proposed several new roles and responsibilities as well. For each of the responsibilities, the group proposed either MTAP or SCOPT as the lead.

#### *MTAP Lead, with SCOPT Support*

- **Develop standards for public transportation programs**
- **Provide feedback to FTA on implementation issues / best practices**
- **Provide technical assistance**
- **Help states implement FTA programs**
- **Collect information on new and improved equipment and practices.** SCOPT should be supporting this responsibility by reaching out to non-MTAP states. SCOPT should also serve as a clearinghouse for developing specifications on behalf of the industry since it’s not being done by APTA, and it is beyond the realm of what MTAP should be responsible for.

#### *SCOPT Lead, with MTAP Support*

- **Recommend/develop policies for public transportation.** As performance measurement rules come out for transit in safety, state of good repair, and asset management, SCOPT will take the lead in the rulemaking process as policy is being created; then, once the rule comes into existence, it should be handed off to MTAP.
- **Provide feedback to FTA and Congress on transit policy and funding issues**
- **Provide research on public transportation issues.** The NCHRP 20-65 Panel has a significant role in this area but an additional role for SCOPT and MTAP is to help identify, screen and prioritize ideas for submittal to NCHRP 20-65.
- **Promote transit as part of an integrated, multi-modal transportation system**
- **Influence public transportation/share information with strategic allies**
- **Coordinate/liase between AASHTO committees and other internal groups**
- **Support AASHTO Strategic Plan**

### **Shared Responsibility**

- **Disseminate information**
- **Create a professional network for sharing of information**
- **Engage in new member orientation.** Orienting new members should be on everyone's agenda and should be called out specifically in the work plans. Orientation efforts should attempt to align individual interests with existing focus areas to help members identify their place in the committee's range of opportunities. Without new member orientation, becoming involved is overwhelming and intimidating.

### **Executive Committee**

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Ms. D'Ignazio explained that the SCOPT Executive Committee is going to be the owner and champion of the Strategic Plan implementation, and should be leading the discussion on who should have what roles and responsibilities as new focuses emerge. Furthermore, the Executive Committee should develop a position description for MTAP members and SCOPT members to ensure the right participation from each state.

#### **Members**

To ensure that turnover does not interrupt the focus and role of the Executive Committee, the meeting participants decided that the potential Executive Committee structure should have the following members: SCOPT Chair, SCOPT Vice-Chair, MTAP Chair, MTAP Vice-Chair, key Subcommittee Chairs, and one active member at-large from each of the AASHTO regions. Having the opportunity to invite new people to participate on the Executive Committee through the AASHTO regions will help keep members engaged and ensure stability for the Executive Committee and SCOPT overall as members rotate on and off the group. SCOPT will need to develop a written purpose and responsibilities of the Executive Committee that does not significantly overlap with any of the Subcommittees, most particularly MTAP.

### **AASHTO Committee Relationships**

#### **Definite Partners**

Meeting participants decided that SCOPT should have a formal structured relationship with both the Standing Committee on Planning (SCOP) and the Standing Committee on Finance, and that an on-going informal relationship with the Standing Committee on Performance Management (SCOPM) would be very useful. The relationship between SCOPT and both SCOP and the Standing Committee on Finance should be formal and ongoing in that there should be a SCOPT liaison who attends their meetings, influences their dialogues, has the full support of the SCOPT Executive Committee, and reports back to SCOPT members. With SCOPM, the relationship should be informal and issue-based; however, an individual should still be assigned as the SCOPM liaison and should have the full support of the SCOPT Executive Committee. Once the specifics are more fully defined, the SCOPT chair should initiate discussion with the chairs of these three committees to establish the formal and working relationships SCOPT envisions.

Participants also suggested that having more formalized relationships with the Standing Committee on the Environment (SCOE), the Standing Committee on Research (SCOR), the Standing Committee on Highways (SCOH), and the Standing Committee on Rail Transportation (SCORT) could be helpful. Ultimately, it was decided that these committees should be considered partners, and that SCOPT should communicate with them as-needed, but that a formalized relationship is less necessary.

However, a discussion about the division of roles between SCORT and SCOPT was raised by meeting participants. SCORT is focused on freight rail and mainly intercity passenger rail. The overlap (or gap) area between the two committees is commuter rail, which is likely to become a more important area as advancing non-highway modes becomes more of an issue for AASHTO. While meeting participants thought that some of the more technical aspects of commuter rail should be under SCORT's jurisdiction, nearly everyone agreed that commuter rail as a general subject area should be adopted by SCOPT. Some participants suggested having a joint task force on commuter rail. Regardless, Secretary Bhatt will need to discuss who is responsible for commuter rail with the Chair of SCORT, and recommend that SCOPT be the owner.

## Strategic Plan Goals

The meeting participants had a discussion about the draft strategic goals, and finalized six goals:

1. Lead and influence national policy related to public transportation
2. Advance public transportation as part of an integrated transportation system
3. Strengthen SCOPT's leadership within AASHTO and with other national organizations, institutions, and groups with complementary purposes and goals (i.e., APTA, CTAA, FTA, TRB, etc.)
4. Identify and promote research and develop training to support public transportation
5. Provide world-class technical assistance and support to state DOTs in their delivery of public transportation programs
6. Increase pool of state DOT professionals willing and able to work with and play a leadership role within SCOPT

There was also a discussion about including AASHTO's goal of doubling transit ridership by 2030. Some participants felt that it would be useful to include since it is not well-known that AASHTO has this as one of its goals, and having it as a SCOPT goal would help support members who are trying to advance transit in their states. Ultimately the group decided that their support for AASHTO's Strategic Plan goals is implied in the SCOPT Strategic Plan. Further discussion was deferred until the release of the draft AASHTO Strategic Plan.

## Charge Statement

Ms. D'Ignazio presented the current SCOPT charge statement and asked the group for brief input. Meeting participants suggested the following for the statement: commuter rail should be included

(pending SCORT's approval); standards should be deemphasized; and the concept of advancing transit as part of an intermodal system should be at the beginning of the statement. When rewritten, the statement will be concise and direct. ICF will provide a new draft mission statement consistent with the workshop discussions in the draft of the Strategic Plan.

## Strategies

The meeting participants were divided into six groups of two to discuss strategies for one goal each. They then reported out on their discussion. The strategies below also incorporate some strategy suggestions that were presented during the discussion about goals.

### Goal 1: Lead and influence national policy related to public transportation

- Develop relationships and educate staff and other members of key congressional committees
- Demonstrate SCOPT's value and technical competency to FTA and other U.S. DOT modal organizations that impact public transportation
  - Take an active role in circular requests, notices of proposed rulemaking; speaking with one voice and making coherent comments
- Become a leader within other associations impacting transportation (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, AMPO)
- Develop clear/concise materials in support of SCOPT's strategic positions
- Work with state secretaries and commissioners to leverage state support and demonstrate the benefits of investing in public transportation to influence national policies

**Takeaways:** Communicate

**Action steps:** Develop a communications plan

### Goal 2: Advance public transportation as part of an integrated transportation system

- Encourage AASHTO to develop a method to monitor, track, and report on progress toward the goal of doubling transit ridership by 2030
- Provide technical assistance (research, technology transfer, documentation of best practices, etc.) to individual members on how to advance public transportation within their individual DOTs. Develop a buddy system of like states for information sharing.
- Present best practices at AASHTO annual and regional meetings about successful projects and programs (highway staff to highway staff):
  - Best practices in integration
  - Organizational best practices (i.e., organizational strategies that have successfully integrated public transportation within the DOT)
  - Best practices in state policies for advancing public transportation
  - Best practices in design, guidance, etc.
- Create and update state profiles in transit
- Support technology transfer on state DOT long range plans and 5/6 year plans that support or facilitate the DOT taking a transit leadership role (rely on relationship with SCOP)

**Takeaways:** Provide more visibility about what is already being done and share that with others to help all states adopt best practices

**Goal 3: Strengthen SCOPT's leadership within AASHTO and with other national organizations, institutions, and groups with complementary purposes and goals (i.e., APTA, CTAA, FTA, TRB, etc.)**

- Provide increased outreach:
  - Coordinate and host conferences and meetings
  - Participate in national webinars and ambassador programs
  - Submit articles to relevant trade publications
- Work more within AASHTO:
  - Formalize liaison connections between SCOP and Finance, and stay informed on specific topics within other committees
  - Encourage someone within the higher levels of AASHTO to engage SCOPT and increase the committee's relevance on the AASHTO agenda
  - Leverage AASHTO's public transportation goal to increase SCOPT's visibility
  - Increase influence, participation, and visibility within AASHTO regional groups
- Broaden relationships
  - Identify a target audience for SCOPT's ideas/messages/products
  - Encourage members to submit transit applications for AASHTO awards
  - Communicate via listservs, AASHTO TV, and social media
  - Get on the agenda at gatherings such as Chamber of Commerce meetings, etc.

**Goal 4: Identify and promote research and develop training to support public transportation**

- Appoint SCOPT working task force to identify and track research opportunities and recommend projects and priorities to the Executive Committee for follow-up
- Survey SCOPT members annually to identify their state's current public transportation research and training needs
- Identify innovative leaders who are aware of new issues for research consideration
- Develop a tool for evaluating the effectiveness of SCOPT/MTAP research activities and recommend how these activities could be improved for effectiveness
- Evaluate existing training tools and recommend improvements

**Goal 5: Provide world-class technical assistance and support to state DOTs in their delivery of public transportation programs**

- Build interest in products by identifying the needs of the state DOT members
- Leverage external resources and partners to understand how to bring them and their expertise to the table (FTA 101 is an example)
- Identify innovations and stay up to date best practices and innovations to enhance offerings, and simplify access to information (using the web and MTAP alerts, e.g.)
- Work with new members to help them identify their roles; develop their skills so they can be productive committee members, and identify good projects to bring new people onto
- Identify speakers using geographic relevance
- Rely on peer exchange and expertise to allow states to help other states

**Goal 6: Increase pool of state DOT professionals willing and able to work with and play a leadership role within SCOPT**

- Develop products (e.g., FTA 101 module) to help get people oriented and invested in the topic
- Increase web presence with potential new staff orientation material
- Provide travel reimbursement/scholarships to bring a second person to certain meetings
- Reach out regionally, consider the FTA regions, and participate in regional FTA roundtable discussions to bring in people who are not currently involved in SCOPT
- Provide professional development or AICP credits for meetings to encourage attendance from unlikely participants (e.g., engineers)
- Share best practices through webinars/peer exchanges that could bring in cross-sector people (planning, engineering, etc.)
- Have more transit discussions added to the agenda of bigger meetings; suggest ideas for addition to agendas even if they are not included every time

**Summary/Next Steps**

ICF will send the Strategic Plan Executive Committee a draft Strategic Plan with the SCOPT Executive Committee structure, goals, strategies, a set of recommendations for implementation, a redrafted charge statement, and membership profiles for SCOPT and MTAP by June 11.

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