National Cooperative Highway Research Program

RESEARCH RESULTS DIGEST

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IDAHO TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT RESEARCH LIBRARY

Responsible Senior Program Officer: Crawford F. Jencks

Continuing Project to Synthesize Information on Highway Problems

A staff digest of the progress and status of NCHRP Project 20-5, "Synthesis of Information Related to Highway Problems," for which the Transportation Research Board is the agency conducting the research. Individual studies for the project are managed by Stephen F. Maher, P.E., Manager, Synthesis Studies, and Donna L. Vlasak, Senior Program Officer, serving under the Studies and Information Services Division of the Board, Stephen R. Godwin, Director.

INTRODUCTION

Administrators, practicing engineers, and researchers continually face highway problems on which much information already exists, either in documented form or in terms of undocumented experience and practice. Unfortunately, this information is often fragmented, scattered, and underevaluated. Often it is unknown to the person normally responsible for making decisions related to the topic. As a consequence, full knowledge of what has been learned about a problem is frequently not brought to bear on its solution. Costly research findings may go unused, valuable experience may be overlooked, and due consideration may not be given to recommended practices for solving or alleviating the problem.

There exists a vast storehouse of information relating to nearly every subject of concern to highway administrators and engineers. Much of it resulted from research and much from successful application of the ideas of practitioners faced with problems in their day to day work. Because there had been no systematic means for bringing such useful information together and making it available to the entire highway community, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has, through the mechanism of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, authorized the Transportation Research Board to undertake a continuing study, NCHRP Project 20-5,

"Synthesis of Information Related to Highway Problems." This study is intended to search out and synthesize useful knowledge from all possible sources and to prepare documented reports on

Suggestions for synthesis topics may be sent to the NCHRP Program Director at any time (see address on back). You can also submit your recommendation at: http://www4.national-academies.org/trb/ synthesis.nsf under "SUGGEST an NCHRP or TCRP Synthesis Topic" Topics suggested must be accompanied by a brief scope statement including a discussion of the problem (a paragraph or two). A title (preferably 10 words or less) and the name and affiliation of the submitter are also necessary. Identification of information sources would also be appreciated. Suggestions for updates of published syntheses are also welcome. A committee meets once a year, usually in the late spring, to make the final selections. To be considered at the next spring meeting, all recommended topics should be posted by January 31. If a topic is not selected, the problem statement must be resubmitted the following year to be reconsidered.

Interested in writing a synthesis? For details, contact Stephen F. Maher, P.E. by e-mail at smaher@nas.edu, or by phone at 202-334-3245 or Donna L. Vlasak, by e-mail at dvlasak@nas.edu, or by phone at 202-334-2974.

current practices in the subject areas of concern. Reports from this endeavor constitute an NCHRP report series, Synthesis of Highway Practice, that collects and assembles the various forms of information into single concise documents pertaining to specific highway problems or sets of closely related problems.

THE SYNTHESIS PROGRAM

This synthesis series attempts to report on the various practices, making some recommendations where appropriate but without the detailed directions usually found in handbooks or design manuals. Nonetheless, these documents can serve similar purposes, for each is a compendium of the best knowledge available on those measures found to be the most successful in resolving specific problems. The extent to which they are used in this fashion will be tempered by the breadth of the user's knowledge in the particular problem area.

To develop these syntheses in a comprehensive manner and to ensure inclusion of significant knowledge, the Transportation Research Board analyzes available information assembled from numerous sources, including state departments of transportation. A panel of experts in the subject area is established to guide the researchers in organizing and evaluating the data collected on each topic and to review the synthesis report.

For each topic the project objectives are (1) to locate and assemble documented information; (2) to learn what practice has been used for solving or alleviating the problems; (3) to identify all ongoing research; (4) to learn what problems remain largely unsolved; (5) to organize, evaluate, and document the useful information that is acquired; and (6) to evaluate the effectiveness of the synthesis after it has been in the hands of its users for a period of time.

Each synthesis is an immediately useful document that records practices that were acceptable within the limitations of the knowledge available at the time of its preparation. As the processes of advancement continue, new knowledge can be expected to be added to that which is now at hand; eventually the synthesis may need to be updated or redone. The readers and users of the syntheses are in the best position to know when this has occurred. Whenever you believe that a synthesis should be updated, it would be appreciated if you would contact TRB and let us know.

Studies in Progress and Planned for 1999

Work is currently under way on the topics listed in Table 1. Topics selected for the current program are listed in Table 2. Questions on these topics should be addressed to the project study managers, Stephen F. Maher, P.E. (202-334-3245) or Donna L. Vlasak (202-334-2974).

Selection of Topics

NCHRP Project Committee SP20-5 meets each year to select topics for study using funds from the upcoming fiscal year. The membership of this committee is given in Table 3. Current funding allows for initiation of about 12 syntheses per year. This number, plus some alternate topics, is selected by the committee at the annual project meeting.

The following factors are considered in the selection process for synthesis topics:

- The topic should address a problem that is widespread enough to generate broad interest in the synthesis.
- The topic should be timely and critical with respect to safety, economic, or social impact.
- The topic is appropriate if current practice is nonuniform or inconsistent from agency to agency, or if the validity of some practices appears to be questionable.
- The quality and quantity of useful available information should indicate a need to organize and compress that which has already been learned and written on the topic.
- The topic should not be one where ongoing research or other activities in progress might be expected to render the synthesis obsolete shortly after completion.

Each year many more topics are suggested for the committee's consideration than can be programmed for study in Project 20-5. Nevertheless, the continued success of this project depends on a constant supply of worthy synthesis topics. The interest of those who have recommended topics is sincerely appreciated, and they are urged to continue. Candidate topics are suggested by members of the committee and by a variety of other sources, including state department of transportation personnel; FHWA, AASHTO, and TRB committees; and other practioners and researchers.

Available Publications

The Syntheses of Highway Practice that have been completed under this project are listed in Table 4. Three Research Results Digests on topics studied under the project are also listed. In addition, two unpublished reports are available. The unpublished reports are for information only as they have not undergone the full review process of a published study. Copies of these Syntheses, Digests, and unpublished reports can be obtained from the Publications Office, Transportation Research Board, 2101 Constitution Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20418; by calling (202) 334-3214; and through the Internet at http://www2.nas.edu/trbbooks/NCHRPSyn.html

Index of Topic Subjects

Table 5 is an index to published syntheses, unpublished studies, and digests and topics under study, as well as those expected to be started through 1999.

Conduct of the Studies

Throughout the year, following the project committee's selection of topics, studies are essentially

initiated in the order of priority assigned by the committee. A panel consisting of practitioners and researchers is formed for each topic. At its first meeting, this topic panel thoroughly discusses the topic, refines the scope, suggests sources of information, and identifies and discusses potential topic consultants.

Following this meeting, an agreement is negotiated with a consultant to gather information on the topic, synthesize it, and draft a report. Typically, the agreement covers a period of 15 months. Information gathering and preparation of the first draft of the synthesis report takes about 8 months. This draft is reviewed by the topic panel with the consultant, often at the second panel meeting. A revised draft is then prepared by the consultant. Subsequent drafts and meetings are scheduled if needed, although this rarely occurs.

After the staff is substantially satisfied with the report, a final draft is sent to the members of NCHRP Project Committee SP20-5 for their approval. At the same time, members of the topic panel have their last chance to review the report, which is published as an NCHRP Synthesis of Highway Practice.

Table 1 TOPICS BEING STUDIED

No.	Title	No.	Title
29-01	Robust Research Programs	30-03	Corridor Management
29-02	Roadway Incident Diversion Practices	30-04	Innovative Practices to Reduce Delivery Time for Right-
29-03	Performance Survey on Open-Graded Friction Course		of-Way in Project Development
	Mixes	30-05	Procedures for Assessing Economic Development Impacts
29-04	DOT Project Management Systems		from Transportation Investments
29-05	Impact of Narrow Median Widths on Commercial Vehicles	30-06	Sleep Deprivation Countermeasures for Motorist Safety
29-07	Management and Selection Systems for Highway Mainte-	30-07	Data Sharing and Data Partnerships for Highways
	nance Equipment	30-08	Bridge Deck Joint Performance
29-08	Measuring In-situ Mechanical Properties of Pavement	30-09	Quality Assurance of Structural Materials
	Subgrade Soils	30-10	Maintenance of Highway Edgedrains
30-01	Systems Enginering Processes for Developing Traffic Sig-	30-11	Design and Testing of Pavement Friction Characteristics
	nal Systems	30-12	Techniques Used to Minimize Lane Occupancy During
30-02	Multimodal Aspects of Statewide Transportation Planning		Construction and Maintenance

Table 2 SYNTHESIS TOPICS SELECTED FOR THE FY 1999 PROGRAM

No.	Title	No.	Title
31-01	Recent Geometric Design Research for Improved Safety	31-09	Truck Trip Generation Guide
	and Operations	31-10	Traffic Control System Configuration Management Plans
31-02	Statistical Methods in Highway Safety Analysis		and Implementation Strategies
31-03	Assessment and Rehabilitation of Existing Culverts	31-11	Building Effective Relationships Between Central Cities,
31-04	Performance Measures for Research, Development and		States, and the Federal Government
	Technology Programs	31-12	Validation of Wetland and Biohabitat Mitigation Measures
31-05	GPS to GIS: Turning Data into Information		•
31-06	Facilitation Partnerships in Funding Transportation Research	Alternate Topics	
31-07	Review of Temporary and Long-Term Pavement Marking	31-13	Public Benefits of Proper Maintenance and Operations
	Practices	31-14	
31-08	Impact of New Information/Communications Technology		Planning and Investment Decisions
	on Transportation Agencies	31-15	Project Financing

Table 3 NCHRP PROJECT COMMITTEE SP20-5

Chairman

C. Ian MacGillivray Iowa Department of Transportation Kenneth C. Afferton Henry H. Rentz Federal Highway Administration New Jersey Department of Transportation (Retired) Gary Taylor Thomas R. Bohuslav Michigan Department of Transportation Texas Department of Transportation J. Richard Young, Jr., P.E. Nicholas J. Garber Mississippi Department of Transportation (Retired) University of Virginia Gloria J. Jeff Liaisons Federal Highway Administration Charles Niessner Ysela Llort Federal Highway Administration Florida Department of Transportation Wesley S.C. Lum Robert E. Spicher Transportation Research Board California Department of Transportation

Table 4 COMPLETED SYNTHESES

No. Title, Pages, Price

- 1. Traffic Control for Freeway Maintenance (1969) 47 pp., \$2.20
- Bridge Approach Design and Construction Practices (1969) 30 pp. (microfiche)3
- Traffic-Safe and Hydraulically Efficient Drainage Practice (1969) 38 pp. (microfiche)*
- Concrete Bridge Deck Durability (1970) 28 pp. (microfiche)* (supplemented by Synthesis 57)
- Scour at Bridge Waterways (1970) 37 pp. (microfiche)*
- Principles of Project Scheduling and Monitoring (1970) 43 pp. (microfiche)*
- Motorist Aid Systems (1971) 28 pp., \$2.40
- Construction of Embankments (1971) 38 pp. (microfiche)*
- Pavement Rehabilitation-Materials and Techniques (1972) 41 pp. (out of 9 print)
- Recruiting, Training, and Retaining Maintenance and Equipment Personnel 10 (1972) 35 pp. (microfiche)*
- Development of Management Capability (1972) 50 pp. (out of print)
- Telecommunications Systems for Highway Administration and Operations (1972) 39 pp., \$2.80 (superseded by Synthesis 165)
- Radio Spectrum Frequency Management (1972) 32 pp., \$2.80
- 14.
- Skid Resistance (1972) 66 pp. (microfiche)*
 Statewide Transportation Planning—Needs and Requirements (1973) 41 pp. (microfiche)* (superseded by Synthesis 95)
- Continuously Reinforced Concrete Pavement (1973) 23 pp., \$2.80
- Pavement Traffic Marking-Materials and Application Affecting Serviceability (1973) 44 pp., \$3.60 (superseded by Synthesis 138)
- Erosion Control on Highway Construction (1973) 52 pp. (microfiche)*
- Design, Construction, and Maintenance of PCC Pavement Joints (1973) 40 pp. (out of print)
- Rest Areas (1973) 38 pp., \$3.60 20
- 21. Highway Location Reference Methods (1974) 30 pp., \$3.20
- Maintenance Management of Traffic Signal Equipment and Systems (1974) 41 pp. (microfiche)* (superseded by Synthesis 114)
- Getting Research Findings Into Practice (1974) 24 pp., \$3.20
- Minimizing Deicing Chemical Use (1974) 58 pp. (microfiche)*
- Reconditioning High-Volume Freeways in Urban Areas (1974) 56 pp., \$4.00
- Roadway Design in Seasonal Frost Areas (1975) 104 pp. (microfiche)*
- PCC Pavements for Low-Volume Roads and City Streets (1975) 31 pp.
- Partial-Lane Pavement Widening (1975) 30 pp., \$3.20 28.
- Treatment of Soft Foundations for Embankments (1975) 25 pp., \$3.20 (supplemented by Synthesis 147)
- Bituminous Emulsions for Highway Pavements (1975) 76 pp. (microfiche)*
- Highway Tunnel Operations (1975) 29 pp., \$3.20
- Effects of Studded Tires (1975) 46 pp., \$4.00
- Acquisition and Use of Geotechnical Information (1976) 40 pp., \$4.00
- Policies for Accommodation of Utilities on Highway Rights of Way (1976) 22 pp. (microfiche)*
- 35. Design and Control of Freeway Off-Ramp Terminals (1976) 61 pp., \$4.40
- Instrumentation and Equipment for Testing Highway Materials, Products, and Performance (1976) 70 pp., \$4.80
- Lime-Fly Ash-Stabilized Bases and Subbases (1976) 66 pp. (microfiche)*
- Statistically Oriented End-Result Specifications (1976) 40 pp., \$4.00
- Transportation Requirements for the Handicapped, Elderly, and Economically Disadvantaged (1976) 54 pp. (out of print)
- Staffing and Management for Social, Economic, and Environmental Impact Assessments (1977) 43 pp., \$4.00
- 41. Bridge Bearings (1977) 62 pp. (microfiche)*
- Design of Pile Foundations (1977) 68 pp., \$4.80
- Energy Effects, Efficiencies, and Prospects for Various Modes of Transportation (1977) 57 pp., \$4.80 (supplemented by Synthesis 121)
- Consolidation of Concrete for Pavements, Bridge Decks, and Overlays (1977) 61 pp., \$4.80
- Rapid-Setting Materials for Patching of Concrete (1977) 13 pp. (out of print)
- Recording and Reporting Methods for Highway Maintenance Expenditures (1977) 35 pp., \$3.60
- Effect of Weather on Highway Construction (1978) 29 pp., \$3.20
- Priority Programming and Project Selection (1978) 31 pp. (out of print)
- Open-Graded Friction Courses for Highways (1978) 50 pp., \$4.00
- Durability of Drainage Pipe (1978) 37 pp. (microfiche)*
- Construction Contract Staffing (1978) 62 pp., \$6.00

No. Title, Pages, Price

- Management and Selection Systems for Highway Maintenance Equipment (1978) 17 pp., \$4.40
- Precast Concrete Elements for Transportation Facilities (1978) 48 pp., \$5.60
- Recycling Materials for Highways (1978) 53 pp. (microfiche)*
- Storage and Retrieval Systems for Highway and Transportation Data (1978) 30 pp., \$4.80
- JointRelated Distress in PCC Pavement-Cause, Prevention, and 56 Rehabilitation (1979) 36 pp., \$5.20
- Durability of Concrete Bridge Decks (1979) 61 pp. (microfiche)* (supplements Synthesis 4)
- Consequences of Deferred Maintenance (1979) 24 pp., \$4.40
- Relationship of Asphalt Cement Properties to Pavement Durability (1979) 43 pp., \$5.60
- Failure and Repair of Continuously Reinforced Concrete Pavement (1979) 42 pp., \$5.60
- 61. Changeable Message Signs (1979) 37 pp., \$5.60
- Potential State Resources for Financing Transportation Programs (1979) 34 pp., \$5.20
- Design and Use of Highway Shoulders (1979) 26 pp., \$4.80
- Bituminous Patching Mixtures (1979) 26 pp., \$4.80
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- Transportation Needs Studies and Financial Constraints (1980) 54 pp., \$6.40
- Alternative Work Schedules: Impacts on Transportation (1980) 54 pp., \$6.80
- 74. State Transit-Management Assistance to Local Communities (1980) 34 pp., \$6.00
- Transit Boards—Composition, Roles, and Procedures (1981) 24 pp., \$6.20 75.
- Collection and Use of Pavement Condition Data (1981) 74 pp., \$8.00 76
- Evaluation of Pavement Maintenance Strategies (1981) 56 pp., \$7.40
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- Formulating and Justifying Highway Maintenance Budgets (1981) 49 pp., 80.
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- Evaluation Criteria and Priority Setting for State Highway Programs (1981) 32 pp., \$6.40
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- Highway Noise Barriers (1981) 81 pp., \$7.20 87.
- Underwater Inspection and Repair of Bridge Substructures (1981) 77 pp., 88. \$7.60
- Geotechnical Instrumentation for Monitoring Field Performance (1982) 46 89. pp., \$6.80
- NewProduct Evaluation Procedures (1982) 34 pp., \$6.80
- Highway Accident Analysis Systems (1982) 69 pp., \$7.60
- Minimizing Reflection Cracking of Pavement Overlays (1982) 38 pp., \$6.80
- Coordination of Transportation System Management and Land Use Management (1982) 38 pp., \$6.80
- 94. Photologging (1982) 38 pp., \$6.80
- Statewide Transportation Planning (1982) 54 pp., \$7.20 (supersedes
- Pavement Subsurface Drainage Systems (1982) 38 pp., \$6.80
- Transit Ownership/Operation Options for Small Urban and Rural Areas (1982) 28 pp., \$6.40
- Resealing Joints and Cracks in Rigid and Flexible Pavements (1982) 62 pp., 98. \$7.20
- Resurfacing with Portland Cement Concrete (1982) 90 pp., \$8.40
- 100. Managing State Highway Finance (1982) 23 pp., \$6.40

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Administration of Research, Development, and Implementation Activities in Oriented Directional Signing (1990) 41 pp., \$8.00 Highway Agencies (1984) 49 pp., \$8.00 Innovative Strategies for Upgrading Personnel in State Transportation 114. Management of Traffic Signal Maintenance (1984) 134 pp., \$10.80 Departments (1990) 35 pp., \$7.00 (supersedes Synthesis 22) 164 Measures to Curtail State Fuel Tax Evasion (1990) 14 pp., \$7.00 115. Reducing Construction Conflicts between Highways and Utilities (1984) 73 Transportation Telecommunications (1990) 92 pp., \$10.00 (supersedes pp., \$8.80 Synthesis 12) Asphalt Overlay Design Procedures (1984) 66 pp., \$8.40 Traffic Signal Control Equipment: State of the Art (1990) 43 pp., \$8.00 Toll Highway Financing (1984) 29 pp., \$7.20 Measurements, Specifications, and Achievement of Smoothness for Pavement Construction (1990) 34 pp., \$8.00 Detecting Defects and Deterioration in Highway Structures (1985) 52 pp., 168. 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Highway Tort Liability Management Programs (1994) 40 pp., \$11.00

Technology Transfer in Selected Highway Agencies (1989) 38 pp., \$8.00

Highway Industry (1989) 45 pp., \$8.00

^{*}These syntheses are available from TRB in microfiche form only at a cost of \$10.00 each.

Table 4 (continued)

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