

DATE: December 17, 2016

TO: Distribution

FROM: Gwen Chisholm Smith, Project Manager
Transit Cooperative Research Program

Re: Request for FY 2017 Synthesis Topics
Transit Cooperative Research Program

The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) is seeking potential study topics for the **FY 2017 TCRP Synthesis Program**. The TCRP was created by memorandum agreement between the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine acting through the Transportation Research Board; the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); and the Transit Development Corporation (TDC), a non-profit educational and research organization established by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). The **Synthesis Program** reports on various practices, and is designed to produce a compendium of the best knowledge available on those practices found to be the most successful in resolving specific problems. Syntheses are relatively short, targeted for about 40-60 pages plus reference materials.

Ideas submitted for study topics form the basis for selection of the annual Synthesis Program. Topics are selected by a project panel that meets once a year, typically in May. The TCRP project panel members perform a preliminary screening and ordering of the topics. At the annual meeting they discuss the highest rated topics and make their final selection. The governing board of the TDC, which also serves as the TCRP Oversight and Project Selection (TOPS) Committee, then gives final approval of the selected topics. It is expected that 5-6 new topics will be selected for the FY 2017 Synthesis Program.

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 problem; (3) to identify all ongoing research (4) to learn what problems remain largely unsolved and; (5) to organize, evaluate, and document the useful information that is acquired. Ideas for study topics may be submitted by anyone at anytime. However, the closing date for consideration of ideas for study topics in FY 2017 is **March 17, 2017**. Instructions for how to propose new topics can be found at the following site:

<http://www.trb.org/Studies/Synthesis/SynthesesSubmittal.asp>

In addition to suggestions for new topics of study, please feel free to suggest updates of published syntheses.

Information on the TCRP Synthesis Program, including studies currently underway and all completed studies can also be accessed through the following site:

<http://www.trb.org/SynthesisPrograms/Public/SynthesisProgram.aspx>

Thank you very much for your consideration. Your willingness to participate in the identification of relevant transit synthesis topics is a key element of a successful, industry-driven TCRP. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at 202/334-3246 or gsmith@nas.edu.

Enclosures

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR SYNTHESIS TOPICS

for

TCRP PROJECT J-7

Synthesis of Information Related to Transit Problems

The following criteria have been established to aid the project committee in the selection of topics for synthesis.

1. Generality of practice on the topic - to measure the expected use of synthesis document.
2. Lack of uniformity and variation in quality of practice - to measure the degree to which a synthesis document might serve to improve current practice. There would seem to be little need for information synthesis on a topic where practice is of uniform high quality.
3. Criticality and timeliness of the topic with respect to safety, economic impact and social impact - to measure the importance of the topic, either in its own light or in its relation to other topics, and to consider the sensitivity of the larger system that includes the topic to decisions made within the topic.
4. Quality and quantity of useful available information - to measure the need to organize and compress that which has already been learned and written on the topic.
5. Absence of ongoing research or other forthcoming potential release of significant information - to avoid a synthesis undertaking likely to be rendered obsolete by the release of new information shortly after its completion.

**SUGGESTED FORMAT
FOR
RECOMMENDED SYNTHESIS TOPICS**

Synthesis of Information Related to Transit Practices

- TITLE:** Preferably ten words or less
- SUBMITTED BY:** Name of submitter and organization
- SCOPE:** This statement should be brief (i.e. one or two paragraphs), but there is not a limit on length. It should describe the problem and identify the parts to be covered by the synthesis. The proposed study should be able to be accomplished in approximately 400 hours of professional time.
- INFORMATION SOURCES:** Optional - organizations, individuals, or literature references
- Submit Topics to:** <http://www.trb.org/Studies/Synthesis/SynthesesSubmittal.asp> or
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