AR040 – Freight Rail Standing Committee
TRB Research

How Research Statements Become Funded TRB Projects

February 19, 2019
Agenda for Today’s Session

• Provide an overview of TRB’s AR040
• Introduce the research cycle and the process used to develop Research Statements
• Review and Identify potential Research Problem Statement(s) for development in 2019
• Identify potential sponsors
• Outline next Steps
Background on AR040

• TRB Committee Focused on freight rail
• In addition to the annual TRB meeting in January, AR040 hosts Summerail where practitioners interact directly with researchers and students
• AR040 has three subcommittees
  – Rail Capacity
  – State & Local Freight Rail Transportation
  – Shared Rail Corridors & Facilities

Please join us
AASHTO & TRB COLLABORATION

• **TRB** brings a structured research discipline to impartially examine topics of interest to state, regional and local transportation system owners, developers and planners.

• **Students** participate in this work and are the future workforce in this industry.

• **States** are the laboratory of these efforts and help shape the research agenda.
Research Cycle

With Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration as an Overarching Theme
Research Needs Statements (RNS) versus Research Problem Statements

- **RNS**
  - Full Development of Research Need
  - Stepping Stone to Research Problem Statement
  - Entered into TRB’s Database

- **Research Problem Statement**
  - Funding Request
  - Manually Submitted to Funding Program(s)
Determining Research Needs

- Build on Past Research
- Existing Needs Database
- Research Ideas

Research Gaps

Research Needs

- Strategic Plan
- RNS
Many Research Paths Are Available

• Federal
  – NCHRP/NCFRP
  – NCRRP (via CRISI funding??)
  – University Transportation Centers
  – Department of Energy

• State
  – State Planning & Research (SPR)
  – Transportation Pooled Fund Program
The Life of a Typical Research Problem Statement

- **NCHRP**
  - Votes Compiled and Presented to R&I for Discussion (Feb. & Mar.)
    - Includes Available Funding w/ Projects Rank Ordered
  - R&I Recommends Projects for Funding to AASHTO Board of Directors (Mar.)
  - Ballot to AASHTO Board of Directors: Each project requires a \( \frac{2}{3} \text{rd} \) approval vote (Jun./Jul.)
  - Panels Formed (Jun. - Aug.)
Success Strategies

- Know the Program(s)
  - What is the Process?
  - What is the Schedule?
  - What are the Problem Statement Requirements?
  - Who are the Qualified Submitters?
  - Are there Research Focus Areas/High Priority Topical Areas?
  - Are Champions Required? If yes, who?
  - Who Prioritizes?
  - Who makes funding decisions?
Success Strategies

❖ Know the Topic
  ➢ Research Already Conducted (Set Up TRID Alerts)
  ➢ Research in Progress (Set UP RIP Alerts)
  ➢ Research Gaps
  ➢ Research Needs

❖ Communicate, Coordinate, and Collaborate
What’s in it for you?

• The opportunity to shape the TRB research agenda
  – To support improved program outcomes for your state.
  – To develop projects which address your current challenges.
  – To develop the next workforce.
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