

Charter of the Council on Rail Transportation

September 19, 2017 (Amended April 10, 2018, to include technical corrections)

Name

The name of this Council shall be the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Council on Rail Transportation.

Purpose

The Council on Rail Transportation shall provide a forum to discuss, recommend, and coordinate with rail stakeholders on freight, passenger, and commuter rail legislation and regulation. The Council shall comment and recommend freight and passenger (commuter, intercity, and high speed) rail policy considerations to the Transportation Policy Forum and disseminate information, tools, and technical assistance to members regarding freight and passenger mobility. The Council shall review and ballot technical documents as assigned by the Transportation Policy Forum and provide direction and assignments to committees on rail issues. The Council shall provide support for and coordinate with a variety of rail stakeholders. The Council on Rail Transportation shall coordinate with the Council on Public Transportation on commuter rail issues related to funding and other public transportation-related topics.

Membership

The Chief Executive Officer of each Member Department may appoint one voting representative and up to two additional non-voting representatives to the Council on Rail Transportation.

Structure

Officers

The officers of the Council on Rail Transportation shall be a chair and vice chair. The chair's and vice chair's terms of office shall be for two years and terminate at the end of the first Council meeting after this two-year period, or two years from appointment if the Council on Rail Transportation does not meet annually. The Council chair and vice chair may be appointed to succeed themselves for additional two-year terms.

Chair

The Council on Rail Transportation chair shall be a member of the Board of Directors and shall be appointed by the Association President. The Council Chair or his/her designee shall serve as the chair of the Council's steering committee. If the Chair delegates this responsibility, the Chair shall be an ex-officio member of the Steering Committee. The Chair will ensure that the Council functions properly, that there is full participation during meetings, that all relevant matters are discussed, and that effective decisions are made and carried out.

Vice Chair

The Vice-Chair of the Council shall be appointed by the Association President. The Council Vice Chair will perform the duties of the Chair when the Chair is unable to do so. The Vice Chair should have a strong background in either freight or passenger rail transportation and play a significant role in the rail program within his or her agency.

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee will be established. The role of the Steering Committee will be to:

- Ensure the general management of Council business;
- Address strategic and emerging issues within the Council scope;
- Determine when and where the Council will meet, including AASHTO meetings and/or an annual meeting site; and
- Work collaboratively with the Association staff to undertake Council activities in a way that helps achieve the goals of the Association Strategic Plan and that fosters Council collaboration with the Association forum, councils, and committees.

The Steering Committee will consist of ten members as follows:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Four passenger Council member regional representatives, one from each of the four AASHTO regions
- Four freight Council member regional representatives, one from each of the four AASHTO regions

Steering Committee members will serve a two-year term. Steering Committee members are appointed by the Council Chair, in consultation with the Vice Chair. Members may be appointed by the Chair to succeed themselves for one additional two-year term.

Subgroups

The Council on Rail Transportation will have two subcommittees:

- **Policy:** Responsible for reviewing and recommending national-level policies that relate to rail transportation.
- **Safety:** Responsible for hosting, promoting and disseminating information on rail safety.

Subcommittee chairs shall be members of the Council to which they report and shall be appointed by the Committee chair. All Council members may participate in the subcommittees.

The Council may establish additional subcommittees, task forces, and communities of practice in accordance with the AASHTO Governing Documents.

Reporting

The Council on Rail Transportation will report to the Board of Directors, except that all policy and multimodal matters will be reported to the Transportation Policy Forum and then to the Board of Directors. The Council shall review and provide input on any matters referred by the Transportation Policy Forum. The Council will also review appropriate technical documents, as determined by the Board of Directors or the Transportation Policy Forum (TPF) Steering Committee.

Meetings

The Council will hold two in-person meetings per year. The date and location of the in-person meetings will be determined by the Steering Committee.

The Council will hold quarterly teleconference meetings, unless an alternative schedule is specified by the Steering Committee.

In the event that the voting Council member is unable to attend a meeting, a Member Department may designate, by electronic notification or letter to the AASHTO staff liaison, prior to each Council meeting, the individual who shall serve as the Member Department's representative at that meeting.

Representation by a majority of all Member Departments, exclusive of the U.S. Department of Transportation, shall constitute a quorum to initiate and to transact general business. A majority vote of those members present, exclusive of the U.S. Department of Transportation, on matters of general business shall be considered binding on the Council. For adoption of a draft policy or technical document, a two-thirds favorable vote of all Member Departments, exclusive of the U.S. Department of Transportation, is required for approval, prior to being considered by other appropriate groups within AASHTO.

Strategic Plan, Annual Accomplishments Report, and Annual Action Plan

The Council shall establish a strategic plan and an action plan to help guide Council activities. The strategic plan shall be consistent with the AASHTO goals and objectives as outlined in the Association's strategic plan. At a minimum, the Council's strategic plan will be reviewed and updated as needed when AASHTO completes a new strategic plan.

The Council will maintain, at a minimum, a one-year action plan that describes the activities that will be implemented, the individual(s) or subgroups overseeing implementation, and a schedule for completion. The action plan shall be submitted to the Strategic Management -prior to the AASHTO annual meeting each year.

Annual accomplishments reports shall highlight the accomplishments of the Council since the last AASHTO annual meeting, and shall be submitted to the Board of Directors and the Strategic Management Committee prior to the AASHTO annual meeting each year.

Ethics

All meetings of the Council and its subgroups will be conducted in accordance with the AASHTO policies governing conflicts of interest.

Amendments

The Council on Rail Transportation charter may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Council membership and then a two-thirds affirmative vote by the Board of Directors.