

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GROUP Committee Triennial Strategic Plan (TSP)

**Committee Name and Number:
AP055, Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation**

Committee Chairperson: Randy Isaacs, Isaacs and Associates

TSP Three-Year Period: April 2012 to April 2015

Date Prepared: February 2012

Current Committee Scope

This committee is concerned with the demand for and supply of public and intercity bus passenger transportation in rural areas. Areas of interest include management, marketing, economics, finance, planning, policy, operations, and specialized services (charter, tourist, and package delivery services). The committee attempts to highlight transportation solutions that provide trips for persons with limited mobility, including the elderly, persons with disabilities or low incomes, unemployed persons, and isolated individuals. The Committee supports the development of improved methods for the coordination of transportation provided by rural public transportation organizations: local, regional and tribal governments; human service agencies, intercity bus companies, and other private non-profit and for-profit transportation organizations.

Notable activities of AP055 to support our scope

1. Research to Practice

The National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation has been held since 1976, the past 35 years. Now held every two years, we will celebrate the 20th National Conference in October 2012 in Salt Lake City. Attendance to 2006 and 2008 conferences was just slightly over 400; the 2010 conference attendance was approximately 350. We expect attendance of more than 400 for the 2012 conference. Approximately 90 presentations are made at each conference, highlighting research and best practice in rural public and intercity bus transportation. Preliminary planning has begun for the 2014 conference.

2. Leadership in Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation Research

Several members of the committee have participated in a number of TCRP and NCHRP studies in the past several years. An informal survey identified approximately 20 TCRP studies in which members were either PIs or sub-contractors.

Several members of the committee are affiliated with University Transportation Centers (UTC) and serve as a liaison between the interests and focus of the committee and research priorities for those UTCs.

3. Fostering the Next Generation

In 2008, the committee established the Student Paper Competition, conducted in concert with the National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation. In 2008 and 2010, the contest provided cash prizes to winning entries of two separate competitions: graduate and undergraduate, and paid expenses for the winners. One of the winners from 2010 is now a young member on the committee. In 2012, the contest has been changed to a graduate paper competition and an undergraduate essay competition.

4. Recognition of Leadership

AP055 is the home of the “Roger Tate Is Smiling” award, given out every two years at the National Conference since 2004. The award was established to honor individuals who, like Roger, have records of passionate, innovative, and unswerving commitment to improving transportation services in rural America.

Committee Future Outlook Statement

Factors and influences that will shape the committees activities

Mobility for residents of rural communities, and transportation connectivity of rural communities to the national network, leads to an increased quality of life for those directly impacted and to a stronger transportation network that contributes to the economic vitality of the country. Access to jobs, to timely, preventive health care, to education for those in rural communities strengthens the country as a whole. Rural transportation services and facilities contribute to livability of each community and environmental sustainability of the country. These transportation services are known to produce the greatest benefits when they are safe, the capital is well maintained and the services operated efficiently.

The Committee supports innovations that develop from models and technologies appropriate to the demographics and needs of rural communities, their economies and social structure to achieve more efficient infrastructure and resource use, better resource allocation decisions, strengthened links between rural and urban communities, and increased consumer choice and well being in satisfying diverse transportation needs. The increased benefits from a more complete, coordinated transportation network can be achieved in ways consistent with social equity, environmental values and expanded freedom of choice.

Emerging issues inside and outside the committee scope

There are many emerging issues that are important to the Committee on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation. The most critical transportation issues with the most direct connection to the committee's work follow:

- Demographics – Population shifts, an aging population, increased disabled veteran population, migrant labor and families,
- Equity - Burdens on the disadvantaged;
- Finance: Inadequate revenues at all levels, rural funding equity;
- Energy and Environment: Extraordinary energy and environmental challenges;
- Infrastructure: Resources necessary for maintaining fleets that operate in challenging conditions; regionalization of health care and other social service networks
- Evolving federal regulations – e.g., DOT ADA, FTA circulars re Title VI and EJ, NTD changes, FMCSA oversight.

TRB's Policy & Organizational Group has identified a number of critical cross-cutting issues that will require collaboration and action from an array of TRB committees in order to make meaningful advances in addressing these needs adequately. The Committee on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation is prepared to contribute to the following:

- Equity – Burdens on the disadvantaged
- Energy, Environment and Climate Change - extraordinary challenges to increase livability and sustainability of our rural communities
- Finance – inadequate revenues for maintaining capital and facilities, as well as providing service in low density, expansive geographic areas.
- Emergency Preparedness Response, and Mitigation – vulnerability to natural disasters
- Safety – insufficient improvement
- Human and Intellectual Capital – inadequate investment in innovation.

Committee Goals

The Committee on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation aims to encourage innovations in planning, policy and operations of rural transportation by fostering research that will expand and synthesize pertinent knowledge, and to improve information exchange and dissemination about rural public and intercity bus transportation concepts and applications.

The committee has four major goals for the next three years:

- Promote research which increases the understanding of needs and challenges associated with rural access and mobility, and which develops innovations in

development of responses to meet those needs and increase access to employment, education, health care, social and other travel needs.

- Disseminate knowledge on best practices and related research findings to transportation professionals and key decision makers in public agencies and private organizations in order to increase knowledge about the best practices and impacts of rural public and intercity bus transportation.
- Identify and address critical issues related to rural public and intercity bus transportation concepts and applications for key stakeholders and transportation user groups, such as transit operators and users, human service agencies, environmental interests, local, regional, state and tribal governments, and private entrepreneurs.
- Advance technology applications related to rural public and intercity bus transportation. Encourage the exploration of issues related to new concepts of technology to rural public and intercity bus transportation to improve efficiency and effectiveness in service quality, cost effectiveness and connectivity to the overall transportation network.

The committee goals for the long-term (through 2019) include:

- Build interest and create opportunities for the next generation of researchers, consultants and trainers to contribute to new developments in rural public and intercity bus transportation.
- Advance common research and collaborative activities to establish fact-based decisions about the role of rural public and intercity bus transportation in improving quality of life and economic strength of local communities, the nation and the world.

Committee Plan

The committee plan contains specific actions to achieve our stated goals. This list will be used in the coming 3 years to address the four major goals identified by the committee. Most of these activities move the committee forward on more than one goal.

Committee Membership

- Strengthen the functioning of the committee and create opportunities for involvement of young and new to the field researchers and other professionals by actively recruiting:
 - additional regular members to the committee to the full complement of 25 members by 2013 through committee outreach and improved marketing of committee activities.
 - at least 3 additional young members to the committee within the next 2 years. The committee-sponsored Graduate Student Paper Competition and the Undergraduate Essay Competition represents one avenue to encourage young

scholars to consider issues related to rural public and intercity bus transportation. Young members will be recruited through the competition as well as through outreach to UTCs throughout the country.

- additional international membership by communicating with associations such as International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association (ICTPA) and others with interest in rural transit.
- Maintain balanced representation of both established and emerging applications of rural public and intercity bus transportation. Ensure that Committee membership reflects a balanced composition with regard to geography, gender, race, ethnicity, age and organizational affiliation.

Identify Critical Issues for Research and Practice

- Collaborate with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to promote research and best practices - provide input and assistance to FTA in defining the future of rural public and intercity bus transportation and in addressing needs at the local, state and national level, as well as establishing a vision for local, state and federal roles. Coordinate with and assist FTA in the dissemination of best practices reviews on the deployment and evaluation of rural public and intercity bus transportation projects.
- Enhance the AP055 web site (www.trbruralcommittee.org) for knowledge sharing, outreach, and promoting research. Post the Committee Strategic Plan, committee organization details, presentations and papers from committee activities and sessions, and a schedule of pertinent events. Include an on-line method for interested people to register as committee “friends” and to comment on proposed activities. Use the committee web site as an outreach mechanism, by highlighting the committee purpose and scope and inviting collaboration. Develop and publish on the committee website a list of unanswered questions on innovations in rural public and intercity bus transportation in order to inform further research and testing.
- Strengthen sub-committees - Assess the need for any additional sub-committees and strengthen the involvement of committee members in the functions, scopes, and mission/goals of those subcommittees so as to keep a vibrant level of intellectual inquiry present in the committee structure.
- Collaborate with other TRB committees - The Committee on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation collaborates with several other committees across the TRB committee structure in addressing cross-cutting issues. A complete list of committees with which the Committee collaborates with is provided in Appendix A. The committee will seek sponsorship of joint sessions and research statements to identify critical issues and advance research relevant to stakeholders and users, sponsor or co-sponsor sessions and workshops at annual meetings, and organize a biennial conference on new

concepts of rural public and intercity bus transportation. The committee will provide liaisons with TRB committees and other groups.

- Reach out to organizations and groups beyond TRB - Strengthen relationships with professional associations, the global community, and multidisciplinary groups of researchers. This includes AASHTO, ABA, APTA, CTAA, NADO, NACO, and UMA.

Advance Research Activity on Issues of Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation

- Strengthen the functioning of the Research Sub-Committee with additional membership and identification of a chair at each annual meeting. Tasks will include submission of problem statements to research needs database.
- Sponsor at least two sessions on rural public and intercity bus transportation at the TRB Annual Meeting. Actively solicit research papers of national and international interest for review, presentation and publication in TRR.
- Develop Research Problem Statements - The committee will be enhancing its influence on shaping and defining the research agenda by developing well-conceived research problem statements, in collaboration with other TRB Committees and other organizations. These research problem statements will be placed in the TRB Research Needs Statements database and made available to the broad community so that the field is continuously defining and updating the critical issues and needs. These research needs statements will be channeled to various sponsors for potential funding streams to become a reality, thus contributing further to enhancing the vitality and growth of the field. Submitting numerous research statements to TCRP Syntheses and TCRP.
- Encourage research to identify legal, regulatory, and procedural impediments to innovative pricing on non-highway modes and develop recommendations for future action. Support development of enhanced economic analysis tools that incorporate pricing impacts into project level benefit-cost analysis. Develop and advance a series of synthesis research proposals to collect and organize relevant research regarding pricing interests for critical stakeholders.

Disseminate knowledge on best practices and related research findings

- Partner with FTA and National RTAP to hold the 20th and 21st National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation for 2012 and 2014 focusing on emerging concepts, new research, lessons learned from successful and unsuccessful rural initiatives, and evaluations of current rural public and intercity bus transportation approaches.
- Collaborate on conferences, workshops, and webinars - Initiating discussions and special

organizational meetings with other TRB committees/task forces and national/international associations to conduct specialty conferences, workshops, and seminars on various topics over the next 2-4 years.

- Seek opportunities to collaborate with other agencies and organizations in conducting webcasts/webinars devoted to the theory, practical applications and new concepts in rural public and intercity bus transportation.

- *TR News* - Develop a *TR News* issue highlighting new research, concepts and applications, as well as recent experience, lessons and evaluations in rural public and intercity bus transportation.

Improve Communication Within and From the Committee

- Disseminate information on upcoming events with rural transportation content to the mailing list of Committee contacts and friends.
- Utilize new communication tools as a means to enhance education, outreach and information exchange on the concepts, practices and costs/benefits of rural public and intercity bus transportation such as blogs, podcasts, etc.

Proposed Changes in Scope

No changes in the scope or title are needed at this time.

Appendix A - Committee History

Committee website

<http://www.trbruralcommittee.org>

Membership Information

		January 2012	Proposed April 2012
Committee Membership	Total	14	24
	Young	1	4
	Emeritus	1	1
	International	0	0
Membership gender and racial diversity	Female	6	12
	Male	10	17
	Minority	0	2
Geographic Distribution	NorthEast	6	10
	SouthEast	2	4
	Central	3	5
	NorthWest	3	5
	SouthWest	2	5
Professional affiliation distribution	Consultant	6	10
	Academia	4	7
	Local/Regional Govt.	1	1
	Other	1	0
	Non-Profit	1	3
	Industry	3	5
	State	0	1
	Federal	0	2

AP055 Subcommittees

- National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation Subcommittee (APO55(1))
 - mission to educating and developing support to advance innovative, market-based pricing of transportation services, and plays a lead role in organizing the Committee's workshops that are generally held twice per year.
 - 2012 Co-Chairs Randy Isaacs, Isaacs and Associates and Leone Gibson, Utah Department of Transportation.
 - The chair for the 2014 conference will be appointed at the 2013 TRB Annual Meeting.
- Research Sub-Committee. Leadership and members being developed.
- Committee Communication Chair. Jill Hough has volunteered as communications chair for 2012-2013.

Other Committee Relationships

AP055 maintains close formal and informal relationships with many different committees. They include, but are not limited to:

- ADA30: Transportation Planning for Small and Medium-Sized Communities
- ADA40: Transportation Needs of National Parks and Public Lands
- ADD50: Environmental Justice in Transportation
- APO60: Paratransit
- ANB60: Safe Mobility of Older Persons