AASHTO's
Standing Committee
On
Highways

STRATEGIC PLAN

American Association of State Highway
And Transportation Officials
444 North Capitol Street, Suite 249
Washington, D.C. 20001

November, 1998
Standing Committee on Highways (SCOH)

Strategic Plan

November 1998
Foreword

This Standing Committee on Highways Strategic Plan was approved in substance by the AASHTO Board of Directors on November 8, 1998. It is the culmination of an intensive planning effort by the Standing Committee and the chairmen of its subcommittees. It is intended to be a living document, that will be reviewed and revised as necessary in years to come.

General Background

The Standing Committee on Highway’s strategic planning process was designed to ensure that the subcommittee continue to find value in the subcommittee process, and to also insure the needed cooperation between the subcommittees and task forces on various technical issues.

The strategic planning process was initiated by the Standing Committee of Highways at the October, 1996 AASHTO Annual Meeting, when the Committee was reorganized to provide representation to each of the AASHTO’s member departments. The following steps ensued:

October, 1996 – At a strategic planning workshop held at the AASHTO Annual Meeting in Buffalo, New York, the Standing Committee identified its priorities;

April, 1997 – At a second strategic planning workshop held in Des Moines, Iowa, the Standing Committee expanded this priority setting to identify four areas:

- System Preservation (Maintenance);
- Development and Introduction of New Technology;
- Using Outside Design and Construction Management Services;
- Organization of SCOH.

July - August, 1997 - A task force was appointed by the SCOH chairman with a charge with developing a mission and vision statement, and identifying goals. The task force held two meetings to draft these documents.

November, 1997 - The Standing committee on Highways reviewed and approved the draft plan and scheduled a workshop at the 1998 AASHTO spring meeting to develop a preliminary draft to be presented at the summer meetings of the SCOH subcommittees.

October, 1998 – After careful and thoughtful review by a task force, the comments received on the draft plan from AASHTO member departments and Subcommittee chairmen were incorporated into the report.

November, 1998 – The Strategic Plan was approved by the Standing Committee on Highways on November 7, and subsequently approved by the The AASHTO Board of Directors on November 8, 1998.
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SCOH’S VISION

SCOH will be the leader for achieving and sustaining world class highway systems, optimizing the safe movement of people and goods, enhancing the environment, and sustaining national security.

SCOH’S MISSION

To serve AASHTO members by providing leadership and guidance for developing, advancing, advocating, and deploying progressive highway policies, standards and technologies.
GOAL 1: STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY

Develop and disseminate standards, specifications, technical policies, other guidelines, and technological advancements that improve the quality and safety of the nation’s highway system while striving for compatibility with the community.

Strategy 1-1

Encourage cooperation with appropriate partners and interested parties in the development of standards, specifications, technical policies, other guidelines, and technological advancements.

**Actions:**

1. Involve respective stakeholders in discussions of criteria and refinement of objectives for new standards and specifications.
   - **Who:** SCOH Subcommittees
   - **When:** Ongoing, annual report

2. Publish and communicate AASHTO specifications, standards, policies, guidelines, and technology advancements to customers, end users, and the industry.
   - **Who:** SCOH Subcommittees
   - **When:** Ongoing, annual report

3. Address the requirements and adopted criteria of member departments, other transportation agencies, and the public by developing ITS and other standards which may include entering into agreements with other standards development organizations (SDOs).
   - **Who:** Subcommittee on Advanced Transportation Systems
   - **When:** Ongoing, annual report

Strategy 1-2

Identify and act on research needs.
**Actions:**

1. Review, prioritize, and forward proposed studies to the Standing Committee on Research for possible inclusion in the NCHRP work program or for development as a pool-funded study.
   
   *Who:* SCOH Subcommittees  
   *When:* October 1999 and annually

2. Establish an AASHTO/FHWA task force to determine the feasibility of a national new products research initiative in support of states’ programs.
   
   *Who:* Subcommittee on Materials, SCOR  
   *When:* October 1999

3. Address the loss of federal funds in TEA-21 for the continuation of national research objectives such as LTPP.
   
   *Who:* AASHTO Taskforce on SHRP Implementation, SCOR  
   *When:* April 1999

**Strategy 1-3**

Champion the implementation of beneficial research results and technological advancements.

**Actions:**

1. Charge the SCOH Chairman’s Forum (All SCOH Subcommittee chairs) to initiate and oversee implementation and deployment of major new and ready-to-implement research study results and products.
   
   *Who:* SCOH  
   *When:* November 1998 and as needed

2. Reappoint, reconstitute or replace the AASHTO Task Force on SHRP Implementation as the body to manage the deployment and implementation of major new and ready-to-implement research results and products authorized by SCOH.
   
   *Who:* SCOH, AASHTO Task Force on SHRP Implementation, SCOR  
   *When:* November 1998

**Strategy 1-4**

Identify training needs and foster training for AASHTO members and industry partners.

**Actions:**
1. Appoint a task force to coordinate collecting and synthesizing training course requirements to support member and industry partner needs.

   Who:     SCOH  
   When:    April 1999

2. Task each SCOH Subcommittee to conduct a national needs assessment to determine what additional training courses should be developed.

   Who:     SCOH Subcommittees  
   When:    October 1999

3. Develop and refine the ‘lead-state’ concept used in SHRP as a mechanism to deploy high-risk technical and research initiatives, including training.

   Who:     SCOH Subcommittees  
   When:    October 1999

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**Strategy 1-5**

Promote improved quality, asset management, safety and protection of the natural and human environment in SCOH’s areas of responsibility.

**Actions:**

1. Promote and support the National Quality Initiative (NQI) and state quality initiatives.

   Who:     SCOH, SCOQ  
   When:    Ongoing

2. Promote asset management and advocate adoption of best practices identified by the Asset Management Task Force.

   Who:     SCOH Chairman’s Forum (All SCOH Subcommittee chairs), SCOH  
   When:    April 1999

3. In conjunction with the AASHTO Strategic Safety Plan, publicize innovations that enhance highway and work zone safety.

   Who:     Subcommittee on Traffic Engineering, Subcommittee on Maintenance, Subcommittee on Public Affairs (SCOA), SCOHTS  
   When:    October 1999

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**GOAL 2: HIGHWAY OPERATIONS**
Develop and promote sound highway operations, including ITS and evolving technologies, to optimize safe and efficient vehicle operations.

**Strategy 2-1**

Promote greater use of traffic engineering solutions in member departments in solving operational and safety problems.

**Actions:**

1. Develop and issue a series of pamphlets that set forth current traffic engineering principles and practices.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Traffic Engineering  
   **When:** December 2001

2. Develop and administer a survey to assess skills needed in the traffic engineering function and develop appropriate staffing and training recommendations as well as a recommended plan of action.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Traffic Engineering  
   **When:** October 1999

3. Develop a policy resolution that encourages AASHTO members to consider traffic engineering principles and practices at the beginning of and throughout project planning and development.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Traffic Engineering, Subcommittee on Design  
   **When:** October 1999

**Strategy 2-2**

Improve traffic management to optimize traffic flow and to reduce the number and severity of traffic accidents.

**Action:**

1. Review the recently adopted AASHTO Strategic Safety Plan to identify those elements that can be advanced by the traffic engineering function in a DOT. Based on this review, develop specific activities to implement those elements of the Plan.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Traffic Engineering  
   **When:** October 1999

2. Develop and support specific state initiatives to encourage the continued decline in overall accident rates.
Who: Subcommittee on Traffic Engineering, SCOHTS  
When: October 1999

### Strategy 2-3

Encourage and support the deployment of ITS technologies to improve traveler communication and the safe and efficient movement of traffic.

**Actions:**

1. Develop joint initiatives with ITE, ITS America, APTA, AAR, etc., as appropriate, to promote ITS solutions.

   Who: Subcommittee on Advanced Transportation Systems, Subcommittee on Traffic Engineering, Subcommittee on Construction  
   When: October 1999

2. Complete the development of procurement procedures and practices that are appropriate to ITS solutions.

   Who: Subcommittee on Advanced Transportation Systems  
   When: September 1999

3. Identify barriers and constraints to deploying ITS technologies and propose solutions.

   Who: Subcommittee on Advanced Transportation Systems, SCOP, SCOHTS, SCOPT, SOTE, SOM  
   When: September 2000

### Strategy 2-4

Use ITS and other technologies as tools that enhance the safe, legal and efficient operation of commercial vehicles.

**Actions:**

1. Based on the work of the task force considering the possibility of a national multi-state permit for moving oversize/overweight loads, compare existing multi-state permit agreements to identify commonality and differences and develop potential resolution for any differences.

   Who: Subcommittee on Highway Transport  
   When: November 1998

2. Encourage AASHTO States not belonging to a regional multi-state permit agreement to do so.
3. Encourage regional associations of state transportation departments that have multi-state permit agreements to pilot a multi-region permit agreement.

   Who: Subcommittee on Highway Transport
   When: December 1999

4. Evaluate the feasibility of a national oversize/overweight permit system.

   Who: Subcommittee on Highway Transport
   When: February 2000

5. Prepare a research problem statement to develop uniform, balanced rules and standards governing the permitting of overweight intermodal containers.

   Who: Subcommittee on Highway Transport
   When: October 1999
GOAL 3: SYSTEM PRESERVATION

Develop and advocate implementation of state-of-the-art methods and techniques for highway system preservation.

Strategy 3-1

Develop public outreach initiatives to extol the imperatives of system preservation.

Actions:

1. Identify primary customers and stakeholders in the nation’s highway system.
   
   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance, SCOP, Subcommittee on Public Affairs (SCOA)
   
   **When:** April 1999

2. Identify and share success stories in highway maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.
   
   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance, Subcommittee on Public Affairs (SCOA)
   
   **When:** October 1999

Strategy 3-2

Champion the implementation of improved products, equipment and technologies in maintenance activities.

Actions:

1. Establish a clearinghouse and database or identify and support an existing forum for promoting improved maintenance products, equipment and technologies.
   
   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance, Subcommittee on Materials
   
   **When:** October 1999
2. Conduct field demonstrations as necessary to illustrate successful applications.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance, Subcommittee on Materials  
   **When:** October 2000

3. Develop a marketing plan to gain widespread support for and application of improved products, equipment and technologies.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance, Subcommittee on Materials, Subcommittee on Public Affairs (SCOA)  
   **When:** October 2000

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**Strategy 3-3**

**Develop guidelines to improve the prioritization of system preservation activities.**

**Actions:**

1. Define the basic elements of system infrastructure so the public and decision-makers can better understand the major components of the highway system, its role in the nation’s economy, and the need to preserve and improve it.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance  
   **When:** July 1999

2. Prepare a plan to promote the development and refinement of systems that will help engineers evaluate a highway’s condition and thus select maintenance plans and effective measures that provide optimum benefit.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance, Subcommittee on Information Systems (SCOA)  
   **When:** July 1999

3. Communicate the benefits of proactive system preservation programs.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance, Subcommittee on Public Affairs (SCOA)  
   **When:** October 1999

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**Strategy 3-4**

**Develop guidelines for evaluating the benefits of contracting routine maintenance work.**

**Actions:**

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1. Identify state DOTs, authorities, and local governmental agencies – in the U.S. and abroad -- with highway maintenance contracting experience.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance  
   **When:** January 1999

2. Collect information (successes and failures, costs and benefits, etc.) on current practices in contracting routine maintenance work.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance, SCOQ  
   **When:** April 1999

3. Establish a taskforce to assemble a synthesis of practices, to provide a discussion on each practice, and to develop guidance for DOTs who may be interested in implementing and/or further evaluating selected practices.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance  
   **When:** October 1999

**Strategy 3-5**

Develop and advocate best practice evaluation tools for maintenance, pavement and bridge management systems.

**Actions:**

1. Through a survey of member states, document current practices and identify commonalities and best practices among evaluation methods and techniques for maintenance, pavement and bridge management systems.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance, Subcommittee on Information Systems (SCOA), SCOQ  
   **When:** April 1999

2. Prepare and distribute a synthesis report on evaluation methods and techniques for maintenance, pavement and bridge management systems.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Maintenance, Subcommittee on Information Systems (SCOA)  
   **When:** October 1999

**GOAL 4: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**
Identify, improve and promote best practices in the project development process and design products that achieve a level of excellence in customers’ minds.

### Strategy 4-1

**Define ways to improve consultant services for preconstruction activities.**

**Actions:**


   **Who:** AASHTO/ACEC Task Force  
   **When:** October 1999

2. Identify the major opportunities for strengthening the partnering relationship between DOTs and the consulting community, and make recommendations for further study.

   **Who:** AASHTO/ACEC Task Force, Subcommittee on Design, Subcommittee on Construction  
   **When:** April 2000

### Strategy 4-2

**Improve project coordination and delivery by developing and sharing best practices and performance measures in project management activities.**

**Actions:**

1. Identify best practices and performance measures being used by member states and other transportation agencies, including improved communication and cooperation among agency functions such as planning, traffic, design, pavements, bridges, etc., as well as with transit, rail, and other modes, as appropriate.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Design  
   **When:** October 1999

2. Identify impediments to the successful application of best practices in project development.

   **Who:** Subcommittee on Design  
   **When:** October 1999
3. Establish an approach for broadening the success of the MVCSHTD Project Development Group (which has included up to 15 states meeting semi-annually) so that other DOTs may benefit from sharing project development management techniques.

*Who:* Subcommittee on Design  
*When:* October 1999

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### Strategy 4-3

**Streamline the environmental process to facilitate appropriate and timely project delivery including required permits.**

**Actions:**

1. Identify impediments to successful environmental permitting processes.

   *Who:* Subcommittee on Design, SCOE, SCOP  
   *When:* October 1999

2. Seek definitive guidance from environmental and other "resource" agencies so DOTs will clearly understand the rules, and participate with these agencies in streamlining procedures.

   *Who:* Subcommittee on Design, SCOE, SCOP  
   *When:* October 1999

3. Identify and communicate any federal and/or state regulatory and/or legislative changes needed to accelerate project delivery.

   *Who:* Subcommittee on Design, SCOE, SCOP  
   *When:* October 1999

4. Identify best practices (including a critique of the lessons leaned under the TEA-21 pilot program) of projects where the design and environmental permitting work was successfully completed together.

   *Who:* Subcommittee on Design, SCOE, SCOP  
   *When:* October 1999

5. Recommend procedures and guidelines for improved environmental permitting processes.

   *Who:* Subcommittee on Design, SCOE, SCOP  
   *When:* April 2000
Strategy 4-4

Develop and advocate guidelines and best practices to assure timely rights of way procurement, clearance, and adjustment of utilities.

Actions:

1. Identify issues, impediments, and best practices for each of the main functional work areas in right of way through a questionnaire to member states.

   Who: Subcommittee on Right of Way
   When: November 1998

2. Review, verify, and further explore (through a call-back procedure) responses from those states that provided the most useful information.

   Who: Subcommittee on Right of Way
   When: March 1999

3. Develop recommended best practices and guidelines for each area of investigation and prepare a report of the findings.

   Who: Subcommittee on Right of Way
   When: May 1999

Strategy 4-5

Develop and advocate guidelines and best practices to encourage appropriate coordination with cooperative planning organizations, local governments and with other modes of transportation, to fulfill project purpose and satisfy needs of a wide range of stakeholders.

Actions:

1. Establish a task force to investigate coordination issues and best practices with planning organizations and local governments.

   Who: Subcommittee on Design, SCOP
   When: December 1998, report due June 1999

2. Request an NCHRP synthesis of best practices for coordinating with MPOs, local governments, and other modes. This would include the experience of organizations such as AMPO, NACo, League of Cities, APTA, NASAO, AAR and other organizations, as appropriate.

   Who: SCOH
   When: April 1999
3. Partner with stakeholders to educate designers, public officials, constituent groups, and citizens about the project development process, the flexibility afforded in existing design standards, and the application of context-sensitive design.

Who: Subcommittee on Design, Subcommittee on Public Affairs (SCOA), SCOE
When: October 1999 and Ongoing

4. Evaluate the recommendations of the Thinking Beyond the Pavement National Workshop on Integrating Highway Development with Communities and the Environment.

Who: Subcommittee on Design
When: October 1999

5. Prepare a resource document concerning design exceptions, their legal implications and appropriate documentation strategies to limit risk and exposure to state DOTs.

Who: Subcommittee on Design, Subcommittee on Legal Affairs
When: October 1999
GOAL 5: CONSTRUCTION

Identify, improve and advocate the best available technologies and techniques for construction and for coordinating construction activities with the community.

Strategy 5-1

Identify and advocate best practices in construction and construction management, including innovative construction techniques.

**Actions:**

1. Identify, evaluate, and promote innovative contracting practices, methods, and techniques.
   
   *Who: Subcommittee on Construction, Subcommittee on Materials*
   *When: October 1999*

2. Develop and distribute a national model for a Construction Technician Certification and Training Program.
   
   *Who: Subcommittee on Construction, Subcommittee on Materials*
   *When: October 2000*

3. Identify and disseminate effective coordination and construction techniques to minimize construction impacts within a community, with particular emphasis on maintaining traffic, business, and other customer activities during construction.
   
   *Who: Subcommittee on Construction, Subcommittee on Public Affairs (SCOA)*
   *When: October 1999*

Strategy 5-2
Identify and advocate effective work zone safety programs.

**Action:**

1. Develop a “best practices” guidance document for AASHTO members and others to use to ensure safety and mobility in the work zone.

   *Who:* Subcommittee on Traffic Engineering, Subcommittee on Construction, Subcommittee on Maintenance  
   *When:* October 1999

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**Strategy 5-3**

Advance QC/QA and end-result construction management concepts.

**Actions:**

1. Assemble, publish, and distribute results of experience in and assessment of QC/QA, performance based, and end-result specifications from all credible sources of information.

   *Who:* Subcommittee on Construction, Subcommittee on Materials  
   *When:* October 1999

2. Develop tools to easy implementation of QC/QA, performance based, and end-result specifications by various user agencies, and develop new sections to the AASHTO Guide Specifications to include these tools.

   *Who:* Subcommittee on Construction, Subcommittee on Materials  
   *When:* October 1999

3. Identify lead states and engage them in communicating to their peers the advantages and successes of QC/QA, performance based, and end-result specification usage.

   *Who:* Subcommittee on Construction  
   *When:* July 1999

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**Strategy 5-4**

Identify cost savings associated with constructability and post-construction reviews and promote coordination among designers, construction personnel, maintenance personnel, contractors, and suppliers during the design phase.

**Actions:**

1. Develop constructability review guidelines based on a survey of AASHTO member departments and working in coordination with industry.
Who: Subcommittee on Construction, Subcommittee on Design
When: October 2000
GOAL 6: COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT

Implement an administrative system and organizational structure that assures quality and efficiency in SCOH’s operations.

Strategy 6-1

Structure the Committee to optimize functions and activities, communications and information exchange, coordination and cooperation, and efficiency and accountability among and between SCOH and its subordinate units. Use a self-evaluation process to measure the achievement of AASHTO’s and SCOH's Strategic Plans.

Actions:

1. Establish an ongoing process of self-evaluation for the achievement of the SCOH Strategic Plan.
   
   Who: SCOH  
   When: April 1999

2. Review SCOH subcommittees, special committees, joint committees, and task forces periodically (say, every 4 years) to ensure continued relevance.

   Who: SCOH  
   When: April 2002

Strategy 6-2

Adopt governance documents to inform the SCOH chair, subcommittee (and other subordinate unit) chairs, and general membership of SCOH’s organizational structure, responsibilities and procedures.

Actions:

1. Review existing governance documents.

   Who: SCOH  
   When: April 1999
2. Develop and/or modify governance documents for the operation of SCOH.

   Who:     SCOH
   When:    October 1999

3. Adopt new and/or revised governance documents, and implement necessary changes in management, administration and/or operational policies and procedures.

   Who:     SCOH
   When:    October 1999

4. Develop an operating guide for SCOH members.

   Who:     SCOH
   When:    April 2000