



**NETC ADVISORY COMMITTEE WEBINAR – MINUTES**  
**March 17, 2021 – 9:00am – 2:00pm ET**

**ATTENDEES:**

Ulrich Amoussou-Gueno, MaineDOT	Dale Peabody, MaineDOT
Colin Franco, RIDOT	Ann Scholz, NHDOT
Tanya Miller, VTrans	Kirsten Seeber, CTC & Associates
Andrew Mroczkowski, ConnDOT	Maina Tran, CTC & Associates
Lily Oliver, MassDOT	Nicholas Zavalas, MassDOT
Emily Parkany, VTrans	

**Financial Update – Dale Peabody**

- Transfers
  - ~ CT, MA, ME and VT have transferred their FFY21 funds. The NH transfer is in process. RI is working on their transfer.
- Fund balance is \$2,534,285.75
  - ~ The \$200,000 contract for NETC 20-2 is not executed yet but that total is accounted for.
- There is \$534,852 to spend on projects now, plus \$200,000 in pending transfers.
- Ann – FHWA is using a new transfer form for pooled funds, which must be used going forward.

**Ranking Process: 2021 Research Problem Statements – Ann Scholz**

- The AC will first provide a yes or no for each project. If a project receives three yeses, it goes to the next round of discussion and rating. The rating provided by the states are added to determine the highest ranked projects based on those scores.

**2021 NETC Research Problem Statements - Yes count for all projects/Scores for all projects**

RPS #	Value	Length	Project Title	CT	MA	ME	NH	RI	VT	Total Yes	CT	MA	ME	NH	RI	VT	Total Score	Decision
				Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N		Y / N	Y / N	0-5	0-5	0-5	0-5		
N21CT1	\$200k	18 months	Quality Review and Assessment of Pavement Condition Survey Vehicle Data Across New England	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	6	4.6	4	4	5	5	3.67	26.27	Fund
N21ME3	\$210k	24 months	Sustainable Biomass-Based Sealant for Service Life Extension of Concrete Structures and Pavements	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	6	4.56	4	4	4	4	3.44	24	Fund
N21NH1	\$200k	36 months	Initiating Seed Production for Effective Establishment of Native Plants on Roadsides in New England	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	5	4.55	2.7	3	4	3	5	22.25	Fund
N21MA1	\$200k - \$250k	30 months	Determining the Effect of Changing the Asphalt Binder Source Between Mixture Design and Production on a Balanced Mixture Design (BMD) in New England	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	5	4.4	5	4	4	0	4	21.4	Contingent
N21ME1	\$200k	24 months	ATSPM Data Analytics for Improving Traffic Safety	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	4	4	3.11	5	3	1	5	21.11	Not funded
N21ME2	\$200k	24 months	Evaluation of Data Messaging Signs in New England	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	4	2.67	3.8	5	3	2	4	20.47	Not funded
N21MA2	\$200k	24 months	Network-Level Guardrail Inventory and Condition Evaluation	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	5	4.1	3.78	3	2	2	3	17.88	Not funded
N21RI1	\$140k	18 months	Developing an Affordable, Accurate and Safe Pavement Survey Method by Applying Machine Learning Techniques on the Road Images		Y	N	N	Y	Y	3-4		4	2	1	4	3.33	14.33	Not funded
N21RI2	\$195k	24 months	Integration of Asphalt Pavement Structural and Mix Design for Sustainable Infrastructure	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	4	3.33	2.95	3	2	3	4	18.28	Not funded

**CT1: Quality Review and Assessment of Pavement Condition Survey Vehicle Data Across New England**

- Tanya/Emily – The project is valuable but the implementation timelines depend on research results, so the VT SME is worried that they might not be timely. VT is putting a lot of effort into an asset management system based on their pavement management system so this project is not necessary. Their SME is interested in being on the TC.
- Dale – ME’s SME liked this project. Having a reliable verification process, even if we had to send the ARAN and crew to another state, would help ME meet the requirements of their DQMP and would save them engineering time. This was tried at UMass Dartmouth a few years ago, for measuring roughness (IRI), and we did not get any useful results from it. How will this project be different?
- Ann – NH SME’s biggest concern is pending AASHTO standards that propose means and methods for certifying the accuracy of rut and crack measuring subsystems. This will require huge test areas, tools that are not currently owned by NHDOT, and statistical analysis that exceeds their experience, requiring additional education. The results of this project should implement anything that’s coming from AASHTO.

- ~ Ann - If there is a certification facility that all states use, who pays to maintain it? Colin – Walaa Mogawer has it at an airfield for the IRI and sends them a bill.
- Colin – This a good project because it will get all of the states together, doing the same thing, talking the same language, having the same cutoff/trigger values, etc. The PI will have to figure out what AASHTO is doing and what FHWA is doing with Long-Term Pavement Performance program and how they figured out how to get quality data from their vendors.
- Implementation discussion
  - ~ Dale – The TC should discuss where the vehicle validation will take place. ME won't take their vehicle outside of NE to validate it so make sure the project is regional.
  - ~ Emily – Their worry is if there are no results for a while, where would it be in their cycle is a challenge. For states that have their own van what will be their process? For states that outsource (VT), what will be their process? FHWA supports outsourcing because you get newer vans and technology.
  - ~ Lily – They have a dedicated team and vans that collect pavement data. Don't know how this will be implemented.
    - Each state would have to contribute a vehicle to make this happen. The contractor won't be able to bring different vehicles for this project. TC would need to make this happen.
      - Emily – This demonstrates that a project that we all think is a good idea has implementation challenges.
  - ~ Emily – Calibration is 2-3 sections that multiple bands can cover to understand the variance between the vans. This may be difficult. How is VT going to send a van to another state for calibration?
    - Colin – Put into their contracts with the outsource van that want to see the calibrations on a site that has been improved.
  - ~ Dale – Implementation comments: It is likely the research will have high implementation potential. Comments: Having a reliable verification process, even if we had to send the ARAN and crew to another state, would help us to meet the requirements of our DQMP and would save us engineering time.
  - ~ Emily – The RPS also talks about new FHWA requirements. The Data Quality Management Plans supersedes the LTTP.

### **ME3: Sustainable Biomass-Based Sealant for Service Life Extension of Concrete Structures and Pavements**

- Tanya – VT SME doesn't see an immediate need but this should be developed to get ready for the future push.
- Dale – Joe Stillwell (Bridge program) liked it and signed off on it from a TC perspective. Dale is concerned that if the research is successful and they come up with a biomass-based sealant, how will it be manufactured? There is nothing to order right now that can be used. So then what? Implementation of it would need to be considered up front. ME's maintenance forces don't want to have to mix it themselves. It becomes an implementation challenge, which can be overcome but he's concerned.
- Emily – NCHRP gets lots of proposals on concrete biomass-based additives. There is skepticism in VT on whether the additive would help or even work in extreme weather conditions.
- Ann – Their SME wonders how product would be shared? Will a vendor manufacture it or will the states have to mix it? Their SME is willing to give it a try. If this is implemented it would go through a supplemental spec process in NH.
- Andrew - The research topic is relevant and potential outcome would be useful for CT. However, the anticipated barrier regarding impact of extreme temperatures and thermal cycling should be

adequately addressed. More research should be done on extending the service life of the sealant itself. Many existing concrete sealant products have a relatively short service life.

- Ann – Is this a huge expense for the states related to what they already are using. Are the prods they currently use not environmentally friendly?
  - ~ Emily – It’s more about if the product improves concrete than environmental concerns. Colin – How long would the proof of concept of a new product take? Proving it in a lab is one thing but how it works on site is the tough part and takes longer.
- Dale – This project came from UMass. They reached out to ME because of their relationship with the Transportation Infrastructure Durability Center. NETC could throw this project back to the TIDC and let them run with it.
- Implementation discussion
  - ~ Dale – No implementation comments. The concern is how it would be manufactured, produced and marketed. DOTs won’t mix it themselves.
  - ~ Andrew – No implementation comments. The only concern is extreme temperatures and the thermal cycling it will go through.
  - ~ Emily – It’s difficult to get on VT’s QPL without [National Transportation Product Evaluation Program](#) results. Should this be a research project or do we expect the product makers to do this work and selling us something?
    - Dale – This is or will be a NTPEP item.
    - Colin – It’s premature to go through NTPEP. They look at products further along. Hopefully, there are likely candidates that they can do bench testing on and would like to do some field testing as well in this project.
    - Emily – Not sure where this fits on the NTPEP list of projects. No bridge sealant category but categories for pavement sealing, concrete coating and rapid concrete patch.
      - Andrew - <https://ntpep.transportation.org/technical-committees/protective-coatings-ssc-ccs/>
    - Dale – NTPEPs program starting in December in 2021 and finishing in December 2022.
    - Colin – The TC should look out for the NEPEP sealers. Dale – Joe Stillwell, who would be the TC chair of this project is a member on the NTPEP committee.
  - ~ Ann – This should be easy to implement quickly through Supplemental Specification. Eventually, if product manufacturers are involved, a revised QPL approach could be implemented.
  - ~ Lily – Technology readiness level is at the early stage and a long way to go. No comments from MA’s concrete person.

#### **NH1: Initiating Seed Production for Effective Establishment of Native Plants on Roadsides in New England**

- This one received a couple of low scores.
- Nicholas – The MA SME feels the project focuses on three separate issues and should focus on one. There is already good information on appropriate NE seed mixes for roadsides. How will plots be created in 36 months?
- Dale – His SME retired recently and he spoke to someone else, who was less enthusiastic and didn’t provide written comments.
- Ann – Her reviewer says that there are no New England seed mixes. There is nothing local and NH is buying seeds from PA. MA said they are already available.
  - ~ If a native seed mix were developed and available to NE DOT’s and local municipalities, we could request it be used for new construction and maintenance projects/activities. This project would also identify beneficial best management practices for pollinators at the roadside, which could be incorporated into NE DOT policy and planning for pollinators.

- Andrew – Their SME also indicated there are no local seed mixes.
- Colin – The proposers want to find a way to commercially mass produce the seeds identified from the [NETC 09-2 Effective Establishment of Native Grasses on Roadsides](#). They have seeds but it's a matter of selecting the right ones. Dale – Yes, they know the seeds but have no place to buy them.
  - ~ Business aspect of the project – How to produce the seeds.
  - ~ Once seeds are selected, does it work in NE. Have six sites as a proof of concept for the seeds.
  - ~ Colin – Is \$200,000 the right amount?
- Emily – This project is consistent with several ongoing initiatives that are underway already, including VT's participation in the [Monarch Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurance](#). This research would assist with these efforts by providing guidance on vegetation establishment and helping to ensure that there is native seed stock available. VT would benefit from this regional approach through the sharing of information, development of best management practices, and additional sources of seed providers.
- Dale – His SME indicated that this project is the next logical step after the previous NETC Study. We don't want invasive plants and want to help the pollinators thrive.
  - ~ Ann – This RPS was written by a DOT staff, not a researcher. Doesn't know how she came up with the dollar amount. Maybe from NETC 2016 study.
- Emily – She would like this project to be shorter than 36 months. Consider a phased approach.
  - ~ Dale – Tell the TC that 36 months is too long and to shorten it if possible.
  - ~ Nicholas – The project may be designed for 36 months for a reason. We need to find out from the proposer/TC if shortening the project to 24 months would produce usable results.
  - ~ Ann – The project has a longer timeline to include more growing seasons. If the project is shortened, fewer growing seasons will affect proving the concept to develop native seed packets.
- Emily – TC should discuss sites in multiple state. The TC can do observations after the two-year project ends.
  - ~ Colin – Two growing seasons are needed. One to plant and another for mowing and to see how the plants will grow.
  - ~ Emily – There is some appeal to not mowing and letting things grow. Cost savings to mowing only twice per year instead of more frequently.

#### **MA1: Determining the Effect of Changing the Asphalt Binder Source Between Mixture Design and Production on a Balanced Mixture Design (BMD) in New England**

- Colin – He scored this project a 0. Most of east coast asphalt comes from the high seas (another country or countries) but no one knows where it comes from. They all have a different chemical makeup. Loads are blended together. This a great project but it would be too difficult.
  - ~ Andrew – A CT SME mentioned that getting the sources of the asphalt narrowed down would be an act of god.
- Emily – VT SMEs think of this as more of a BMD process. States are deciding whether to stay with current Marshal and Superpave mix designs or go towards performance-based designs. This project would help that effort.
- Andrew – CT SME didn't provide any comments.
- Dale – ME SME didn't provide any comments.
- Nicholas – Another component to the project is that the project would also identify discrepancies in performance between the different asphalt binder suppliers in the region.
- Lily – The goal is not to identify where the origins of the asphalt but what kind of tests are needed if producers switch from what they submitted for lab testing, in order to guarantee the performance of whatever asphalt is used in production.

- ~ Dale – Agrees with Lily. The study doesn't look at chemical aspects of the binder itself but how the binder source changes the mix design.
- Lily – This RPS written by their SME in their materials lab. They responsible for writing the quality assurance plan. They just finished a similar RAP study. They learned that they have to do certain tests to make sure the performance levels are met. This study is the same idea.
- Colin – Andrew has it right. No one can tell you anything about the chemical makeup of the binder and how it impacts reality. He thinks this project is a futile effort.
  - ~ Emily – Not worried about where asphalt comes from but about accepting a mix design at the beginning of a project and the HMA supplier gets a different load of asphalt. Want to know that the performance of the asphalt would be the same.
  - ~ Ann – NH is in between both those viewpoints. The NH SME said if the binder source impacts performance substantially and this leads an agency to require a single acceptable source per contractor and approved JMF, there may be impacts to mix production that generate considerable cost increase.
- Emily – Is the TAAC okay with a 30-month project? Projects should be 24 months or less. Should duration be part of the selection consideration? With her small amount of money she wants to see results soon.
  - ~ Nicholas – Is there a limit in the RPS form? Dale/Ann – Don't think so.
- Ann – NH is not doing anything with [NETC 18-2](#) because they don't have the equipment in the lab. Colin – Same.
- Ann – This project would help NH decide whether to implement BMD at the lowest level.
  - ~ Dale – Good comment. He assumed that all states are doing BMD but they are not. Most are using Superpave.
- Ann – The TAAC is not ready to move this project forward, at this point. Keep it as a contingent project.

#### **Further discussion**

- Projects selected
  - CT1: Quality Review and Assessment of Pavement Condition Survey Vehicle Data Across New England
- Ann – Each state say which of the other top four they would fund. ME3 (Biomass-Based Sealant) or MA1 (Asphalt Binder). Think about if you have a SME to sit on TC.
  - CT – ME3
  - MA – MA1
  - ME – MA1
  - NH – ME3 (not set up to do BMD). Dale – If the RPS wasn't focused on BMD but included Superpave, would it be more palatable?
  - RI – ME3
  - VT – MA1
  - TIED!
- Dale – ME3 – Maybe throw this back to the TIDC? Both NETC and TIDC could chip in. There would be hoops to go through to get to that point.
- Ann – Not broken hearted to go with MA, but she doesn't want to be asked later why NH isn't implementing this. NH isn't set up for BMD yet.
- Tanya – If reduce the time period of the seed project, would the cost go down? Then could we do all four.
  - Ann – Won't know until we have a SOW developed. Dale – Likes the creative thinking on this.

- Dale – Fund the first two projects. Get the TCs working on the next two and let them know that we can't afford \$200k or 36-months. Ann – Could move forward as contingency projects as NCHRP does.
  - Tanya – Can the price be negotiated? Dale – The TCs don't usually change the price unless the TAAC gives them specific instructions.
- **Action item:** Change the RPS form to reflect that if a project is longer than 24 months, it needs NETC approval or it needs to be phased.
- **NH1 – Yes**
  - Emily – This one contingent on the length of the project. Ask TC if they would be willing to do the 3<sup>rd</sup> year observation and next steps. It wouldn't cost NETC anything and would be a smaller phase 2 project. If the TC says can only be done as a 3 year project, would AC still go forward with it?
  - Dale – Seems like this one has a green light but the TC needs to determine if time can be shaved off of the timeframe.
  - Ann – Checked with the proposer about the 36months and they are needed. The project would also create a source of seeds.
    - ~ Emily – The TC should come up with a three-year scope and two-year scope and the TAAC will consider both. If the TC indicates the project wouldn't be useful if it's only two years that would tell them something. There are lots of questions on how to get all six states seeds that would be effective.
    - ~ Dale – Private nurseries could be a source for seeds. The TC would need to think about this.
- **MA1 – Yes**
  - Ann – Do the three states that favor this project feel they can implement it?
    - ~ Emily – Not in the short term but the results will be useful as VT figures out the BMD processes.
    - ~ Ann – The results of this project could help NH decide on whether to implement BMD. Not sure how far they are down the road from BMD due to budget constraints.
    - ~ Who is heading for BMD? ME, VT and probably MA and CT.
- **ME3 – Yes**
  - Do the three states that favor this one feel they can implement it?
    - ~ NH – Yes via a supplemental spec. It would be added to the qualified products list if a manufacturer makes it.
    - ~ Emily – Will this project include discussions with manufacturers? Ann – This isn't written into the RPS.
    - ~ Dale – The challenge will be manufacturing the sealant.
    - ~ Dale – Would like to have a conversation with the TIDC and reached out to them about partnering on this project.
    - ~ Emily – Will reach out to the VT bridge person and is more confident about having a TC member for this one.
- Ann – We are going with CT1, NH1, ME3 with MA1 being contingent. We still want the states to submit TC members for all four project. MA1 will be contingent for now. Will move up if any other project's budget is reduced
  - Dale – Instruct the TC and AC liaisons to take a harder look at budget and project length.
  - Emily – For ME3 (Biomass Sealant) the AC liaison and TC chair should consider manufacturing. For NH1 (Seeds) project, should the SOW identify where the seed plots should be and the minimum number of them? Dale – TC should decide. Should get those points on the table now so TC can consider.

- AC Liaisons
  - CT1 - Andrew
  - ME3 - Dale or Ulrich
  - NH1 – Ann
  - MA1 – Lily or Nicholas

### Other topics

- Emily – Meeting in person. Will it ever happen again?
  - Ann – NH hasn't lifted their travel ban. AASHTO has said no travel through August. NH will probably follow AASHTO guidelines.
  - Emily – VT working at home through 5/31/21. Then there will be a hybrid plan for working in the office.
  - Andrew – CT can't go back to office until building renovations are complete. Everyone will get 8'x8' cubes. Easier to disinfect. Need to purge file cabinets. They be allowed two small filing cabinets and are focusing on getting rid of paperwork where possible. 3-2-2. In the office 3 days, teleworking 2 days, off 2 days. Production rose by 30% when they went to teleworking. Management didn't like the idea of teleworking but numbers back it up. The public perception of teleworking is negative.

### Timeline for 2021 RFPs – Kirsten Seeber

- The AC members will notify staff of project status – Funded, will be discussed, or not funded.
  - ~ **Action item:** Kirsten will email TAAC the project list and status by 3/19/21.
- April – Technical Committees formed to develop Scopes of Work. **Due date = April 2<sup>nd</sup>.**
  - ~ **Yes – NH, CT, VT, ME (may have hard time for seed production), RI (two out of four), MA (Yes, for the two that have been selected yes.)**
  - ~ **Action item:** Kirsten to send email reminder to TAAC. The TC chair will be listed in the email.
  - ~ Emily – She is concerned about the time between award letter to contract execution, about three months.
    - Dale – The award letter is a contingency document. Then ME needs to negotiate the contract. Documentation has to be sent by proposer and then reviewed by ME. Then negotiations take place. It's easier and faster to execute contracts with consultants ( two months). Universities takes a longer (three months). That's why he's pushing hard to get the TC members assigned and the SOW finished, so the contract process can begin.
- Kirsten/Maina will create the first draft of the SOWs, using the RNSs as the basis. Then send draft to the TC chair and TAAC Liaison to review and revise.
  - ~ The TAAC Liaison will pay attention to the implementation section of the SOW.
- Kirsten/Maina will convene the TCs to create the SOW.
  - ~ Need at least four TC members to schedule the meeting.
- July - August – Kirsten/Maina send final SOWs to ME for processing into RFPs.
  - ~ Send the completed SOW to TAAC as a notification of where it is in the process.
- Late September - October – Proposals due to ME. Kim distributes proposals to TCs for evaluation and recommendation of award.
- January – TAAC to approve funding for changes in budget and scope of research projects.



**Open Projects (March 2021)– Kirsten Seeber/Maina Tran**

Project # and Title	PI, Organization AC Liaison CTC Project Manager TC Chair	Update	End Date Budget
<a href="#">18-3: Integration of Unmanned Aircraft Systems into State DOTs</a>	Jag Mallela, WSP E. Parkany M. Tran Jeffrey DeCarlo, MA DOT	Project is complete. Maina is waiting for the tech transfer deliverables and has followed up with the PI several times. The PI will hold a webinar in March 2021. There are 41 attendees registered so far.	3/31/2021 \$146,632
<a href="#">19-1: Curved Integral Abutment Bridge Design</a>	Adam Stockin, WSP E. Parkany K. Seeber Alex Bardow, MA DOT	The TC met on 3/11/21 to discuss the memo on Task 2: Finite Element Studies. The TC decided to respond to WSP in writing, which was sent 3/16/21. The TC is concerned that WSP is veering away from the SOW and would like to get them back on track.	3/31/2022 \$151,316
<a href="#">19-2: Multi-Scale Multi-Season Land-Based Erosion Modeling and Monitoring for Infrastructure Management</a>	Aimee Mountain, GZA A. Scholz M. Tran Neil Olson, NH DOT	The research team is working on developing a toolkit. A project status meeting was held on 1/25/21. The next TC meeting will be in June.	2/28/2022 \$148,035
<a href="#">19-3: Experimental Validation of New Improved Load Rating Procedures for Deteriorated Steel Beam Ends</a>	Simos Gerasimidis, UMass Amherst N. Zavalas K. Seeber Matt Weidele, MA DOT	Task 1 is 50% complete and Task 2 is 25% complete. A TC meeting is scheduled for 4/1/21 to review Task 1: Identify common unstiffened beam-end corrosion topologies.	3/31/2023 \$179,995
<a href="#">20-1: In-Service Performance Evaluation of NETC Bridge Railings</a>	Christine Carrigan, RoadSafe D. Peabody K. Seeber Jeff Folsom, ME DOT	The kickoff meeting was held on 2/22/21. Tasks 1 (inventory of NETC steel bridge railings) and Task 2 (Collect crash data for five years of all NETC bridge railings identified in the inventory) are being done in unison.	6/30/2022 \$119,978
<a href="#">20-2: Current Status of Transportation Data Analytics and A Pilot Case Study Using Artificial Intelligence (AI)</a>	TBD A. Scholz M. Tran Susan Klasen, NH DOT	UMass Lowell conditionally awarded. ME is in contract negotiations. ME is working with UMass Lowell on contract documents and hope the contract will be signed by the end of March.	TBD \$200,000
<a href="#">20-3: Investigating Thermal Imaging Technologies and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to Improve Bridge Inspections</a>	AECOM, D. Peabody M. Tran John "Sam" Maxim, ME DOT	The kickoff meeting was held on 2/23/21. The research team has started on Task 1: Desk scan. They will also survey the TC for input on bridges that should be selected for field demonstrations in Task 2.	TBD \$175,000
<a href="#">20-4: New England Connected and Automated Vehicle Legal, Regulatory and Policy Assessment</a>	Stantec, Greg Rodriguez E. Parkany/N. Zavalas K. Seeber Daniel Sullivan, MA DOT	The next monthly TC is scheduled for 3/25/21.	12/31/2021 \$105,446
Re-Creating NETC	Kirsten Seeber/Chris Kline, CTC & Associates A. Scholz K. Seeber A. Scholz	CTC is working on the summary memos for Task 2 and Task 3. Two meetings are scheduled in April (4/12/21 and 4/22/21) to review Tasks 1-3.	8/12/2021 \$50,000

- 18-3
  - ~ Still waiting for deliverables.
  - ~ PI wants to add someone to the contract (new staff person). This requires new paperwork for ME to process.
    - Dale – He will talk to Kim about this. He doesn't feel it will happen because it will take too much time. He doesn't want to extend the project at this point.
    - Dale – The bigger issue is to get the final products done for review. Can't pay any invoices for work done after 3/31/21.
  - ~ Dale – Should be okay with this one because the TC reviewed everything already, but we don't want to get ourselves into this situation again.
  - ~ Colin – Put the dates into the contract for draft and final tasks.
  - ~ Emily – This is another example of a project that should have been shorter so it didn't end up having multiple PIs.
- 19-1
  - ~ Emily – TC worked together to get their comments back on the response. Still questions and skepticism on if what they proposed will work or be as good. Will be interesting to see how it affects the timeline of the project.
- 19-2
  - ~ Maina will check with PI to see if they need a TC meeting as a check in.
  - ~ Ann – Will not be at 6/10/21 meeting.
- 19-3
  - ~ CT and VT providing beams. VT is providing two beams.
- 20-1
  - ~ Colin – Are there enough railings to do a study? Dale – TBD. There is a decision point to determine this at some point.
- 20-2
  - ~ No update on contract execution.
- 20-4 Re-Creating
  - ~ CTC will get drafts of Task memos to TAAC prior to the meetings.

#### **Symposium Update – Maina Tran**

- The committee met to discuss platforms available and the tech aspects of them. The committee also talked about format and agenda, which will dictate the best platform to use.
- Timeframe – The Symposium will happen later in the year. The committee discussed how to spread the event out over a couple of days/weeks.
- A virtual format may not be ideal but can have more than 100 attendees and include more topics.
- TAAC survey results
  - ~ Top goals
    - Workshop format
    - Showcase NE research and innovations
    - Identify or generate RPS
    - Networking opportunity – Not as structured.
    - Ann – How is #2 diff from last 2. Emily – All NE research vs just NETC research.
    - Emily – Feels posters are pretty important. Feels identifying or generating RPSs is more important. It would be great to generate ideas but follow through is the hard part as we found out last year. Also, need to identify a champion, which can be difficult in these Symposiums.

- Dale – What is NETC getting out of the Symposium? Identifying or generating RPSs is high on this priority list. Workshop format is the most important thing.
- Maina – Posters can be incorporate somehow.
- ~ Topics priority
  - Bridges
  - Construction
  - Environmental
  - Materials
  - Ann – Environmental last time had lots of topics within it. Wasn't it the suggestion to decrease the number of topics? Break down the larger topic into smaller topics. Need to do this for other larger topics as well?!?
  - Emily – Take advantage of virtual so that 5-10 folks can attend from each agency.
  - Emily – Need at least one champion per topic to get ideas from peers and structure the day. Likes the idea of a NE discussion on different topics.
  - Dale – Surprised that the same topics from last time are ranked highly.
  - Ann – Materials – They held a virtual event last year. If they are having their own meeting again, then focus on other topics?
    - Dale – Would like to see NETC focus on non-traditional areas. We are not doing a huge service by repeating the same three topics.
      - Emily – Agrees with Dale. Give maintenance and construction a chance. Next meeting – how to prompt potential champions.
    - Dale – Traffic Engineers would like to meet to work together with their peers. Related to advanced traffic signal systems.

#### **Openness of External Research Programs – Emily Parkany**

- Are states feeling pressure from FHWA to make their programs more competitive? How open are their external research programs? The converse of this is whether they're able to direct funds to their state universities. UVM is a little sympathetic that there's pressure from VT's Contract Admin and Audit to make things as competitive as possible, but they wonder when they will have the opportunity to compete in the other New England states. Are the state DOTs able to fund SPR-B money toward universities in their states or to other state universities as well?
- Christos – RI is trying to be open and get others involved. He sees it as the universities working together.
  - ~ Colin – Their relationship with URI is becoming incestuous and it's not good. RI has worked with other univs. He likes that NETC projects are open to all, including private companies and universities.
- Ann – NH has cooperative agreements with three universities, but they can sole source if there is an expert identified. They also can use statewide on-call contracts for research projects. Ann doesn't want to post research project RFPs because of the timeline. They would be stuck in a long contracting process. She would rather find the expert and have them to do the project because the contracting is easier.
- CT – Most of their projects go to UConn. They don't do competitive bids. They have two other projects with other CT univs. They have agreements with them.
- ME – They do only a few projects and mostly sole source, mostly with University of Maine. But have worked with others. Other than NETC, he can't recall last time they put a project out for competitive bid.
- MA – Two contracting approaches.

- ~ 1) Interdepartmental Service Agreement – It can only be done with a state entity. They are encouraged to work with the network of universities first. Look to see if there is an expert on the list to work on a project. Contracts take three to four months. They prefer this option.
  - Emily – How do external researchers get on your affiliate network? UMASS Transportation Center maintains the affiliate network of researchers list. Researchers can contact UMTC (Mike Knodler) to get added to the list. If an outside researcher is interested, they should form a team with a MA state university. Emily – This sounds similar to their Qualified Researchers list.
- ~ 2) Open Procurement – This is a long process and takes six to nine months or longer to contract.
  - FHWA Division Office also has to approve the projects, which adds time.

**Next meeting 4/27/21 from 11:00am – 12:30pm ET.**