



New England Transportation Consortium

NETC Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

DATE: Tuesday, January 28, 2020, 11:00am – noon ET

LOCATION: GoToMeeting Link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/628554149> Dial-in: 646-749-3122;
Access Code: 628-554-149

Ed Block, CT DOT	Dale Peabody, MaineDOT
Tanya Miller, VTrans	Greg Rowangould, UVM
Matt Mann, UMass	Ann Scholz, NHDOT
Lily Oliver, MassDOT	Kirsten Seeber, CTC & Associates
Emily Parkany, VTrans	Maina Tran, CTC & Associates
Dee Nash, NH DOT	Christos Xenophontos, RIDOT

1) Open Project Review (January 2020)

Project # and Title	PI, University <i>AC Liaison</i>	Update	End Date Budget
18-1: Development of MASH Computer Simulated Steel Bridge Rail & Transition Details	Chuck Plaxico, Malcom Ray, Roadsafe LLC D. Peabody	Draft final report in February and final report in April. A poster and fact sheet were not included in the contract. PI feels these can be added at no additional cost.	6/1/20 \$199,936
18-2: Framework of Asphalt Balanced Mix Design for NE Agencies	Walaa Mogawer, UMass Dartmouth A. Scholz	Tasks 3- 5 are in progress. A TC meeting was held on 12/17/19. Survey results on state inventory of testing equipment was presented along with recommendations on best tests to use based on available equipment.	6/30/20 \$127,499
18-3: Integration of Unmanned Aircraft Systems into State DOTs	Jon Gustafson, WSP E. Parkany	Task 3 is in progress. A progress meeting was held on 1/24/20.	3/31/2021 \$146,632
19-1: Curved Integral Abutment Bridge Design	TBD E. Parkany	ME is in contract negotiations with WSP. CTC is scheduling the kick-off meeting in early March.	TBD \$150,000
19-2: Multi-Scale Multi-Season Land-Based Erosion Modeling and Monitoring for Infrastructure Management	TBD A. Scholz	ME is in contract negotiations with GZA. The kick-off meeting is scheduled for 3/5/20.	TBD \$150,000
19-3: Experimental Validation of New Improved Load Rating Procedures for Deteriorated Steel Beam Ends	TBD N. Zavolas	CTC sent final SOW to MaineDOT for RFP posting.	TBD \$200,000

Discussion:

- 18-1 – Ann – Are the states sending the projects results to their FHWA Division offices? Dale – It’s up to each state. ME is working with its FHWA Division Office to show their bridge rails are MASH crash worthy.
- 18-3 – Emily – The TC is engaged in what PI had done and what’s going to happen. The interim reports will be posted on the [project page](#).
 - If TCs are comfortable with it, all interim and task reports will be posted on the active project pages.
- 19-1 – Dale – The amount of project increased over the \$150,000 budget by a few thousand dollars. Is that an issue for the AC? Do they want to see the exact number before the contract is signed? Emily – Does the AC need to decide at what point they discuss this issue, such as if the budget is \$5k or \$10k over, or a certain percentage over? Dale – If a project is over its budget by a few thousand dollars he will bring it to the AC.
- 19-3 – ME is working on it getting this RFP posted but wants to get the contracts for 19-1 and 19-2 executed first.

2) Research Problem Statement Solicitation

- Ten Problem Statements were received from MA (3), ME (4) and NH (3) DOTs. Fourteen statements were received last year.
- Problem Statement Ranking/Discussion meeting on 3/31/20 from 9:00am-2:00pm in Concord.
- The next steps in the process are:
 - ~ Kirsten will compile all problem statements into one document and create a summary sheet with a quick overview.
 - ~ Kirsten will the post problem statements on a members-only page of the website.
 - ~ Kirsten will send the problem statements and a scoring sheet to the DOT representatives. The members will discuss the problem statements within their agencies, get comments and score them. A statement on implementation will be included in the email to prompt that discussion at the DOTs.
 - ~ Does the AC want to collect the individual Problem Statement Evaluation Forms, so we have more information on what individual DOTs thought about the projects?
 - Ann – Haven’t collected them the past. Don’t see a need for them.

3) Implementation

- Closeout webinars for past projects
 - ~ 17-1 ([Quick Response: New England Connected and Autonomous Vehicles](#)) webinar rescheduled for 2/26/20 from 2:00-2:45pm. CTC sent registration email to NETC mailing list. Eleven registrations so far.
 - ~ 15-2 ([Using the New SHRP2 Naturalistic Driving Study Safety Databases to Examine Safety Concerns for Older Drivers](#)) webinar rescheduled for 3/4/20 from 11:00-11:30am. Kirsten sent the registration email to NETC mailing list on 1/27/20.
 - ~ Kirsten working to schedule webinars with PIs on 15-3: Moisture Susceptibility Testing for Hot Mix Asphalt Pavements in New England and 15-4: Quick Response Project: Optimizing Quality Assurance (QA) Processes for Asphalt Pavement Construction in the Northeast.
 - ~ Emily – Modify future marketing emails so that the other webinars are included.
- 13/14/17-series projects – implementation activities at DOTs – Dale to facilitate
 - ~ Responses received from CT, MA, NH and VT.
 - ~ 13-1: Development of High Early-Strength Concrete for Accelerated Bridge Construction Closure Pour Connections

- Theme of the comments is that more work is needed. Circle back to the TC members and find out their level of interest in training, workshop or a phase II of the project.
- No problem statement on this project this year. It's an older project. States probably doing more with high strength closure pours. There is national work on coming up with a generic mix.
- Matt – We could find out from the states what practices have been improved and if/how mixes have changed since this project. Is it still an issue for the states?
- Emily – There is a related UTC project and she suggested they build off this project. There are many NCHRP panels on concrete additives, so this is a timely topic. Beyond that, different states have their own rules on using only proprietary products or using more generic products.
- ~ 13-3: Improved Regionalization of Quality Assurance (QA) Functions
 - Dale - Phase II looked at how this might work, the business model and financial aspects of it.
 - Emily – Was this QA of asphalt or concrete? Concrete and pre-cast.
 - Dale – Materials Engineers were high on this awhile back. John Grieco (MA) was excited about this.
 - Emily – What the researchers gave the TC was not what the members felt was usable. Lesson learned – TC needs to be engaged so that the PI understands what the researcher needs to do/provide so that the project can go the next step.
 - (a) Dale – There was not enough communication between PI and TC. Emily – Communication is something they are all struggling with and getting from the PI what is useful for the states.
 - (b) Dale – Hard for a researcher to figure out the financial logistics and cost sharing mechanisms because the states are so different. We may have set the researcher up for not fully succeeding.
 - Ann – Did the project produce a common checklist that all NE state inspectors would use? Dale – Don't know. Since CT and VT partially recommended this project, **Ed and Emily can check with their TC members.**
- ~ 14-1: Measuring the Effectiveness of Competency Models for Job Specific Professional Development of Engineers & Engineering Technicians
 - Dale – Not much hope for an implementation project based on the comments.
 - Emily – The project dragged on and on. No enthusiasm by the time it finally ended. The AC needs to be working with their TC member to keep enthusiasm for projects. Dale – This became a lukewarm topic in ME. Ann – Same thing in NH. There was a position change and the new person didn't even know about the project.
- ~ 17-1: Quick Response: New England Connected and Autonomous Vehicles
 - Dale – The states are communicating on CAVs and trying to learn from each other.
 - Emily – Same folks who were the project TC are still meeting on this topic. Also, a Research Needs Statement was submitted on this topic. MA submitted the RNS, but four states were willing to chair the potential project. There is lots of enthusiasm for this topic. The working group is addressing issues identified during this project (the roadmap items that came from the project).
 - (a) Emily – Christos will be on the ongoing project rep on the working for RI. Julia Gold has left.
- ~ 17-2: Quick Response: Quantification of Research Benefits

- Dale – Really up to the AC on how they might implement quantification of research for NETC or at individual states.
- CT will use this and figure out ways to quantify where appropriate, as well as other benefits. They will put it into a ROI approach and report back to the AC on their efforts. This is a priority for them. This is a good tool to have to stay ahead of any conversations on the necessity of research.
 - (a) Emily – What CT is doing sounds good and wants to hear what they do. Ed – Would you be open to see how they apply it and what they find. Yes! **Action item:** Tell Kirsten so it can be added to an upcoming AC meeting agenda.
- Is NETC requiring quantifiable benefits in our SOWs? This holds the PIs accountable. This is not currently in the NETC SOW form. We added an implementation plan but not quantifiable benefits. Emily – That’s something for this group to decide.
 - (a) Dale – This needs to be part of the thought process when developing an RNS. He agrees with Emily that they earlier the PI starts thinking about it, the better. Emily – We discussed this at the March meeting last year, but the group punted on it because it can be hard. The AC should think this about going forward.
 - (b) Greg (as a researcher) – Maybe not think about it as quantitative benefits but about evaluating project inputs and project outcomes. The RNS or RPF would have expected outcomes from the project. Then there is some way to know if the outcomes occurred. Did they produce a product, policy, standard, etc. that they promised?
 - (c) Ed – Look at past projects and analyze them now. It might be years between a project ending and the benefits showing up at a DOT. Getting a handle on what the conversation should be: how to demonstrate value from the research program.
 - (d) Lily – If we look at these five projects, 13-1 has a slight possibility to be analyzed for quantitative benefits. The others are harder to quantify.
 - (e) **Action item:** Kirsten will add topic this to the March agenda.
- ~ Dale – Through these discussions, we are learning what NETC should do. Make sure the work is getting done in a timely manner and that there is good communication between the PI and the TC.

4) Proposal Evaluation Guidelines (RFP Scoring Criteria) and PI Evaluation

- Kirsten sent the Proposal Evaluation Guidelines to the AC DOT reps on 12/2/19, which included all comments.
- Dale – These are the evaluation guidelines NETC has for TCs when they evaluate project proposals. They run counter to some of ME’s policies. ME does a PI evaluation at the end of each project and it goes on file with their Contracts office. If that PI proposes again, the information is available to review. The thought here is where ME has the PI information on file, then Kim (ME Contracts) will relay the past performance information to the TC during the scoring meeting. Anyone on the TC can talk about experience with the PI, even if it is not a related topic or a past NETC project. Those scores are reflected in Qualification of Proposers section. Dale hopes that addresses the questions folks have about past performance.
- ~ Emily – Is Dale saying the text in the form doesn’t need to be changed, but use the practice he outlined above? Yes. **Action item:** Dale will make a note for Kim to bring up past performance during the scoring meetings. The TC members will know that they are able to comment on past performance of the proposing PIs.

- ~ Emily – This topic came up because there was some awkwardness in a scoring meeting where past performance wasn't considered. A TC member was able to steer folks based on a glitzy proposal. She is okay with the process but is worried that there is not more written about this and there could be another weird scoring meeting in the future.
 - o Dale understands the concern about the project Emily is referring to. He reviewed the proposals and the scores wouldn't have changed. The winning PI would still have won.
 - o Dale – He's reviewed all the projects they've selected. It's a fair process. He doesn't think anything is broken.
- ~ Ann – Is this form in the NETC Policy and Procedures manual? Dale – It's a hybrid between the P&P manual and ME's needs. Ann – What does ME's contract office send out when they start rating the proposals? Dale – Similar to this.
- ~ Ann – She's fine with this. Dale – The AC can have a separate conversation about this. The next RFP will be reviewed prior to the March AC meeting.
- Dale would like to put this topic to bed. If anyone has additional comments on the form, **send to Kirsten by February 11th**. If no comments are received, then the current form will be used.

5) Other Business

- No Symposium in 2020. Keep potential 2021 Symposium on agenda to discuss later in 2020.

6) Adjourn

Next meeting: February 25th from 11:00am – noon ET