

AASHTO Comprehensive Committees Review (CCR)  
**Recommendations to the Board of Directors**  
November 2016

**BACKGROUND**

AASHTO has led the development of transportation technology and policy for the United States for over a century. Essential to this long legacy is the leadership and critical contributions of the member department volunteer professionals.

In 2014, AASHTO adopted a new strategic plan with four goals:

- Provide value to members
- Provide innovative technical and professional services and products
- Be a leader in national transportation policy development
- Communicate the value of transportation

During the development of this strategic plan, AASHTO's committee structure – which has remained largely unchanged for over fifty years – was identified as needing a comprehensive review to ensure that AASHTO is providing the highest possible value to its members. A steering committee was established to guide the Comprehensive Committees Review (CCR) to better align the committee structure with the four strategic goals. Over the course of work of the CCR Steering Committee, the following desired outcomes guided its work:

1. **Organizational Structure:** Provide an organizational structure that ensures committees can operate efficiently and be nimble, adaptable, and forward looking.
2. **Organizational Focus:** Broaden multimodal perspectives of committees and their coverage.
3. **Committee Priorities:** Prioritize committee activities and the resources required to support and conduct these activities while representing the diverse views of the member departments.
4. **Cross-Committee Interactions:** Provide for increased communication between committees.

As transportation continues to evolve at an increasingly rapid pace – through technological advances, workforce challenges, environmental instability, and economic uncertainty – AASHTO's committees must also evolve to strategically respond to these changes and serve the needs of the member departments. The following recommendations seek to achieve an optimum balance between numerous competing needs, including: nimbleness vs. member engagement; bottom-up information vs. top-down direction; traditional work flow vs. emerging technologies and processes; and modal expertise vs. multi-modal integration. Detailed supporting documentation for these recommendations is included in the *AASHTO Committee Restructuring Proposal* accompanying this document.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The CCR Steering Committee hereby makes the following recommendations to the AASHTO Board of Directors regarding the organization and operation of AASHTO's committees. The recommendations fall into two main categories: procedural and structural.

Procedural Recommendations:

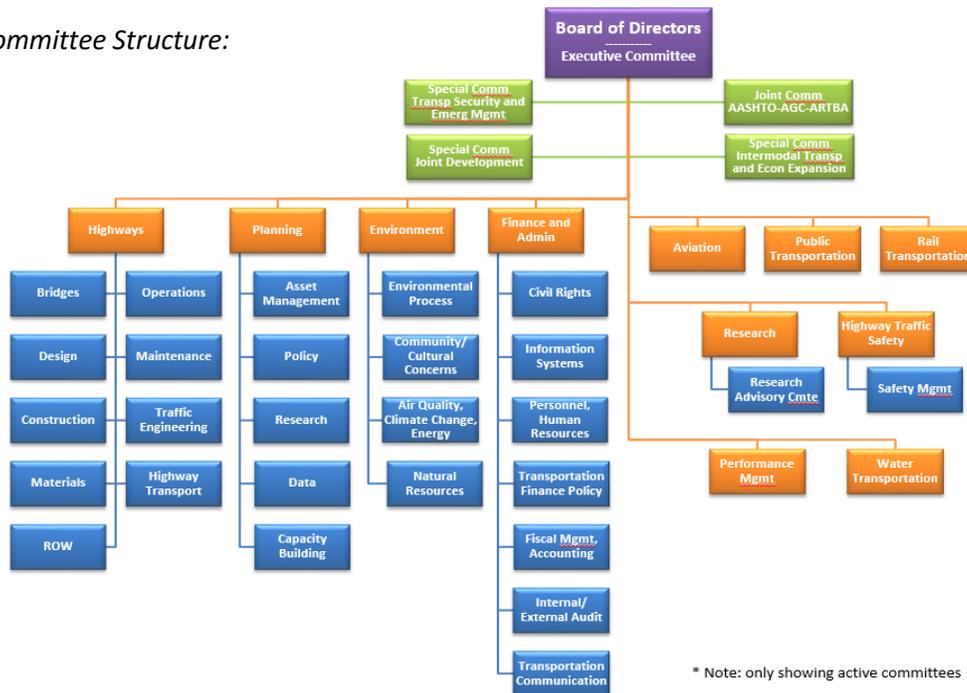
During its review of the existing committees, the CCR Steering Committee identified several procedural changes that would make AASHTO's committees more efficient and responsive to member needs. Thus, the following procedural changes are recommended for adoption by the Board.

1. Better define the roles and responsibilities of the committees (from the top down) to ensure that committees focus on their principal charge, as well as to minimize redundancy between committees.
2. Establish committee work plans and annual activity reports focused on accomplishing tasks that meet AASHTO Strategic Plan goals.
3. Increase/improve direction from parent committees to subgroups to help prioritize and establish timelines for completion of tasks.
4. Require that committee chairs be members of a Council, the Transportation Policy Forum, or the Board of Directors, and that committee subgroup chairs be members of the committee to which they report, to foster communication among all levels of the association.
5. Establish “steering committees” within committees to ensure nimbleness of actions and direction. These committees will address strategic and emerging issues, manage the committee work, and communicate and coordinate with other committees.
6. Identify cross-cutting issues and appoint liaisons between appropriate committees for coordination and communication.
7. Require technical service programs to be guided by appropriate committee(s).
8. Encourage groups to operate virtually to facilitate committee communication and information exchange between the states.
9. Establish Communities of Practice for discipline and topical areas to extend the reach, value, and impact to member departments beyond the formal committee structure.
10. Establish ad-hoc, short-term task forces to address specific matters that are important to be addressed but may not need ongoing attention.
11. Formalize the role of the Associate Members, including local transportation agencies, with ex officio, non-voting representation on appropriate committees.
12. Allow the private sector limited participation on applicable committees without voting rights.

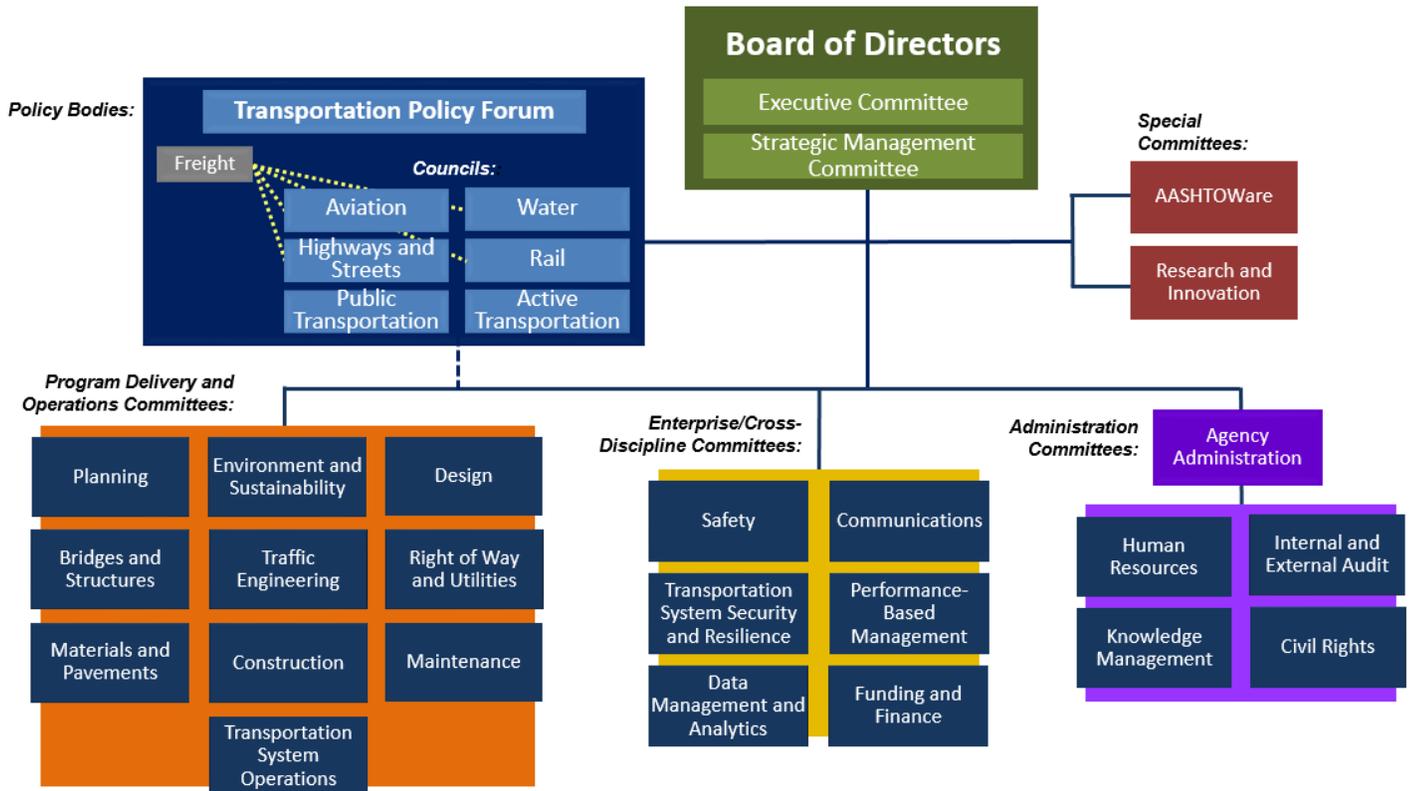
**Structural Recommendations:**

An overall restructuring of the AASHTO committees is recommended to organize committees based on policy functions, member department workflow functions, and enterprise-wide functions. The current committee organizational chart is presented for reference, followed by the recommended structure with thumbnail descriptions of new and modified committees. The recommended structure illustrated by the chart is not intended to represent the full range of reporting and/or working relationships.

**Current Committee Structure:**



*Proposed Committee Structure:*



*New Committees:*

- **Strategic Management Committee:** established within the Board of Directors and consisting of Chairs of various committees to provide top-down direction to committees and councils to focus attention on national priorities, emerging technology and issues, and external partnering efforts.
- **Transportation Policy Forum:** created as a new entity consisting of high-level department representatives to focus on and discuss policy issues as well as broad transportation, multimodal, and multidisciplinary topics; including the development of the cyclical reauthorization policy agenda.
- **Active Transportation Council:** created as a sixth modal council to address policy issues involving pedestrian, bicycle, and non-motorized forms of transportation.
- **Freight Special Committee:** established under the Transportation Policy Forum to address economic and policy matters of all forms of goods movement, will subsume the responsibilities of the current Special Committee on Intermodal Transportation and Economic Expansion.
- **Data Management and Analytics Committee:** established to address data acquisition, management, sharing, and analytics in support of member department data activities.
- **Knowledge Management Committee:** created to address member department practices related to the identification, organization, and management of knowledge (including expertise, technical documentation, policies, standard operating policies, training, and other forms of information) for long-term sustainability.
- **Funding and Finance Committee:** created to address transportation funding and financing topics, subsuming the responsibilities of the Finance Policy Subcommittee.

*Modified Committees:*

- **Councils** are generally the successors to the current modal standing committees with the responsibilities to discuss mode-specific policy issues, approve relevant technical actions referred by committees, collaborate with external partner associations, and provide guidance to appropriate committees.
- **Research and Innovation Special Committee** will continue the work of the Standing Committee on Research to oversee the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), but will expand its focus to include research implementation, longer-term research issues, multi-modal issues, and new and emerging technologies and innovations affecting transportation.
- **Materials and Pavements Committee** will combine the existing SCOH Subcommittee on Materials with the Joint Technical Committee on Pavements. Materials and pavements topics will carry equal weight within the combined committee.
- **Transportation System Operations Committee** will expand its scope and purview to include both wireless communications and highway freight issues.
- **Communications Committee** will address topics currently covered by the existing TransComm subcommittee, and will play an increased role in strategic AASHTO communications.
- **Performance-Based Management Committee**, created by merging the Standing Committee on Performance Management and the Joint Subcommittee on Asset Management and adding the topic of enterprise-wide risk management, will address the areas associated with continuously improving the performance of a State DOT, both as an organization and in the delivery and management of a transportation system.
- **Transportation System Security and Resilience Committee** will cover all-hazards preparation and response to both natural and man-made disasters for the various modes, including work currently addressed by the Special Committee on Transportation Security and Emergency Management (SCOTSEM) and the Resilient and Sustainable Transportation Systems (RSTS) Steering Committee.
- **Agency Administration Committee** succeeds the Standing Committee on Finance and Administration, but will focus on the internal administration issues of the member departments. Funding and finance policy issues will be covered by a new committee, as noted above.

All committees, councils, and the Transportation Policy Forum will be composed of representatives from all 52 member departments. Membership on the remaining committees and subgroups will vary, as detailed in the accompanying Committee Restructuring Proposal. Many committees and subcommittees are not affected and will continue, and all committees will be engaged to align their charters and activities with the AASHTO Strategic Plan and the Committee Restructuring Proposal.

Reporting and Approval Processes

Under the new structure, most committees will operate fairly independently under broad principles and direction from the Board of Directors. Broad transportation policy matters and policy resolutions arising from a committee will be referred to the Transportation Policy Forum for review, coordination, and approval, prior to referral to the Board for final action.

Technical standards and technical policy matters will be referred to the appropriate modal Council for review and approval. Where such matters involve more than one mode, the Transportation Policy Forum Steering Committee will decide whether the document should be balloted concurrently by more

than one Council or balloted by one Council with advice and input from other Council(s). Should there be disagreements, this Steering Committee will act as arbitrator to reach a solution or will refer the matter to the Board of Directors.

### Implementation

Implementing the recommendations from the CCR Steering Committee will involve the rearrangement of a diverse collection of committees that are responsible for the development and maintenance of important policies, products, and services. To minimize potential disruption to current and planned activities, maintain the engagement of state DOT volunteers, and retain critical products and services, the Strategic Management Committee will be charged with developing an implementation plan and overseeing the implementation of the Board-approved structural changes, providing updates to the Board as implementation progresses. Recognizing that AASHTO staff time is already stretched thin, as part of the implementation effort, the Strategic Management Committee should consider appropriate staffing to ensure that the association most effectively leverages volunteer committee members' time.

### **CONCLUSION**

To continue the advancement of policy and technical excellence by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials well into the next century of operation, the Comprehensive Committees Review Steering Committee, as duly appointed by the AASHTO President in early 2015, recommends adoption of this proposed committee restructuring plan.

Additional details on the recommendations provided herein, as well as background materials documenting the entire review process, including considerations, evaluation criteria, and outreach efforts, can be found on the web at: <http://committeereview.transportation.org/>.