Texas Department of Transportation
DEWITT C. GREER STATE HIGHWAY BLDG. • 125 E. 11TH STREET • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483 • (512) 463-8585

October 7, 2009

Mr. Pete Rahn
Chair, AASHTO Standing Committee on Performance Management
Missouri Department of Transportation
105 West Capitol Avenue
P.O. Box 270
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Dear Pete:

The AASHTO Standing Committee on Performance Management's Congestion Taskforce has worked over the past several months to investigate options for the states regarding the establishment of a set of consistently calculated and appropriately applied mobility/congestion measures for use across the nation. At the request of the Standing Committee on Performance Management (SCOPM), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) hired Dr. Tim Lomax of the Texas Transportation Institute to provide staff support and his tremendous expertise in the realm of congestion measurement and reporting.

Recommended Action Plan

The Congestion Taskforce met by conference call on September 28, 2009 and adopted the following policy recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee on Performance Management.

1. AASHTO should endorse the National Mobility/Congestion Measure Matrix (enclosed) as the comprehensive source for calculating the standard mobility/congestion measures.

2. AASHTO should endorse the top three mobility/congestion measures in the matrix as the national mobility/congestion measures;

    a. Travel Delay
    b. Travel Delay per Commuter and
    c. Congestion Cost

    Each State DOT would be required to calculate these measures using the specified formula for the National Highway System and report the results annually.

3. AASHTO should endorse a policy position supporting the federal evaluation of the State's "mobility/congestion" performance for the National Highway System. This evaluation should be based on how the State performed relative to the performance target established by the State on the three national mobility/congestion measures mentioned above. The evaluation should not attempt to determine the contribution of each funding category to the congestion/mobility performance. The goal is to measure "what happened?" rather than "how was it funded?"

4. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and AASHTO should support the acquisition of a national travel speed dataset from private vendor(s) for State's utilization in development of mobility/congestion measures. A single, national procurement (using an RFP jointly developed by FHWA and the states) would provide States with a set of nationally consistent travel speeds on the National Highway System in a format that can be used with roadway inventory databases and permit States to select options for different levels and complexity of travel time data based on individual needs. (Refer to the enclosed paper on this issue for further details.)

Congestion Measure "Cookbook"

The Congestion Taskforce on September 28, 2009 also approved the enclosed congestion measure "cookbook," which describes the concepts, the calculation of the measures and the context and considerations for applying the performance measures. The "congestion measure cookbook" includes the following documents:

- Developing a Congestion Performance Measure Concept Paper – describes the basis for the performance measure program being recommended
- National Mobility/Congestion Measures Selection Matrix – summary of the key aspects of the measures
- Measure "One-pagers" – description of each measure and how to calculate and use it
- Applying the Performance Measures – considerations for the practical application of the measures
- Migration Strategy – Key steps that link current practice to future vision of using performance measures
- Target Setting – Methods to develop congestion target values for the measures

- Obtaining Inexpensive, Comprehensive Travel Time Data – Proposal for acquiring a consistent dataset for all states

As chair of the Congestion Taskforce, I thank the members of the taskforce, Dr. Tim Lomax, and the staff of the new TxDOT Strategic Policy and Performance Management Office for their work on these materials.

I look forward to our discussions on these important issues at the upcoming AASHTO Annual Meeting.

Sincerely,

Steven E. Simmons, P.E.
Deputy Executive Director

Enclosure: Congestion Measure Cookbook

cc: AASHTO SCOPM Congestion Taskforce
Dr. Tim Lomax, Texas Transportation Institute
Dr. Tony Kane, AASHTO