**Draft Meeting Minutes**

**Committee on Accessible Transportation and Mobility (ABE60)**

**Transportation Research Board 93rd Annual Meeting**

**Wednesday, January 15, 2014, 2:30 to 6:00 p.m.**

**Fairchild Room, Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C.**

**In Attendance**

**Co-Chairs**

Lalita Sen Texas Southern University

Russell Thatcher TranSystems Corp.

**Secretary**

Kenneth Joh Texas A&M University

**Members**

Julie Babinard The World Bank

Billie Louise Bentzen Accessible Design for the Blind (ADB)

Daniel Blais Transport Canada

Betsy Buxer MV Transportation, Inc.

Mary P. Crass OECD - International Transport Forum

Virginia Dize National Association of State Units on Aging

Nina Frid Canadian Transport Agency

Ann Frye Ann Frye, Ltd.

Joey M. Goldman Nelson/Nygaard Associates

Claude Marin-Lamellet IFSTTAR – LESCOT

Andrea Lubin Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center

Rex C.K. Luk Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation

James R. Marston Veterans Administration, Atlanta

Kit Mitchell The Inst. of Highways and Transp. (retired)

Abha Negi Svayam

Lilian Salazar Instituto Tecnologico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey

John G. Schoon University of Southampton

Richard Schultze RLS and Associates, Inc.

Judy L. Shanley Easter Seals

Anabela Simoes Instituto Superior de Educação e Ciências

Aaron Steinfeld Carnegie Mellon University

Ling Sheung Suen Intelligent Computer Systems and Applications, Inc.

Karen B. Wolf-Branigin The Arc

Mohammed Yousuf Federal Highway Administration

**Friends**

Andres Balcazar Global Alliance on Accessible Technology and Environments

Jon Burkhardt Westat

David Chia The Collaborative, Inc.

Andrew D’amico Econolite Group, Inc.

George Dondero Santa Cruz County Regional Transp. Commission

Suzie Edrington Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Rosemary Gerty Regional Transportation Authority

Mary-Jane Gravelle Canadian Transportation Agency

Liz Greer Noblis, Inc.

Alice Grossman Georgia Institute of Technology

Ahsan Habib Dalhousie University

Meredith Highsmith Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Catherine Holloway University College London

Cynthia W. Lister Milligan, LLC

Eileen Lu Eden Social Welfare Foundation

Crystal Lyons CFL, LLC

Lynn Mack Polara Engineering, Inc.

Roger Mackett University College London

C. Marie Maus Easter Seals Transportation Group & Project Action

Campbell McKee European Mobility Group

Mark Muriello Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

Patrick J. Piccininni Ohio Department of Transportation

Shuchita Rawal Svayam

Tom Rickert Access Exchange International

David Rishel Delta Services Group, Inc.

Uwe Rutenberg Rutenberg Design, Inc.

Janett Jimenez Santos Can Lah, SC

Eric Sinagra University of Pittsburgh

Jana Sochor Chalmers University of Technology

John Z. Wetmore Perils For Pedestrians TV

**TRB Staff**

Gwen Chisholm Smith TCRP

Jennifer Weeks Liaison to Committee

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Co-Chair Russell Thatcher. Copies of the meeting agenda (see Attachment 1) and a sign-in sheet were distributed. Mr. Thatcher informed the committee that the session will be audio recorded. He briefly reviewed the items on the agenda.

**2. Introductions of Members and Friends**

All present, including committee members and friends, introduced themselves. Mr. Thatcher acknowledged the unexpected passing of committee member Mr. Michael Winter in July 2013, and a moment of silence was held in his honor.

**3. Review of Minutes of 2013 Meeting**

The minutes of the 2013 meeting were reviewed. A MOTION was made by Campbell McKee to accept the minutes. The motion was SECONDED by Ann Frye and was passed unanimously.

**4. TRB Staff Announcements**

Russell Thatcher opened the discussion by introducing Mark Muriello, the chairperson of TRB’s Policy Section, of which the committee is part. Mr. Murriello made the following announcements: 1) Technical Activities Council approved the addition of two additional members to every committee from state departments of transportation; 2) the change in venue for the 2015 TRB Annual Meetings; 3) theme of next year’s meeting: Corridors to the Future: Transportation and Technology; 4) new issue of TRB Critical Issues in Transportation; 5) new internet based tools to keep track of committee and subcommittee members; 6) asked committees to assemble “thought pieces” to reflect on the accomplishments of the committee during the past two years and future research agenda; 7) paper reviews and recommendations for publication.

Mr. Thatcher introduced Jennifer Weeks, TRB staff representative to the committee. She provided a brief report on the 2014 Annual Meeting. There were 5,200 papers submitted (a record), about 400 more than in 2012. In addition, 135 workshops, 450 lectern sessions, and 195 poster sessions were held. There were an estimated 12,000 attendees this year, another record. One new policy that was implemented this year is offering each committee to name a non-traditional group to attend TRB (with free registration) to increase diversity of participation. The Blue Ribbon Committee Awards was implemented last year to recognize excellence in committee work. The award categories include communications, community building, mentoring, advancing research, and contributing to the transportation community. TRB continues to expand communications portfolio such as webinars, (average attendance is 370), and Ms. Weeks encouraged the committee to explore opportunities to use webinars. Questions about the new venue were also asked by committee members, including accessibility for persons with disabilities, space, program schedule, and WiFi internet access.

**5. Report from TCRP**

Mr. Thatcher introduced Gwen Chisholm Smith who provided an update on the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP). She noted that it was the 22nd year of the TCRP. 685 research projects have been initiated and 610 research studies and syntheses have been completed, and 571 are available online. Over 530 transit professionals have been involved in these projects. It was noted that TCRP reports are available on the TRB and APTA websites and that an Annual Report of TRCP activities is prepared each year.

Ms. Chisholm Smith noted that funding has been significantly strained during the past two fiscal years and has decreased from $10 million in FY 2011 to $6.5 million in FY 2012, and down to $3.5 million in FY 2013. The budget for FY 2014 is anticipated to be $3 million. Both APTA and AASHTO are recommending that TCRP funding be reinstated to $10 million during the MAP-21 authorization. Due to TCRP funding reduction, there has been a shift to an all-electronic format (no hard copy publications but available for purchase). She also noted that the TOPS Committee selected 6 new projects in October 2013, and that the nominations for project panels were being sought for projects. The deadline in 2014 for synthesis topics is March 17; TCRP solicitations are due on June 15.

Mr. Thatcher followed up on Ms. Chisholm Smith’s statement by inviting ABE60 committee members and friends to serve on the panel for a new project (“Understanding Changing Demographics and Markets”).

**6. TRB Committee Communications Coordinators Council**

Mr. Thatcher introduced Joey Goldman to provide a report on the Communications Coordinators Council. He highlighted some of the communication tools used by other committees, such as committee websites, mid-year meetings and conference calls, webinars, quarterly newsletters, social media (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn), and blogs and message boards. He solicited opinions from the committee in adopting some of these tools. One committee member expressed interest in a mid-year meeting, and another committee member raised concerns about the accessibility of the technology to persons with disabilities. Mr. Goldman gave an overview of the committee website, and showed the links on the site. One point of discussion was whether the TRANSED conference website should be linked to the committee website.

**7. Subcommittee Reports**

**7.1. TRANSED Conference Planning Subcommittee, ABE60(5)**

Nina Frid and Ann Frye provided a summary of the TRANSED conference planning subcommittee meeting. In the meeting, Rosario Macario gave an update on the planning for the Lisbon conference in 2015. There was a discussion of interest in the next TRANSED conference in 2018. There were four expressions of interest, and the subcommittee heard presentations from each (Halifax, Sydney, Taipei, and Montego Bay, Jamaica). They will develop criteria for assessing expressions of interest and come up with a short list of two candidates, who will be asked to submit proposals. In terms of update for TRANSED 2015, a conference website was launched and the location of the conference was confirmed. A draft outline of the program was proposed and will be posted in February. Participation and how each committee member can contribute to disseminating information about the upcoming conference were discussed. The conference is anticipated to last four days. Themes and subthemes of the conference were also discussed. Committee members asked questions about the conference registration fee and another committee member (as well as Mr. Thatcher) raised a concern about the open access availability of conference papers and proceedings. Mr. Thatcher also encouraged ABE60 committee members to submit papers and attend the TRANSED conference in July 2015.

**7.2. International Activities Subcommittee, ABE60(1)**

Ann Frye opened the discussion on the continuity of TRANSED conferences. It has been a long-standing concern for the subcommittee. Svayam has offered a secretariat for TRANSED as well as a website, which could provide that continuity. Abha Negi from Svayam has also proposed a logo for TRANSED, and developed a new strapline (“sharing mobility solutions around the world”). There were also discussions about ongoing projects from subcommittee members. Tom Rickert provided a brief report on the activities of Access Exchange International. He noted the following points: new colleagues from Mexico City; paratransit guide in Spanish has been developed.

**7.3 Technology Subcommittee, ABE60(2)**

Daniel Blais described the presentations for the Technology Subcommittee meeting on Tuesday, January 14. The new co-chair, Aaron Steinfeld, was introduced. The subcommittee discussed new initiatives related to technology and accessible transportation. Specific presentation topics include: the application of mobile technologies, including real time travel information and wayfinding for travelers who are blind or hearing impaired, accessibility of signage, technology to increase mobility for people with physical disabilities, and the FHWA accessible transportation technology research initiative. Mr. Thatcher suggested that the technology subcommittee should sponsor a workshop to fit the theme of next year’s conference.

**7.4 Research Subcommittee, ABE60(4)**

Karen Wolf-Branigin reported on the 2013 paper review process. A total of 18 papers were reviewed, with six reviewers assigned to each paper. There were 107 referees on the reviewer list; 94 referees reviewed papers in 2011-2013. Among the 18 papers, there were 104 review assignments, 82 submitted reviews, with each paper having at least three reviews. Among the papers submitted, 7 were accepted for podium sessions, and 11 were accepted for poster sessions. ABE60 sponsored two workshops and one poster session. Ms. Wolf-Branigin also announced the opening of the William G. Bell Award nominations for 2015.

Anabela Simoes reported on the development of research statements in 2013. Nine possible research topics were discussed at the subcommittee meeting: 1) best practices in accessibility training for transportation personnel; 2) challenges faced by volunteer driver programs; 3) issues and solutions to support customers with disabilities during the trip chain; 4) solutions for people with disabilities who cannot travel alone; 5) connecting K-12 students to bus transportation and public transportation; 6) using public transport as a way to achieve active travel creating an accessible environment; 7) road conflict between scooters and wheelchairs; 8) effect of weather conditions on curb cuts and pedestrian routes; and 9) training social service agencies how to better provide accessible transportation. Several people attending the subcommittee meeting volunteered to work on research statements for these topics. Ms. Simoes also invited other committee members to submit problem statements.

**7.5 Joint Mobility Options Subcommittee, ABE60(3)**

Kit Mitchell briefly reported on the activities of the subcommittee. There was a report on the progress with ITN (low cost taxi-like system), now running in 27 cities in the US. AARP launched a publication called Smart Drivers, a guide for older drivers. NHTSA has a program called Drive Well, available on their website.

**8. Updates on Recent Research Projects**

Mary-Jane Gravelle and Nina Frid discussed Canadian Transportation Agency’s effort to develop research guides on traveling with service animals and traveling with attendants. These provide guidance to service providers and carriers as well as persons with disabilities. A brief overview of these guides was given. These two guides are expected to be released in spring or summer of 2014. A clip of the multi-modal training video was also presented.

Aaron Steinfeld discussed research at the RERC. The core mission of the center is public transit. RERC is focused on empowering consumers and manufacturers as well as service providers to make an impact on equipment information services on the physical environment. They have several guiding principles, including multimodal focus, universal design, simulation and big data. There are three research projects: 1) extend work with Tiramisu app; 2) space requirements inside buses and ramp slope studies; 3) sidewalk to bus stop access. There are two development projects: one project focuses on paratransit and the other on vehicle design.

Mohammed Yousuf provided an update on FHWA research projects. These projects focus on synergies of technologies and how to combine with an integrated transportation system. One of the key themes is how to extend benefits of accessible transportation and technologies to other communities and other travelers. Some of the projects include: 1) wayfinding and navigation for the visually impaired; 2) using robotic technology and real time maps; 3) using smart phones to gain access to traffic signal phasing and timing; 4) automated road vehicles.

Lillian Salazar provided a summary of BRT projects in Mexico City. She and Jannett Jimenez are architects and work for a NGO focusing on accessibility. They are working on methodologies for doing evaluations for accessibility, including using apps. Some accessibility improvements that Mexico City BRT have implemented include improving sidewalk accessibility near stations using a complete streets approach and using tactile pavements and audio devices.

Beezy Bentzen provided a summary of the ClickAndGo Project at WMATA. This is a wayfinding technology for persons with visual disabilities. ClickAndGo is a database of customized wayfinding information that is freely available to blind and deafblind users, providing step-by-step detailed walking route information. Universities, schools, and hotels can purchase a license to provide this information to travelers with visual impairments. It is available free to all users with an internet connection, telephone, or cell phone.

Uwe Rutenberg provided a summary of TCRP projects that focus on the changing demographics in North America, particularly the increase in the elderly and obese populations. One project conducted for the FRA focuses on the accessibility of next generation high speed trains in the US. The other project examined access to urban buses and paratransit vehicles. Mr. Rutenberg showed visual examples of accessibility on trains and buses in his presentation.

**9. Report on Liaison Activities with Other Committees**

Due to limited time remaining, Mr. Thatcher invited members to report on liaison activities in lieu of going down the list.

* David Chia reported on the paratransit committee meeting. In October 2014, there will be a conference in Monterey, CA.
* Julie Babinard reported on the pedestrian committee meeting. In April 2014, there will be an international conference on the topic in Paris.
* Ling Suen reported on the women’s issues committee meeting. The committee received a blue ribbon award.

**10. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

**Attachment 1**

Transportation Research Board

93rd Annual Meeting

**Committee on Accessible Transportation and Mobility (ABE60)**

Wednesday, January 15, 2014, 2:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Fairchild Room, Hilton Hotel, Washington, DC

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order (Lalita Sen and Russell Thatcher, Co-Chairs)
2. Introductions of Members and Friends (All)
3. Review of Minutes of 2013 Meeting (Co-Chairs)
4. TRB Staff Announcements (Jennifer Weeks)
5. Report from TCRP (Gwen Chisholm-Smith)
6. TRB Committee Communications Coordinators Council (Joey Goldman)

Possible Committee-Sponsored Webinars

1. Subcommittee Reports

7.1 TRANSED Conference Planning Subcommittee, ABE60(5)

(Nina Frid and Ann Frye, Co-Chairs)

14th TRANSED Conference 2015 Update (Rosario Macario)

15th TRANSED Conference 2018 Expressions of Interest

7.2 International Activities Subcommittee, ABE60(1)

(Ann Frye and Nina Frid, Co-Chairs)

Long Term Future of TRANSED Conferences (funding, scholarship fund,

future shape and direction)

Report on Activities of Access Exchange International (Tom Rickert)

Recent International Developments

7.3 Technology Subcommittee, ABE60(2)

(Daniel Blais and Aaron Steinfeld, Co-Chairs)

Synthesis of technology Presentations

7.4 Research Subcommittee, ABE60(4)

(Karen Wolf-Branigin and Anabela Simoes, Co-Chairs)

2013 Paper Review Process

2014 Sessions and Workshop

2013 and 2014 Research Statements

Next William Bell Award

1. Updates on Recent Research Projects

Research at the RERC – APT (Aaron Steinfeld)

FHWA Research Projects (Mohammed Yousuf)

BRT in Mexico City (Lillian Salazar)

ClickAndGo Project at WMATA (Beezy Bentzen)

TCRP C-20 results and Next Generation of High Speed Trains

(Uwe Rutenberg and Kate Hunter-Zaworski)

Research Guides on Traveling with Service Animals and Traveling

with Attendants; Multi-Modal Training Video

(Mary-Jane Gravelle and Nina Frid)

1. Report on Liaison Activities with Other TRB Committees

ITS (Aaron Steinfeld, Carol Schweiger)

Safe Mobility for Older Persons (Kit Mitchell, Virginia Dize, Ling Suen)

Senior Mobility Options Joint Subcommittee

Older Women’s Activities Subcommittee

Pedestrian (Julie Babinard, Lois Thibault, Beezy Bentzen)

Paratransit (Betsy Buxer, Russell Thatcher, David Chia, James Cooper)

Taxi Subcommittee

Rural & Intercity (Will Rodman, Lalita Sen, Larry Harman)

Rail (Kate Hunter-Zaworski, Dan Blais)

Airport Terminals and Ground Access (Uwe Rutenberg)

Ferry Transportation (David Chapman)

Developing Countries (Tom Rickert, Lalita Sen)

Women’s Issues (Ling Suen)

Tribal Transportation (Lalita Sen, Virginia Dize, Richard Weiner)

School Bus (Ted Finlayson-Schueler)

International (Ling Suen, Lalita Sen)

Vehicle User Characteristics (Aaron Steinfeld)

Economics (David Lewis)

Traffic Control Devices (Beezy Bentzen)

User Information (Beezy Bentzen)

1. Other Business
2. Adjournment