

AASHTO SCOPM Target-Setting Workshop

June 13, 2013

Participants:

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- Jesse Jones, Arkansas DOT
- Rachel Falsetti, Caltrans
- David Lee, Florida DOT
- Tom Cole, Idaho DOT
- John Selmer, Iowa DOT
- Richard Woo, Maryland SHA
- Mark Van Port Fleet, Michigan DOT
- Bernie Arseneau, Minnesota DOT
- Tim Henkel, Minnesota DOT
- Mara Campbell, Missouri DOT
- Lynn Zanto, Montana DOT
- Steve Salwei, North Dakota DOT
- Tim Gatz, Oklahoma DOT
- Christos Xenophontos, Rhode Island DOT
- Paul Degges, Tennessee DOT
- John Barton, Texas DOT
- Jay Styles, Virginia DOT
- Wanda Wells, Virginia DOT
- Daniela Bremmer, Washington State DOT
- Lori Richter, Wisconsin DOT
- Gregg Fredrick, Wyoming DOT
- Jen Brickett, AASHTO
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- Pete Stephanos, FHWA
- Nicole Katsikides, FHWA
- Rich Taylor, FHWA
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- Keith Williams, FHWA
- Andrew Wishnia, FHWA
- Frances Harrison, Spy Pond Partners, LLC
- Perry Lubin, Spy Pond Partners, LLC
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Next Steps

- Draft document on target-setting for FHWA based on survey results and today's discussion – circulate to Task Force Members for review and comment
- Develop action plans for how to move forward on communication, engagement and guidance activities based on input and priorities expressed

Priority Areas of Need

Task Force members identified the following priority areas of need during the workshop.

Communications

- **Engagement.** Engage the states that haven't participated yet. Need to maximize state involvement and get information out. 18 states have not yet been involved. Cannot leave states behind because they haven't participated. Focus on pulling everyone up to a base level to allow states to get their technical experts involved.

- **Communication tools.** Create a set of 1-pagers on measures and related issues. Synthesize available information and make available in a concise form to everyone.
- **Common definitions.** Precise definitions are needed to produce something meaningful and successful.
- **Outreach.** Distribute a survey with questions like: are you aware of measures proposed; are you aware of MAP-21 requirements; etc. Based on responses, identify gaps and develop communication plan to fill them.
- **Partnership.** Need the ability to talk to FHWA partners and provide them a clear statement of the states' position.
- **Coordination.** Look for opportunities for small group meetings with MPOs and states to discuss getting coordination mechanisms in place.

Guidance

- **Preparation.** AASHTO needs to prepare states for the rulemaking – provide the ability to identify missing pieces and what they should look out for. Need assistance in helping states to assess readiness, especially from a technical perspective. Once initial NPR comes out, use this to focus attention.
- **Integration.** Need training on how new MAP-21 processes can integrate with existing state processes for performance-based planning and target-setting.
- **Best practices.** Ultimately, training on best practices will be important. In particular, need guidance and training on target-setting for the congestion measures.

Strategy

- **Goals and objectives.** We need to define success – have to get alignment behind a common definition.
- **Consensus.** Run a final checkdown on measures with standing committees, make sure we have consensus.
- **Structure.** In general need more work on less mature areas – involve executives to set the big picture but let the technical people work out the details. Need a stronger structure to support work in these areas (particularly freight); more clarity and engagement. Solution could be a well-defined group within AASHTO to tackle congestion/delay issues – perhaps a temporary task force (including technical people).
- **Workplan.** Need to develop an overarching workplan for the comment process.
- **Caution.** AASHTO should be cautious in their recommendations, can't feel pressured to advance something just because time is short.
- **Push ourselves.** We don't want to come up short in this effort. We must resist the urge to be so conservative that we minimize the potential benefits. Recognize that this effort on performance measures can enhance transportation systems in each state.

Key Action Items

Task Force members identified the following key action items during the workshop.

AASHTO SCOPM Task Force

- Draft memo to US DOT on target-setting based on this workshop
- Disseminate information about each measure that was provided with the survey via SCOPM website
- Include a blurb in the AASHTO News, with a link to the SCOPM website.
- Create a base/template presentation for distribution once we have the NPR, comparing the rules to what AASHTO has proposed.
- SCOPM Task Force can provide a focal point for AASHTO during the comment process.

AASHTO SCOPM

- Continue to encourage states to appoint a member to SCOPM if they haven't already done so.
- Need to advise states on the importance of making comments so that their voices get heard in the comment period.
- Develop a template concept for reporting performance – we want to be telling our own story. Should be standing agenda item on SCOPM meeting. Florida DOT has a great example.
- Best Practice Forum – once we have a good understanding of the rules
 - SCOPM website has a framework for this; plan to put out primer one month prior to NPR – should come out in August
 - Suggest specific examples/best practices to FHWA
- Continue to coordinate with technical groups and schedule calls once exact date for NPR is known.

AASHTO – General

- Create resources to bring in technical expertise to assist with response to MAP-21 (first produce an action plan on how to do this).
- Develop guidance on managing media/PR implications of MAP-21 reporting

FHWA

- FHWA must continue to provide technical assistance on deployment issues (AASHTO may want to create its own repository for this information for AASHTO's own use).
- FHWA has developed guidance on what makes a good measure – not a polished report but can share with AASHTO.
- Need for AASHTO/FHWA to work together on the framework for national performance story. Value in having states tell a story, but may be a credibility risk in AASHTO and FHWA telling different national stories. ***But also keep in mind that each state wants to continue to tell its individual story.***

Workshop Presentations – Summary

Introductory Remarks

Paul Degges, Janet Oakley, and Hyun-A Park

- We've been working on performance measures for quite some time, trying to get to a common language. We've been telling Congress that we are data driven. From an individual state perspective, many of us are. But from a national perspective, FHWA can't answer the question "how are we doing" – there is no uniformity in how we measure performance.
- It is important to recognize that this is really about "Performance Indicators" at the national level rather than the "Performance Measures" that we all use from a business perspective.
- Important to remember that performance management isn't a substitute for funding – looking to move forward with performance provisions of MAP-21 but need to work on the funding issues.
- For today's workshop, 34 states have weighed in on target-setting, along with several other organizations (MPOs, researchers, etc.)

FHWA Comments

Pete Stephanos

- FHWA appreciates the work of this task force and the opportunity to participate. The Task Force report that came out last fall was timely and useful. The initial memo on target-setting principles was also helpful. It is helpful to hear from the state perspective about what it is going to take to set a target, and be accountable for that target.
- FHWA has been getting a lot of feedback from many parties. Will be discussing all of this feedback – including that received from this Task Force – in the NPRM.
- The draft Planning and Safety rules will be released for comment early in Q4 of 2013, followed by the Infrastructure rules later in Q4 2013. The congestion/system performance rules will follow in Q1 2014.
- All rules will be finalized in early 2015 – this is when implementation starts
 - First 3 rules will be finalized in 2014, but effective dates will all be the end of Q1 2015.
 - Anticipate a 90 day comment period – some longer; with opportunities for outreach

Additional FHWA clarification provided throughout workshop:

- Consequence for not meeting minimum Interstate condition requirement (to be established in rulemaking) is that state would be required to set aside a portion of their NHPP and STP to focus on pavement improvements

- Consequence for not meeting state-set target for Interstate or NHS is that states would need to document actions they plan to take to meet the target
- MAP-21 does not require that a target represent an improvement over current conditions. However, targets and progress will be in the public view – there will be public accountability. FHWA also has authority to assess how aggressive a state has been in making progress towards their targets.
- Definition of significant progress will be included in the rules, and will be tailored to each measure – e.g. significant progress for safety is not necessarily assessed the same way as significant progress for pavements.
- Minimum performance levels will be a constraint on state targets – while states have latitude to set their targets, cannot set a target below the minimum performance level.
- FHWA intends to enable states to be aggressive in target-setting without fear of adverse consequences. Aware that some stakeholders want states to set aggressive targets that may not be easily achieved.
- FHWA intends to provide a basis for minimum thresholds set by rulemaking.
- FHWA clarified that freight/system performance data will be available for all NHS roads and will include segment from-to, length, travel time – segments won't necessarily match a state's segments. Data will be available in 5 minute intervals.
- FHWA intends that this will be a transparent program. Its objective is not to compare, but you can expect someone to do that. Would be productive to focus on how to explain differences across state targets – what the decision making process was.
- FHWA issuing 9 rulemakings, each with requirements to do a certain thing by a certain time. Will be a bit of a challenge to see a coherent picture until all rules are out. Ultimately FHWA will produce a master schedule.
- Rulemaking will discuss responsibilities and coordination between states and MPOs. Coordination will be covered in Planning regulations. Intent is that targets should be developed in coordinated fashion.
- FHWA seeking a balance between flexibility and consistency. There is value in having consistency in the way the targets are expressed in order to get a national view. For example, 1 vs. 5 year, % change vs. absolute number. Or (if the measure is IRI) one state sets a target based on average IRI; another based on % of system in good/fair/poor – wouldn't be possible to combine these.
- FHWA is planning webinars, event at AASHTO annual meeting, etc. – to explain what is being proposed, though comments must be provided via the official process. Also looking at innovative ways of communicating. Working on a training course as well. Safety target-setting report and peer exchange will be out this summer

Key themes from the Survey

See workshop information packet for information presented

Matt Hardy

- Focus on national objectives, not how states manage their own programs
- Avoid getting locked in to immature measures
- Recognize risks of target-setting - concern about what happens if targets are missed
- Recognize that target-setting is resource intensive and will strain capacity of DOTs - takes – data, time, staff
- Flexibility in how targets are set is desired
- Don't want to look at individual targets in isolation, set as part of a tradeoff exercise
- Recognize impacts of unforeseen events, changes in funding, etc. on ability of states to meet targets – allow targets to be adjusted in response to external events
- Address fact that states already are setting targets, perhaps based on similar but not exactly the same measures as what the national measures will be – could these be accepted as proxies for the national targets? If not, how to avoid confusion on this
- Need for clarification on how these targets relate to targets in existing programs (NHTSA, EPA)
- Need for a rational schedule of target-setting, reporting and revision that fits with state processes for working with stakeholders as of April 1 2015, how would this actually work?
- Communication on these topics needed starting now and continuously – webinars would be helpful to maximize reach
- Need for detailed guidance and clarification on goals, objectives, measures and target-setting methods, expected level of uniformity – and specific definitions on the congestion side (corridors, segments, etc.)
- Need for guidance and information sharing on best practices

Pavement Performance Management Area

See workshop information packet for information presented

Christos Xenophontos

- States at different levels of maturity on implementing TAM - more guidance and training are needed on risk based asset management, consistent measurement of IRI
- IRI alone doesn't tell the story – but difficult to come up with structural health index – despite measurement issues, important to take this opportunity to move forward.
- Weighing functional versus structural improvements must be factored into target-setting.
- Enhanced NHS is much bigger than it was. Discussion about setting targets for local roads – some consideration given to setting different targets by functional class/ownership.

Bridge Performance Management Area

See workshop information packet for information presented

Greg Frederick and Tim Gatz

- Work of the Task Force subgroup on bridges was supplemented by Subcommittee on Bridges and Structures – consensus was to move away from “good-fair-poor” and towards condition categories based on type of need – cyclical maintenance, preventive maintenance, replacement/rehab
- Target-Setting Approaches:
 - Need for an asset management approach
 - PMs don’t capture the need for substantial investment to address programmatic issues (seismic, scour, etc.) – target-setting process needs to account for this.
 - Timing of reporting issue – NBI report sent in April; if MAP-21 report is in December, numbers would be off
- Expanded NHS/Off System Bridges
 - Difficult to influence condition of off-system, locally owned structures – guidance needed on how to address target-setting for these. (Example from Rhode Island: was at 18% SD on NHS. Rose to 28% because one bridge, not state-owned, went SD)
 - AASHTO might recommend a set of sub-targets for bridge target-setting?(rur/urb, etc.)
- Resources and Funding Flexibility
 - MAP-21 allows HSIP funding for bridge inspections – that would free up other funds. However, division offices are hesitant to approve. Also, don’t have appropriate processes in place to transfer NHPP to STP.
- Communication about measures and targets
 - Many issues about public misconceptions/interpretations of the measures that exist

Freight Performance Management Area

See workshop information packet for information presented

Tim Henkel and Lori Richter

- Context: Understanding of MAP-21 varies dramatically across states, as does maturity of freight planning. We want to get to a place with a national freight network, data, funding and a process for allocating it. MAP-21 didn’t get us there, but we want to keep moving towards this.
- Measures:
 - Concern about missing elements other than delay and reliability (e.g. capacity, utilization and other system-wide considerations)
 - Concern about focus on highway/trucks as opposed to mode neutral, multi-modal
 - Questions about scope of measures – statewide, regional, corridor

- Data
 - Concern about FHWA data – compatibility with state systems, ability to supplement, ability to process, segmentation.
 - FHWA data won't address the more global characteristics of freight movements (OD, supply chains, etc.) Only highway mode.
- Target-Setting
 - Discussion with respect to significant freight corridors: needs of states for freight planning go beyond requirements of MAP-21. Most states are in the infancy of freight planning and analysis – require resources to get ready.
 - Concern that states may want to demonstrate that investments in other modes are meeting the spirit of the rule. Concern meeting rule drives suboptimal investments.

System Performance Management Area

See workshop information packet for information presented

Daniela Bremmer

- Measures
 - Recognize recommended measures don't capture all important aspects of performance
 - Important to remember that this is meant to be a national performance indicator, NOT an operational performance measure
- Target-Setting
 - Need to engage research community, vendors in this – lots of expertise out there
 - Issue of setting targets for delay on a statewide basis: discussion of the value of looking at delay in rural areas. Same issue with reliability – how does it pertain to a rural area?
 - Question: May a state “substitute” more detailed/sophisticated operational performance management practices for the nationally oriented targets?
 - Question: Recommend targets be set in terms of average delay and reliability at the system level, or percent of the system at or above a particular performance level? Is rolling up average reliability to the system level meaningful? Appears that is the preference, since this is a national measure.
- Data
 - Data is a key issue – conflation needed to combine the travel time/delay information with other information from state systems. Want FHWA contractor to assist with conflating to match state segments. States will have to evaluate how to combine the FHWA data with their own data sets.
 - Another issue is arterial data – not robust, not meaningful to set arterial thresholds

- Question: Can FHWA calculate the measures using the national data set to reduce burden on the states? Issue with relying on federal government – e.g. time lags, inconsistencies between state and federal data sources/ how to reconcile.

CMAQ Performance Management Area

See workshop information packet for information presented

Mara Campbell and Rachel Falsetti

- Measures
 - Travel time aspects not as established; lack of consistent processes in place
 - Hope that the NPR precisely defines the measures and also maximizes consistency with existing reporting requirements
 - Proposed measures intended to align with things that states are already doing for CMAQ. In the past, CMAQ funding a tool for conformity: emission reduction. Though two measures are not perfectly aligned, there are projects that can do both.
- Target-Setting
 - Question: Could targets work against picking the best projects? This is always a concern – that targets have unintended consequences
 - Note that way the measures defined by this Task Force, target monitoring is closely linked to project delivery. Raises issues of long v. short term, subject for further discussion.

Safety Performance Management Area

See workshop information packet for information presented

Tom Cole, Bernie Arseneau, John Selmer

- Measures
 - Cross-state comparisons a concern. Consistent definitions are important.
 - Some valid points on limited influence of engineering side, but can't limit progress – highlights importance of collaboration with agencies on the behavioral side.
- Target-Setting
 - More than 30 states have a zero deaths goal. States should be encouraged to have an interim goal that they are measured against. Much support for aggressive goals. But recognize that the further along you get, the harder it is to make progress.
 - Using a 3-5 year moving average will absorb some of the fluctuation, but there is random variation. If a state is fully utilizing HSIP dollars, collaborating with the locals, using data, etc. – needs to be considered in addition to the target.
 - Question on discussion of target-setting with respect to special rules and impact on how states set their targets. The set asides conflict with a performance-based, data driven approach. Had recommended that special rules should be deferred until states have a

chance to see how overall targets are working (though the rules will already be in effect). Some states are very concerned about the special rules – state DOTs have no control over these roads. A single event can affect the numbers.

- Note that there are both absolute and rate targets, question of how to balance? For example, concern about what if you hit 3 of the 4, etc. Must be looked at in the context of the overall program.
- There are challenges related to ‘all public roads’ including adequacy of data, degree of DOT control. But can’t ignore the local system; we are committed to getting to zero and half of the fatalities occurring on the local system. Need to build partnerships on this.

Update – Cross-Cutting Issues and Recommendations

John Barton

Context

- We can only do what we can do. Many factors beyond our control that impact our ability to set and achieve certain targets.
- Target-setting process shouldn’t require states to do more than what MAP-21 requires, but if they do then need to allow the efforts to be cohesive.

Funding

- For states that have multiple funding sources, focus this effort on the federal portion. In states with 100% federal funding, need to recognize multiple objectives to be addressed.
- Note that minimum levels and targets may be difficult to achieve with available funds
- Need to clarify statements that “targets should not be linked to funding” vs. targets should be fiscally constrained. Clarification is that states shouldn’t be penalized for failing to achieve a target and that states should be encouraged to set aspirational targets, but also realistic, funding-constrained targets for purposes of MAP-21.
 - FHWA has included a definition of “targets” in the rulemaking for this very reason

Measure maturity

- Note that may require time to develop baseline data and trends in order to establish meaningful targets.
- Not all measures are at the same level of maturity, need to recognize this in the target-setting process. For pavement, bridge, and safety we are in. For freight, system performance and CMAQ: there are issues with measure selection and definition. Need to nail down measures and targets, along with data sources, business rules, etc.
 - Question whether this group should simply say that there should be more time for CMAQ and System Performance; and for freight, could FHWA take on the calculation of the measures?

- USDOT needs to respond to Congress, and can't wait. Even if the states don't have a perfect set of goals, need to talk about what we do have. This group is reacting to what the AASHTO BOD has asked for. When the NPR comes out, will have to respond in a short timeframe. If we overanalyze things, we will never be done. Could include note about reconsidering these in the future but need to continue to move ahead.
- FHWA recognizes different levels of maturity and have considered this in its proposal.

Comparisons

- Concern about comparing one state to another "It's not a beauty contest"
 - AASHTO has 2 years to own this message. There are several 3rd party outfits (e.g. ASCE) telling us what kind of job we are doing. We need to be able to communicate how we are doing. We've discussed coming up with templates for communication.
 - Bottom line here is that FHWA shouldn't consider what one state's target or process is in assessment of another's

Coordinating requirements

- There are overlapping requirements – needs to be clarification on how these interrelate.

Flexibility and consistency

- Want targets to be based on trends and ranges (not on specific numbers) and adjustable (rather than dynamic) based on consistent measures across states
- Maximum flexibility discussion – multiple dimensions:
 - Question: MAP-21 gave states flexibility in setting targets; perhaps it would be sufficient to say X states are making progress towards their target in order to provide the national view.
 - States should have uniform metrics (for example, targets need to use same time frame) but flexibility in the process in how the target is set.
 - Consistency could potentially help states get needed funding, help give Congress and the American people an indication of how their money is being utilized
 - Flexibility dimensions
 - What the measure is (must be consistent)
 - How the target is defined – ability to roll up (debate here)
 - Method for setting the target (agreement that states need flexibility here)
 - Method for assessing whether substantial progress is made (debate – flexibility vs. clear rules)
- If you adjust a target too much, you lose credibility. But want ability to periodically adjust targets. Just don't want to have a situation where a state can adjust its target right before the report is submitted
 - May want to adjust based on funding changes.
 - Perhaps suggest that targets should be adjusted on a biennial basis.

- FHWA Clarification: there is a 2 year check in frequency. Initial assessment is 2 reporting periods following the target-setting.

Schedule

- Include a schedule as part of the rulemaking so that it can be commented on; allow enough time for states to set targets and prepare reports
- Need to consider when data are available (VMT, crash, etc.) and make sure this lines up with reporting deadlines

Communication

- Continue current efforts
- Develop a comprehensive communication plan – coordinated between FHWA and AASHTO

Guidance and Training

- We don't know what we don't know – Need best practice information and peer exchanges to help states to establish the targets
- Once the NPR is out for comment, need webinars to help states understand. Need to reach staff level people in this.
- Need to address the fact that different processes may be appropriate by facility type, state size, location, urban/rural.

Objectives

- Question: Who is setting overall goals and objectives? There are national goals but they aren't quantified. States are meant to set their own goals and objectives. Follow-up: Would quantitative national objectives for performance be helpful to states?