

NCHRP Project 20-24(130) – AASHTO’S 2021-2026 Strategic Plan

Meeting Notes

8/6/20 Candidate Strategic Goals Webinar

Participants:

Project Panel and Core Team

Carlos Braceras, Utah DOT
Brandye Hendrickson, AASHTO
Patrick McKenna, Missouri DOT
Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti, New Jersey DOT
Mike Tooley, Montana DOT
Jim Tymon, AASHTO
Shawn Wilson, Louisiana DOTD

Kirk Steudle, Econolite Group
Susan Martinovich, HNTB
Hyun-A Park, Spy Pond Partners
Perry Lubin, Spy Pond Partners

Strategic Plan Advisory Committee

James Bass, Texas DOT
Clay Bright, Tennessee DOT
Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Minnesota DOT
Julie Lorenz, Kansas DOT
Lloyd MacAdam, Ohio DOT
Jack Marchbanks, Ohio DOT
George McAuley, Pennsylvania DOT
Russell McMurry, Georgia DOT
Roger Millar, Washington State DOT
Brian Ness, Idaho TD
Bill Panos, North Dakota DOT
Kevin Thibault, Florida DOT
Craig Thompson, Wisconsin DOT

Action Items

- **Team** schedule AASHTO Strategic plan retreat
- **Team** draft candidate goals
- **Team** build strategic plan elements for discussion
- **Team** plan the retreat

Notes

Welcome and Introduction

- Appreciate time and effort and strong turnout for this important meeting
- Your participation critical to charting the course for the organization over the coming years

Workshop Purpose

Develop a strong foundation for the AASHTO Strategic Plan by your input on candidate goal areas

- Discuss goal considerations and options
- Identify options for candidate goals to develop for the strategic planning retreat/workshop

Present, discuss, and refine observations, insight and guidance from work-to-date

Agenda

See presentation slides for complete agenda

1. Introduction and Work-to-Date Summary
2. Strawman Strategic Plan Structure
3. Goals Development Considerations

4. Strawman Goal Areas Options
5. Priorities
6. Next Steps

Schedule

See presentation slides for summary of upcoming milestones

- Next step is AASHTO Strategic Plan Advisory Committee Retreat — develop retreat/workshop agenda focus for the full strategic plan
- September/October - develop draft strategic plan
- Present Draft AASHTO Strategic Plan at AASHTO annual meeting

SWOT

See presentation slides for summary of SWOT analysis.

Poll — How do you feel about the proposed SWOT?



Polling Comments:

- *It is a good summary of what was discussed*
- *I think it makes a lot of sense, appreciate the recognition that actions can have overlapping benefits*
- *I think it is very well developed*
- *Very good AASHTO SWOT summary. Thank you!*
- *Looks about right*
- *Meets needs but only a start*
- *Emphasis is needed on social justice, multimodal and local transportation needs along with state perception*

Example Strategic Plans

See presentation slides for summary of example strategic plan. Visit <https://aashtoplan.com/aashtoteamaccess> for collected plan library.

- **Julie.** ITE is a couple of layers too complicated. It has to be something readily accessible to a reader and I'd like to think we'd have more than just CEOs reading the doc - clear and to the point. Agriculture one was so streamlined that I didn't know what they were going for. I think bell shaped curve, something more in the middle of those.
- **Carlos.** For me, a big component of our readers are our committees because we want it to help drive the work that they do. I think we need to be thinking about what might best help them align their work to where we want to go as an organization?
- **Patrick.** I'd like if we separate the internal versus the external and then develop goals under each of those areas. I think it's important for an organization like AASHTO to have the national flavor, external pieces but it's also important in a strategic plan to make sure we're also improving the organization from the inside out. Some of the plans are either one or the other - internal or external - I think we need to combine some of those pieces and have those overarching areas and then some strategic goals underneath each of those
- **Brian.** My favorite was the APWA. Very clear categories. My least favorite was ITE, too complex, made my head spin.
- **Shawn.** I think the ASCE jumped off of me as being a good model. Not only do we want to communicate to our committees, but whether it's USDOT or folks in decision-making positions, I think that's an easy way to explain in an elevator speech some of the goals and aims of AASHTO and allows us to focus on the association a little bit more and go right in line with what Patrick said - what was internal and external.
- **Roger.** I still am on the ASCE board and helped write those goals. We were trying to do - who is the target audience for these goals? Our target audience was young civil engineers who aren't active in the society, trying to give them reasons for being active. We wanted to encourage members to join and be active, and that's something we need to think about when we think about AASHTO's goals. The members are the states. Role of committees is an important question.

Ideas for the New Strategic Plan

See presentation slides for diagrams and summaries of strategic plan structures.

Strawman Strategic Plan Structure Feedback

- **Russell.** I think this provides a good structure and a good thought-process as you look at the goals that we previously laid out and then overlaying the SWOT analysis.
- **Kevin.** I agree I think it's a good approach.
- **Shawn.** I like that it's not so restrictive and different committees will probably have greater value seeing that they're doing more than one thing in this model. When I first looked at, didn't know if strategies were aligned with what's above it... does remind me of a keyboard
- **Carlos.** I think it's going to be appropriate for the board of directors, this strategic plan, to have the strategies in there, but I think once you lay out goals you're going to have committees that will be able to contribute strategies that will be key to accomplishing goals ... being able to somehow recognize the strategies from within different committees within this.
 - How do we integrate committee feedback? Farming the committee input
- **Kirk.** Opportunity at the bottom with the action boxes for committees - conversation on that at the retreat

Poll - How do you feel about the proposed strategic plan structure?



Polling Comments:

- *It is a great, straightforward and easy to follow structure*
- *Structure is good and allowing flexibility is important*
- *Still need to consider how committee efforts do not conflict with other committee efforts relative to aligning with goals*
- *I like it. Provides fluidity*
- *Committees will have a very clear connection across the broad goals which could appear to strengthen the association*
- *This structure is good and adaptable*
- *I like the flexibility that it allows to have more than one action or strategy under 1 goal*
- *Good structure*
- *Well conceived*

Strategic Plan Context:

See presentation slides for summary of prior and current strategic planning contexts.

- **Question.** Were context summary bullets collected through interviews? Observations?
- Bullets reflect team's analysis of survey, interview, and SPAC/panel input, informed by knowledge and experience of these issues

What are the most important results you want the AASHTO Strategic Plan to achieve?



Polling Comments:

- Provide value to members
- I think it is important for AASHTO to be an example for similar organizations in terms of our collective strategic efforts. I also think it's important to serve needs beyond just transportation
- Improve the quality of life for all Americans through transportation
- Inform national transportation policy that funds the modernization of our transportation network, encourages innovation and prioritizes safety
- Create future and serve broad needs to me are similar

AASHTO Strategic Plan Priorities

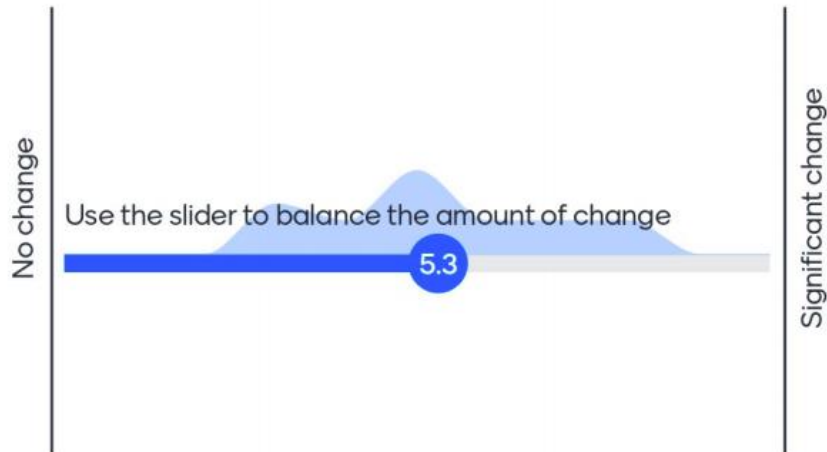
Outward/Inward Focus



- **Patrick.** Important to consider who is the target audience for the plan, or if there are several target audiences. Possible that the plan should identify those audience categories and set strategic goals within each of those categories. AASHTO as an organization has member stakeholders, the public,

and the committee structure. Find a way to create the overlay of strengths and weaknesses and opportunities in each of those strategic goals maybe across target audiences, rather than a particular audience

Amount of Change



- **Carlos.** I don't think the amount of change is the most relevant factor – this is the result of, not the input to, the decision making process.

Strategic Plan Priorities

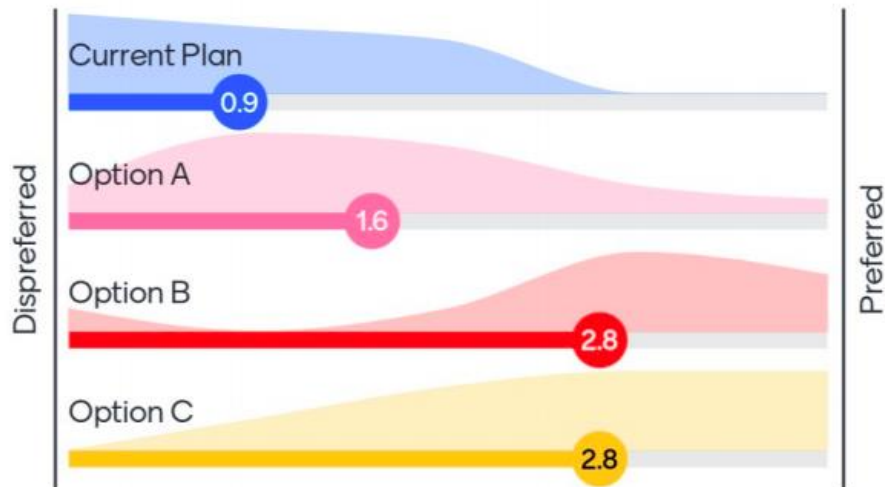
- **Patrick.** From a fiduciary/board member standpoint – rather than a staff perspective – staff has to have achievable targets. But from association standpoint you might run the risk of setting bar too low: you never fail to meet low expectations. Being bold and staking out some bold statements and territory is likely what we need at the national level, from a policy perspective, in order to move the ball forward. We have a lot of major challenges, and I don't think playing it safe will satisfy.
- **Shawn.** To be bold will require a very deep dive throughout the levels of the organization within the committees as well. That's what organizations look for, leading groups and providing that helps to produce that boldness in results

Change to Current Goal Areas

See presentation slides for summary of candidate goal approaches.

- Strawman Goal Areas A (minor change)
- Strawman Goal Areas B (moderate change)
- Strawman Goal Areas C (major change)

Rate the Four Options



Group Discussion

- **Shawn.** Collectively there's a forward leaning approach - in many cases very representative of the org. given the nuances of our different regions. I didn't get a sense that there was a lurch as much as a tempered, forward leaning approach. Surprised by that last poll, because of my perception that I didn't think B and C would be that close
- **Roger.** We're well positioned. Strategic plans target a moment in time. At this moment we're well organized, well led, well financed. We don't need to focus so much inward on fixing things. Dynamic time in the industry. Lead, follow, or get out of the way period. We as org. made up of state DOTs is positioned to lead, and the strategic plan should focus accordingly
- **Jack.** I think that we're well-grounded and there's a lot of satisfaction with the org. Pleased to see that people want bolder change. Liked option C the most because it focuses us on post-pandemic situation that we're responsible for a mobility eco-system, not just roads and highways and bridges. That kind of forward look is really necessary for AASHTO to remain viable.
- **Roger.** I Inherited a strategic plan in my organization that was 7 goals x 5 strategies x 10 action items and we were spending all of our time dealing with how complicated we made it. Each goal needs to have achievable number of strategy and action items. Let's not dilute that by having something for everyone in the plan, it doesn't have to be all-encompassing. Should be about strategy, not including everyone's "pet projects."
- **Carlos.** Fewer is better. Simple and fewer is a good principle. This is a high level effort. A lot can be contained within simple goals.
- **Jim.** Great to hear how engaged everyone is. And committed to bold plan and to keeping it focused. As we get into the retreat stage will be good to ensure we stick to that, if that's what we decide here today. Reflecting on past processes, during the discussion phase there is potential for it to balloon - everyone wants to make sure they are involved. But this is a great direction, great starting point. Hopeful that we stick to this focus and philosophy at the retreat.

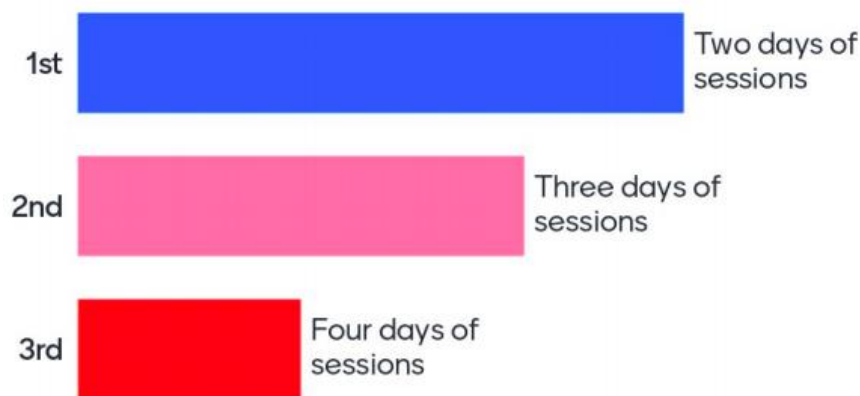
Strategic Planning Retreat

See presentation slides for summary of virtual retreat formats.

Virtual Formats

- **Russell.** World café format - gives everyone a chance to have input on each goal, if there are multiple, and aggregate them all together. Everyone gets a say. Versus breakout groups may only focus on one goal area, and then everyone goes back and forth on that.
- **Roger.** I like World café too, very much like a breakout. Breakouts work well with the current technology. Smaller group would allow for more input from each member, and world café gives everyone a chance to talk about all the items.

Workshop Scheduling options



- **Roger.** Consider scheduling some or all on week-end?
- **Jim.** Glad Roger brought that up may be easier to carve out time.
- **Roger.** If we're really going to focus, the number of distractions during the week-end goes down.
- **Carlos.** Earlier in the day may make it easier
- **Shawn.** Not a preference but willing to do weekend if it is the will of the group. Consider combination of a Friday afternoon and a Saturday morning

Next Tasks

- Draft candidate goals
- Build strategic plan elements
- Plan the retreat