

Transit Council Communication Plan

December 2010

Introduction

The ITE Transit Council Communication Plan is intended to guide the use of resources in communicating with the Council membership and other key audiences inside and outside the Institute. In developing this plan, the Transit Council reviewed its previous communication methods, progress toward implementation of the previous Communication Plan and the evolving needs of its membership. In addition, at the direction of the ITE Coordinating Council, this plan includes a section on interaction with volunteers. The goals for this plan are to:

1. Provide technical and organizational information to Transit Council and ITE members
2. Enhance interest in the Transit Council
3. Improve product delivery
4. Enhance visibility for ITE and the transportation profession

Target Audiences

The target audiences for the Transit Council Communication Plan have been identified and prioritized into primary and secondary audiences. The primary audience is the members of the Transit Council, to whom the Transit Council will focus regular communication.

Secondary audiences are other key groups that may receive periodic information from the Transit Council, for example through membership on the Coordinating Council or active task forces, or may be targeted for specific projects or other periodic activities. These include the Coordinating Council, the ITE membership, Districts and Sections, and sister organizations or agencies, such as the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and the Transportation Research Board (TRB).

Messages

The following primary message themes have been identified for Transit Council communications:

- General information on the goals, activities and achievements of the Transit Council – This would include new projects, sponsored sessions at meetings, publications and other activities of the Council.
- Links to up-to-date information of interest to transit professionals.
- Outreach to encourage enhanced membership involvement.

Primary Communication Tools

The following primary communication tools will be used by the Transit Council:

1. Web Page – updates every four to six months. Yuko Nakanishi will review the current content and recommend changes in content to bring the site up to date (due February 2011). Team to collaborate on providing information. ITE staff to implement changes. Audience – general ITE community, council members. Purpose – provide information to potential

- members; direct interested parties to other resources (such as upcoming transit-themed Journal issue, meeting minutes, meeting schedules, sponsored sessions, etc.)
2. Newsletter – publish electronic newsletter every six months. Cheryl Freeman to remain in charge of assembly/editing. ITE Staff to publish. Purpose – highlight Council activities and projects, provide brief technical articles, provide links to additional updated information, including outside sources.
 3. Social Networking – Yuko Nakanishi to evaluate previous ideas for Facebook/LinkedIn presence for Transit Council and recommend whether to proceed with implementation. A decision on the implementation of this element will be finalized at the upcoming Transit Council Executive Committee meeting in January 2011.
 4. Executive Committee Meetings – three in-person/teleconference meetings at TRB, Technical Conference and Annual Meeting. Conference calls as needed between in-person meetings. Purpose – develop and update council mission, goals and annual action plans, track progress on action items, develop ideas for projects and track progress, discuss and decide on sponsored sessions, discuss updates to information sources, identify needed adjustments to plans. These meetings are led by the Chair. A committee member will be assigned to record and distribute minutes. Cell phones using the speakerphone feature will be used to allow distant members to connect to the in-person meetings.
 5. Targeted emails from Council Chair. Purpose – in advance of the conferences to highlight Council-sponsored sessions at Technical Conference and Annual Meeting. Purpose – professional development, information sharing on project experience and best practices, increase visibility of Transit Council and the transit aspects of the transportation engineering profession.
 6. Results of council sponsored projects – various forms of reports. Purpose – advance the state of the practice, identify and promote best practices, share knowledge gained, provide a technical resources. These products will be produced in future years once new projects have been identified and initiated.
 7. Outreach to related organizations – TRB and, possibly, APTA. Purpose – seek opportunities for synergy and improved dissemination of technical information for benefit of Council and Institute members. Yuko Nakanishi will continue to make contact with TRB representatives to set an initial meeting at TRB Annual Meeting. Alan Danaher will make contact with APTA to set up an initial discussion and Sean Rathwell will contact the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA).
 8. ITE Journal Articles – the Transit Council will publish, with ITE staff assistance, a “transit focused” Journal issue in January 2011. In addition, the Council will encourage its members to consider submitting articles for publication throughout the year.
 9. Council Chairs –Through its membership on the Coordinating Council the Transit Council will share information on Council activities and seek opportunities for joint activities with other councils. This occurs through three regularly scheduled Coordinating Council meetings, Council Chair reviews by the Coordinating Council Chair, and individual communication with the Chairs.
 10. SCORP (Standing Committee on Recommended Practice) – The Transit Council’s primary communication with SCORP is through the three regularly scheduled SCORP meetings, the policy document, review of project proposals, and the active involvement of the CoCo Vice Chair as the Chair of SCORP.

11. Task Forces (Energy and Climate Change and Roundabout) – The Transit Council will provide representatives to the task forces to provide representation of transit issues and to facilitate communication and potential coordinated projects or activities.
12. Districts and Sections – the Transit Council will seek to implement strategies to establish ongoing communication with Districts and Sections. Members of the Transit Council will seek opportunities to attend section and district meetings and describe the activities of the Council for the purpose of broadening participation in Council-sponsored activities. Responsibilities for making contacts with the Districts and Sections will be discussed at the upcoming Executive Committee meeting in January 2011.

In addition to these regular forms of outreach, the Transit Council will continue the use of periodic surveys of the Council members to gather information.

Interfacing with Volunteers

We believe that the most effective approach to engaging more ITE Members in the activities of the Transit Council will be outreach to the Sections and Districts, where most members are active. Members of the Executive Committee will reach out to their respective District and Section leadership to establish connections. At the January 2011 Executive Committee meeting the council leadership will discuss potential strategies and tactics for communicating with members through the Sections and Districts.

The Executive Committee will continue to hold three meetings where in-person attendance is possible, at TRB, the Technical Conference and the Annual Meeting. At least three additional conference calls will be scheduled during the year and the Executive Committee members will use personal cell-phones to afford access to the in-person meetings for those members who cannot attend.