Driver Behavior Research in the 2nd Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP 2)

Ann M. Brach, Ph.D., P.E.
Deputy Director, SHRP 2
Transportation Research Board, Washington, D.C.

Friday, April 24, 2009
Complimentary lunch at 12:00 pm
Lecture at 12:30 pm

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THE DYNAMICS OF FARE AND FREQUENCY CHOICE IN URBAN TRANSIT

Speaker
Ann M. Brach, Ph.D., P.E.
Deputy Director, SHRP 2
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Where & When
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Lunch served at 12:00 pm
Lecture begins at 12:30 pm
Mezzanine Lounge, W20-407
Stratton Student Center
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Abstract
The second Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP 2) is a $170 million, 7-year research effort focused on reducing congestion, improving highway safety, and rehabilitating the country’s aging highway infrastructure. Authorized by the U.S. Congress in 2005, the program is administered by the Transportation Research Board of The National Academies. SHRP 2 complements other highway research programs by focusing on a few strategic goals, involving stakeholders from across and outside of the highway community, and taking a multi-disciplinary approach. This talk will provide an overview of SHRP 2 and a more detailed presentation of SHRP 2 safety research. In the area of highway safety, SHRP 2 will carry out the largest naturalistic driving study (NDS) to date: 2000 volunteers from several sites across the country will have their vehicles inconspicuously instrumented to provide continuous data on vehicle performance and driver behavior for a period of one to two years. In addition, data on roadway and roadside features in the areas in which the volunteers most frequently drive will be collected and correlated with the driver data. The SHRP 2 NDS is aimed at understanding driver behavior in real-world situations and how this behavior interacts with vehicle, roadway, and environmental factors. The immediate result of the research will be a rich database of driver, vehicle, and roadway data that will be made available to qualified researchers. Ultimately, the goal of the program is to provide the intellectual basis for fundamentally new approaches that will make a significant improvement in highway safety. A number of unique technical and non-technical challenges are posed by this study and should lead to interesting discussion of possible ways of addressing them.

Biography
Ann M. Brach is the Deputy Director of the second Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP 2) at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) of The National Academies. In this capacity, Dr. Brach is responsible for overseeing research on the role of driver behavior in highway safety and on methods for rapid renewal of highway infrastructure; she also oversees initial research implementation activities. In addition, Dr. Brach carries out legislative analysis related to federal highway and transportation-related research. Prior to her current position, Dr. Brach served as a Senior Program Officer in Policy Studies at TRB, where she directed the development of SHRP 2. In addition, she has completed studies of funding trends, congressional earmarking, and stakeholder involvement in federal transportation research programs. Before coming to TRB, Dr. Brach was Research and Technology Program Manager at the Federal Highway Administration and Chief of the Research and Technology Division of the Maryland State Highway Administration. Dr. Brach obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from Northeastern University in Boston. She received the Master of Science and Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she focused on management of research and innovation in the construction industry. She recently completed terms as chair of the Research Committee of the American Society of Civil Engineers Transportation and Development Institute and as a member of ASCE’s Transportation Policy Committee. She is a registered Professional Engineer in the Commonwealth of Virginia.