

October 15, 2010

Earlier this year, the FHWA established a Bridge Preservation Expert Task Group (BPETG), comprised of representatives from state highway agencies (AASHTO), FHWA, Academia, and Industry. This forum is intended to generate timely input and coordination among stakeholders in the bridge community with regard to strategies, practices and research needs pertaining to preservation in the overall management of the national inventory of publicly owned highway bridges. Going forward, this group has committed to work closely with the AASHTO TSP² Bridge Preservation effort by providing complementary technical input in support of advancing of the state of the practice.

The BPETG continues to refine action items associated with its 2010-2012 Strategic Plan which is constructed around nine strategic objectives. One of those objectives is to ***“Promote the development and implementation of clear and consistent bridge preservation terminology.”*** To that end, the BPETG has completed an intensive effort to develop and gain consensus on a “working definition” of bridge preservation, which it is now proposing for consideration, with the purpose of adoption by AASHTO as the nationally accepted definition for inclusion in the AASHTO Glossary of Terms. Additionally, the BPETG has developed a commentary to provide needed amplification of this definition, which is being proposed for inclusion in appropriate bridge and maintenance manuals and guides produced by the AASHTO Subcommittee on Bridges and Structures and Subcommittee on Maintenance. Comments on the proposed definition and commentary are requested from the bridge community and other interested stakeholders, and will be received through November 30, 2010 at <http://www.tsp2.org/respond>. All feedback received will be provided to the leadership of the BPETG, appropriate AASHTO Subcommittees and technical working groups. The working definition and commentary are shown below:

FHWA BPETG Working Definition of Bridge Preservation as of October 15, 2010

Bridge Preservation

Actions or strategies that prevent, delay or reduce deterioration of bridges or bridge elements; restore the function of existing structures; keep bridges in good condition; and extend useful bridge service life. Preservation actions may be preventive or condition-driven.

Commentary

Effective bridge preservation actions are intended to address bridges while they are still in good or fair condition and before the onset of serious deterioration.

An effective bridge preservation program:

- 1) employs long-term network strategies and practices that are aimed to preserve the condition of bridges and extends their useful life;
- 2) has sustained and adequate funding sources;
- 3) has adequate tools and processes to ensure that the appropriate treatments are applied at the appropriate time

An effective bridge preservation program may include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- 1) Qualifying parameters for bridge types and related conditions (i.e. bridge elements or components that are in fair to good condition such as concrete decks, coated steel elements, substructure elements in a marine environment, etc.);
- 2) Appropriate treatments such as cleaning, installation of deck overlays, coating of steel elements, installation of cathodic protection and prevention systems, etc.;
- 3) Regular needs assessment to identify, prioritize, and estimate the cost of planned work.