

## Chapter 2. MDOT Organization and Strategic Framework

This chapter presents the organizational structure of research administration and management. It also presents the mission, vision and values of ORBP that help guide research.

### 2.1 Research Administration

#### 2.1.1 MDOT

MDOT has about three thousand full time employees and annual budget of about \$3.4 billion. MDOT's organization has central offices in Lansing, seven Regions and 26 Transportation Service Centers located through the state.

#### 2.1.2 ORBP

On December 18, 2007, MDOT's Office of Research and National Best Practices changed its name to the Office of Research and Best Practices, dropping the word "national" from its name. This change reflects a recognition of Michigan's role in a global transportation network and its commitment to pursuing and achieving excellence at an international level. For a current organization chart, see [Appendix A1](#).

The Engineer of ORBP reports to the Chief Operations Officer, who in turn reports to the Director of MDOT. All Development, Delivery/Operations, Regions and TSCs also report to the Chief Operations Officer. For a current organization chart, see [Appendix A2](#) and MDOT's website.

ORBP manages three program functions known as the Research Office, the MDOT Library, and Best Practices, see [Appendix A3](#). This manual will not address the Best Practices Program.

##### 2.1.2.1 ORBP Research Office

The ORBP Research Office organizes, manages, and disseminates the results of research conducted within MDOT. It coordinates the process for identifying, selecting, and managing research projects funded through the Federal Statewide Planning and Research, Part II, Program, and it helps develop and manage research funded by other agency programs.

The SPR, Part II, Program – including research, technical transfer and implementation – is the focus of this manual.

##### 2.1.2.2 MDOT Library

The MDOT Library is an integral part of ORBP. The MDOT Library serves staff, consultants, other government agencies and the public by finding information on topics, conducting literature searches, locating facts and statistics, identifying information and additional sources, and obtaining articles and books through a state and national library network. For more information, see [Appendix A4](#).

### 2.1.2.3 ORBP Key Functions

Some of the key functions that ORBP performs are: giving approvals for new projects and research task agreements; making revisions to the program’s projects, funding or schedules; setting priorities for research; and tracking implementation activities for research results. Processes are described later in this manual.

**Review:** ORBP reviews all approved research activities and obtains necessary authorization for each research project.

**Progress Reports:** ORBP receives progress reports pertaining to each SPR, Part II, and Transportation Pooled Fund research project from Principal Investigators on a quarterly basis. These reports are based on information obtained from the Project Manager, Research Manager, the Contract and Finance Manager, the Technical Monitor, the Federal Programs Manager and the Principal Investigators.

**Budget:** The Engineer of ORBP approves all research budgets and ensures that research activities are conducted within the constraints of available resources.

**Extensions/Revisions:** The Engineer of ORBP approves all revisions to approved research projects and any extensions required to complete the research within the limits of the approved work program. A budget change that involves an increase in the total federal funds authorized for the work program requires prior FHWA approval and authorization. Similarly, changes in the work program (adding a line item, subcontracting, etc.) as specified in 49 CFR 18.30(d) require prior FHWA approval.

### 2.1.3 Committee Structure for Research

SPR, Part II, Program research is guided and carried out through a tiered structure of oversight, advisory and management committees as shown in Figure 2.1.

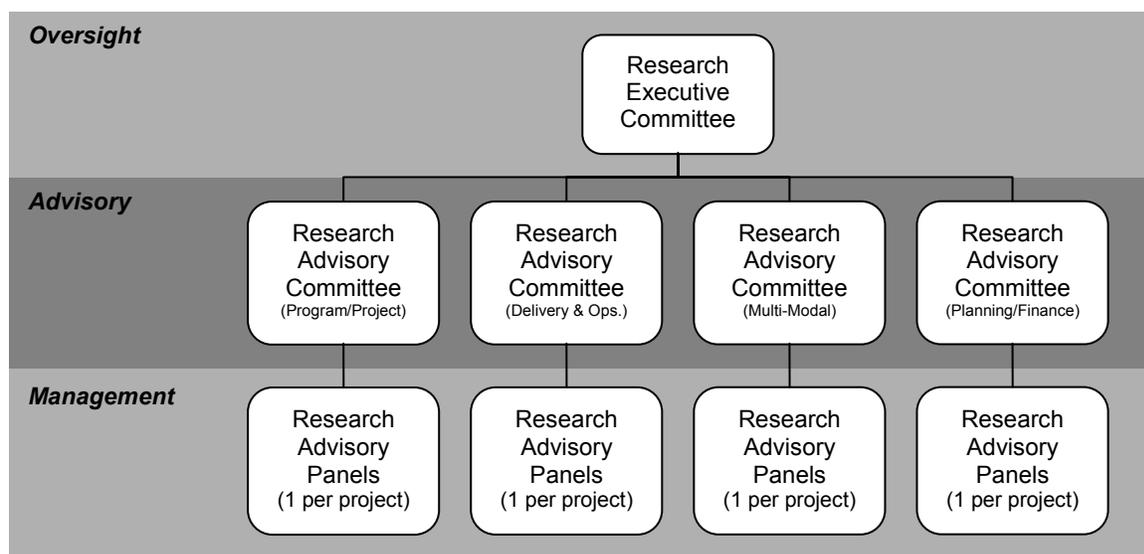


Figure 2.1—Oversight, advisory and management committee structure

Details on each of these three types of committees follows.

### **Oversight. Research Executive Committee (REC)**

The REC meets four-to-six times per year and oversees and approves the annual program recommendations.

#### **Members:**

- MDOT Chief Operations Officer
- MDOT Chief Administrative Officer
- Engineer of ORBP
- MDOT Bureau Deputy Directors
- Regional Representatives

#### **Duties:**

- Sets strategic direction
- Defines research goals
- Approves recommended research
- Reviews key research findings
- Reviews and approves/disapproves all recommendations for research results implementation

### **Advisory. Research Advisory Committee (RAC)**

There are a total of four RACs, in the areas of:

- Program/Project Development
- Delivery & Operations
- Multi-Modal Transportation
- Planning & Finance

#### **Members of each RAC:**

- Chair (Bureau Deputy Director for each RAC)
- FHWA representative
- ORBP representative
- 4 to 6 focus area managers (see section 4.1.1)

#### **Duties:**

- Align research projects with the strategic direction of MDOT
- Provide input to creation of research problem statements
- Prioritize research needs
- Recommend research needs to REC

- Receive reports and presentations on research results
- Lay implementation foundation by describing outcomes and benefits of recommended research
- Advance research results by submitting a formal request to REC for their review and approval

### **Management. Research Advisory Panels (RAP)**

A RAP is formed for every research project. RAP membership and duties are detailed in Chapter 4, “Project Management.”

## **2.2 ORBP Mission, Vision and Values**

### **ORBP Mission**

The Office of Research and Best Practices’ (ORBP’s) mission is to:

- Coordinate and manage research programs for the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- Monitor learning and innovation in development and operations on integrated transportation systems
- Promote implementation of learning and innovation throughout MDOT
- Encourage research which supports integrated multi-modal transportation and MDOT’s strategic goals

### **ORBP Vision**

ORBP’s vision is to be a recognized leader in coordinating applied research and implementing results. We will accomplish this by:

- Identifying cutting edge research topics
- Implementing research results
- Coordinating development of research projects

Our core strength results from a highly integrated network of dynamic partnerships among transportation professionals.

### **ORBP Values**

ORBP’s values are:

- Quality
- Teamwork
- Customer Orientation
- Integrity
- Pride
- Determination
- Innovation
- Partnership