Issue Overview

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It is a pleasure for me to preside over this session and to be part of such a distinguished group of presenters. As the title suggests, the purpose of this part of the conference is to sample what the individual states are doing to embrace the concept of intermodalism. Before we begin, I would like to give you an overview of what the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) is doing toward the development of an intermodal transportation infrastructure system for our state.

As you know, ISTEA has challenged each state to focus its energies on a national intermodal transportation system. Through the concept of intermodalism, connectivity among ports, rail systems, airports, and highways is believed to be the key to the future growth of the nation.

In order to do our part, we in Louisiana have modified our thinking and adjusted our priorities to implement an intermodal approach to the way we do our jobs. In planning for the future, we are ensuring that airports, highways, railroads, ports, harbors, and mass transit facilities work together to provide an efficient and effective homogeneous transportation network.

The focus of the Louisiana system is to move people and goods in a safe and energy-efficient manner, to provide the foundation for improved economic development and growth, and to strengthen the ability of Louisiana and the nation to compete and succeed in the global economy.

In keeping with its national intermodal policy, Congress mandated that states prepare statewide intermodal transportation plans by late 1995. Congress also directed the U.S. Department of Transportation to make $3 million in grants available to six states to develop prototype intermodal transportation master plans. Louisiana was awarded one of these coveted grants.

The two primary goals of this federal project were to develop a prototype methodology for statewide intermodal transportation planning and to develop a recommended long-range intermodal transportation master plan for Louisiana. I would like to explain in more detail our approach toward developing the intermodal transportation planning model.

The project was undertaken by a team of experts in a variety of different areas from within the state. The organization of this wide-ranging team was headed by DOTD under my overall direction. A project manager was appointed and primary staff responsibility was assigned to the Research and Planning Directorate. A project staff was then organized that included members of the Department of Economic Development (DED), a significant contributor in forecasting levels of population and industry and in the development of alternative plans, policies, and strategies.

Other staff included representatives of Louisiana State University, such as faculty members and research staffs of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, who specialize in transportation planning, remote sensing, image processing, and geographic information systems applications. Also included were members of the National Ports and Waterways Institute who specialize in freight transportation, particularly by water and rail.

In addition, the staff included expertise from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Louisiana Tech University, Southern University, and Tulane University. To guide the efforts of the staff, a Project Management Advisory Committee (PMAC) was formed that consisted of the senior administrators for each of the participating agencies and institutions and the project manager. The purpose of the PMAC is to review overall project progress, staffing, budget expenditures, and management issues.

Under the project manager, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed, which consisted of the senior technical staff members from each of the agencies and universities. As specific tasks were assigned, a task leader was selected from the TAC, and a staff was drawn from the appropriate areas of expertise within the entire project staff.

The next step in the process was to establish mechanisms to involve other public agencies and the private sector. This was accomplished through the organization and formal appointment of an Intermodal Advisory Council consisting of the modal advisory councils and the metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs).

Modal advisory councils were established for passenger mobility and for highway, rail, water, air, and pipelines. These councils consisted of both users and providers of transportation services in their respective modes. Selected representatives from each modal council were then appointed to the Intermodal Advisory Council. An advisory council of regional planning officials from the MPOs was created to ensure proper coordination between state and local planning efforts. With an organization and structure in place, the planning began in earnest.

The first step in the planning process was capturing the input from the public's involvement, which was accomplished in three ways. First, the modal advisory councils proved to be invaluable in identifying issues and opportunities for consideration. Issues and opportunities were also identified through an intermodal transportation planning conference. In addition, a quarterly newsletter was published and distributed to approximately 3,000 stakeholders. Last, personal interviews were conducted with nearly 100 senior transportation executives.

The next step in the planning process was to establish goals and objectives for Louisiana's intermodal transportation system. These goals and objectives were defined using the collective wisdom of the entire team. The next major thrust in the planning process was focused on three areas. First, a comprehensive needs analysis was conducted in which long-range transportation demand forecasts were made to determine deficiencies of the intermodal system. Separate conceptual frameworks and models were developed for passenger and freight planning. Second, an extensive data collection effort was undertaken to develop an inventory of intermodal transportation facilities and existing freight and passenger movements and characteristics to measure system performance. Third, long-range transportation demand forecasts were developed, with 1990 as the base year and 2020 as the forecast year.

Because so many of the passenger and particularly the freight movements in Louisiana do not originate or terminate within the state, forecasts were required at three geographic levels: Louisiana, the rest of the United States, and the rest of the world. Because of differences in passenger and freight demand, transportation analysis zones were defined differently for forecasting each passenger and freight variable.

In the next step, the issues and opportunities identified through the stakeholder outreach effort, along with deficiencies identified through the needs analysis, formed a pool of poten-

tial improvements to consider when generating alternative transportation plans. A classical brainstorming approach was selected as the method for generating alternative plans in which revenue forecasts and goals and objectives served as the principal constraints. A methodology for evaluating alternative plans was also developed. This methodology called for substantial involvement from the Intermodal Advisory Council in ranking the alternatives and formulating the recommended statewide plan. The recommended master plan will now be presented to the legislature for its review and approval. Finally, the plan will be adjusted to reflect any changes and finalized. I am pleased to report that we have completed the first goal of the modal plan and have submitted the plan to DOT for review, and we are well along in developing our detailed implementation master plan for Louisiana.

In conclusion, we are excited about the future and about the direction of our efforts toward realizing a fully integrated intermodal transportation infrastructure system for Louisiana. We know it is the key to opening the door for economic growth for our state and for the nation.