

# COMMENTARY ON PAPERS BY BURKHARDT AND SHARPE AND WILLIAMS

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•THE foregoing papers reflect the significant progress that has been made in the handling of social considerations related to highway location and design. These papers add both to the "process guidelines" approach and to the improvement of techniques for that process.

The papers by Burkhardt and Sharpe and Williams are quite different from each other. However, easily identifiable advantages are evident in each. The Sharpe and Williams approach to social capacity indicators is clearly desirable, since it (a) solicits and utilizes individual rather than group responses on social issues and (b) proposes the use of readily available data and well-developed analytical techniques—i. e., the "cluster analysis". Burkhardt's paper on community reactions proposes a vigorous two-way communication program that is imperative to an effective handling of social considerations. Furthermore, it materially improves our understanding of the general population's perception of social issues related to highway location and design.

Although these papers are difficult to assess collectively, it is possible to relate their conclusions to proposed federal legislation and to FHWA's "process guideline" approach.

With respect to legislation, it is possible to trace historically the development of a basic precept of our democratic form of government—that is, the involvement of the broad community in decision-making on social issues. This involvement might also be called participatory government, and earlier legislation, as well as the growing body of current legislation, is becoming increasingly clear on this point. Thus, the consideration of social issues in highway planning is closely associated with the movement toward more and better citizen involvement procedures. As a consequence, we do have a standard against which to measure the papers presented here. A second standard, as mentioned earlier, is the FHWA "process guidelines" that are being increasingly accepted as responsive to earlier legislation as well as to the constantly changing NEPA guidelines. Since the positive aspects of the two papers are presented above, this review will conclude with the identification of further developments or refinements that might be required of the approaches suggested in the papers.

The indications are that all of our efforts toward the inclusion of social considerations in the highway development process will require

1. The development of techniques for entering such considerations at the system level rather than just at the location and design levels;
2. The identification and equitable handling of the "null" or "do-nothing" option in our methodologies, analyses, and questionnaires;
3. The refinement of techniques for the identification and utilization of dynamic social objectives or goals;
4. The improved identification of the total group of decision-makers who will (whether invited or not) insist on a role in the highway planning phase; and
5. The further development of iterative planning, location, and design procedures that will give us a much-needed flexibility in responding positively to the legislative and citizen pressures that affect all of our highway development efforts, from inception to implementation.