RESPONSE

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The first question that I find myself struck by is, What are the problems to which TSM is addressed? I think that I understand the background from which TSM has emerged. I think the causes have to do with the constraints on facility and service expansion in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The highway expansion ran into a variety of constraints largely of a nonfiscal nature. In the mid-1970s, transit is also running into serious constraints on service expansion mainly of a fiscal nature. There is concern as well about lack of integration of the costs of the system. But I think that there is still a lack of clarity about the problems of urban transportation that transportation policy may be trying to alleviate or to solve.

The case studies suggested that congestion is the primary problem and that TSM is the new traffic engineering strategy for alleviating congestion. But in the discussion of urban transportation more generally, one often has the sense that the primary objectives today have to do with increased equity, increased amenity in the urban area generally, air quality improvement, energy conservation, and so on. It is not always clear the extent to which TSM is addressed explicitly to these other issues or the extent to which it is an instrument for dealing with them.

Traffic engineering has been the historic strategy during most of our history for dealing with congestion. In the late 1950s through the early 1970s we had a brief burst of a construction orientation associated with the interstate program in urban areas, but it was unprecedented and appears to have been a relatively brief episode. And now we are returning to a traffic engineering orientation under a new name. In a sense, I think, we have rediscovered the wheel. We now call it system management, but it bears a great deal of resemblance to the enthusiasm of the late 1940s and early 1950s over things such as one-way street systems, staggered traffic lights, and so on. The question is, What else will TSM be besides the new traffic engineering? Will it incorporate new objectives in important ways and new conceptions to the urban transportation problem? Will it focus on the management of institutions, transit institutions for example, and on cost control as well as on the management of urban street systems?

The second question that I find myself pondering is, How great is the challenge of integrating the new planning requirements that have been imposed, largely at federal initiative, on urban areas for the past several years? First there was the thrust to integrate highway and transit planning, and increasingly paratransit planning is being added to that. Paratransit, of course, incorporates a great many things under a single title, and it involves the integration of many parts of the system that are under different ownership and management, that is, dial-a-ride systems that may be under public transit management, van-pool and car-pool systems that may be under private management, and taxicab systems that are also privately regulated management. Then, there is the integration of long- and short-term planning. That may be the most difficult form of integration of all. How does one integrate the 6-month to 1-year perspective with the 20-year perspective, which has guided transportation planning during most of the postwar period? And there is the capital and operating integration. The idea of integrating the forms of operating planning with capital planning seems particularly difficult because the coordination of operations involves day-to-day coordination of action, not just the coordination of the intellectual activity of planning, and then the delegation to individual modal agencies to carry out those plans.

If one takes those various types of planning—highway, transit, paratransit, long- and short-term capital and operating—and builds a matrix, there would be 12 cells in that matrix; but of course it is much more complicated than that. The question that I would like to have addressed is, To what extent is this proving to be a nearly insuperable burden or one that in fact is proving to be quite manageable in urban areas?

A related question is, Does it matter if the TSM projects are not closely integrated and not all built into a comprehensive plan if TSM is essentially ad hoc and opportunistic in its orientation and requires only that major conflicts be ironed out and major priorities be set in some regional form? In that context, does it matter whether the region has a major capital agenda? A casual observation of my own has been that, in those regions that still have major highway, transit, and capital-intensive transit projects on their agendas, key policy makers and even planners are finding it difficult to focus on TSM and paratransit kinds of issues. It is in those areas that do not have rail rapid transit on their agendas and that do not have major expressway issues on their agendas that TSM is proving to be highly used. This I say in spite of the Boston case study. My own observation is that in spite of this imaginative project in downtown Boston, which is a very special case, major policy makers in Boston have found it difficult to focus on TSM because of their continuing preoccupation with major capital projects, which, of course, stems from a long and reasonable history in that region.

The third question involves the issue of the constituencies for TSM. Every major initiative, if it is going to have much of an impact on urban America, has to have political constituencies associated with it. At the moment, I think that I perceive that TSM is a professional initiative that has emerged out of the transportation professions, particularly those professionals who sit in Washington, but has received a favorable response from those who operate out of the states and regions and...
localities around the country. But it is also an initiative that has only succeeded so far as it has pursued modest objectives that have not inconvenienced significant numbers of drivers or voters and have not changed the basic patterns by which the urban transportation system has operated over the years. And it may be that as long as it continues to do that it will be undisturbed by the larger political process, but will also have a trivial impact on the overall nature of the urban transportation system. This gets back to the comment that TSM may be a minor initiative, although a commendable initiative.

Who are the potential constituencies of TSM who may over time eventually enable it to try some bolder initiatives and to become more pervasive with respect to the nature of the urban transportation system? I think of some constituencies that can be identified right now, both for conventional policies and not so conventional policies. It is the downtown business initiative or constituency that wants downtown malls. The highway programs had major constituencies, who were concerned about the construction of the highways and about building the automobiles to be driven on the highways. It is more difficult to see exactly where the constituency for conventional transit has come from, but there are major institutions both in the central city governments and in transit authorities that have carried the ball politically on that one. There may also be TSM initiatives waiting to be tapped that are not so instantly visible right now. So perhaps the first question is, What has been the evolutionary development of constituencies in this area and how will they develop over time?

LLOYD: It seems to me that one of the big problems with TSM is that it is an economy of sorts, and the projects that tend to have enormous benefits to the business community and support from the unions. A project that is the kinds of jobs it would yield. Many decisions are made for profits because of the jobs they bring and against projects if jobs are lost. Therefore, it is easier to get consensus on the general strategy than on the specific tactic.

WRIGHT: With regard to the Banfield project, we explained to the policy boards that the project was consistent with several regional policy objectives including those relating to the environment. The policy boards made a commitment to those objectives and are now adhering to them and attempting to provide an opportunity for its ultimate success. It has not been easy, however.

SOMERFELD: Our TSM projects require little capital and, therefore, have few opponents. We are having some difficulty in balancing the goals and objectives. As soon as we start reducing traffic through neighborhoods, we are, of course, downgrading the automobile efficiency and movement, and that is controversial.

Is it feasible or necessary to integrate the many types of planning: long-term, short-term, capital, operating, highway, transit, paratransit?

ALDERSON: The initial proposal for Nicolet Mall was made in 1956; the first skyway was built in 1962, and there are still skyways to be built. An effort like that cannot be carried out without long-term planning. Some have suggested that TSM planning, or short-range planning, will replace long-range planning. I think long-range plans and short-range TSM actions must be integrated, and people who suggest that they need not be miss the point of what planning is about. Once one has moved into the 3 to 5-year time frame and is trying to decide which things to do with next year’s budget, one is in programming anyway and not in planning.

How great are the communication and coordination costs of doing that? Clearly, one of the arguments of the comprehensive planning thrusts of recent years have made is that everything now takes so long because so many people have to get into the act, so many clearances have to be made, and so many points have to be dealt with in the analyses. To what extent are the intellectual demand and the communication demand becoming more than it is humanly possible to do? Or is it manageable?

ALDERSON: In our metropolitan area, our transportation system management policies are simply extracted from our long-range plan. We did not make any new TSM policies because the policies that were in the 1990 transportation plan had enough about effective use of the system to give us what we needed for TSM. So, there was not any added communication. We do spend time in committee work dealing with priorities when we come to funding.

LLOYD: One problem we have that pertains specifically to MPOs is that we have such a detailed and extensive process of review in terms of transportation planning that by the time a project gets distilled to the final decision point so many people have seen it and signed off on it that it is almost irreversible. Sometimes at the last moment the timing or the exact extent of the project may not seem wise, but it is hard to take another couple of weeks or another 3 or 4 months because so many people have already seen it and are outraged to think that their effort may have gone in vain if there is going to be a last-minute change.

ALDERSON: We have a very detailed set of policies and objectives that were reviewed by major segments of the community. However, when we begin implementation, for example, in the central part of the city where our objective is to maximize existing roadways and transit, then we must talk about automobile-restrictive zones and pricing mechanisms to reduce the flow of traffic. The merchants are, of course, the first ones to oppose it even though they were involved in setting the policies and objectives.

So, it is easier to get consensus on the general strategy than on the specific tactic.

WORKSHOP A DISCUSSION

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The following conclusions were reached in workshop A.

1. TSM has been an effective means for conveying to transportation officials that federal funds are limited and that programs seeking to achieve use of existing facilities are essential if congestion is to be relieved and energy conserved.

2. The federal policy statements are not in line with