

this situation is that current plans and programs are perceived as unrealistic by local officials and the credibility of the planning process suffers accordingly.

10. Inability to project financial resources: In a time of inflation and limited financial resources, local officials are particularly in need of accurate and dependable projections of implementation costs. In essence, the financial feasibility of transportation proposals is uppermost in the minds of local officials. Related to this issue (as well as to issue 9) is the perceived need for additional federal and state financial assistance for transportation improvements.

#### RESEARCH NEEDS

One research need was recognized by the group and

specifically recommended for further study. This need relates to the problems and difficulties in planning for an uncertain future. It was noted that there is apparently a growing body of literature and research findings in this area and that available knowledge and theory should be applied to the urban transportation planning process.

Another research need is to establish appropriate levels of effort for transportation planning and programming in small and medium-sized urban areas. This will require better definition of the geographical scope and functions involved, together with recognition of the work directly or indirectly performed by staffs of each local jurisdiction and state agencies, as well as by the MPO.

## Organization Structure for Plan Implementation

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In addressing transportation planning for urban areas in the 5000 to 200 000 population range, it must be recognized that there is no single organizational structure universally suitable to administering transportation programs. In Tennessee, the A-95 organization is a major issue. This paper discusses the organizational structure that has been developed in Tennessee to implement the planning and programming of transportation systems. In this structure, the roles of state and local agencies and officials have been integrated.

In addressing the issues and levels of effort involved in the transportation planning process, the existing organizational structure should first be examined. It should be recognized that the organization for transportation planning in all urban areas in the 5000 to 200 000 population range cannot be the same and that no single agency at the local and state level has been legislatively created to administer the transportation program. The premise at the federal level that such an agency exists through the A-95 organization is a major issue in Tennessee.

By designation of the governor, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) was first designated as the agency responsible for urbanized-area transportation planning pursuant to Title 23 of the U.S. Code. Subsequently the promulgation of the U.S. Department of Transportation joint planning regulations led to the designation of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in each of the urbanized areas of the state. Careful consideration to keeping planning and implementation responsibilities with the legislatively delegated agency while being responsive to the joint planning regulations was paramount in the MPO designation. The designation involves a two-body organization, an executive board composed of the chief elected official of each local entity involved, an elected board member of the regional A-95 agency, and the governor and an executive staff composed of the appointed head of each operating department, division, commission, or authority. Citizen involvement is accomplished through a cooperatively approved citizen resource group or committee.

The responsibility of the elected representatives (the executive board) consists of policy direction and approval for all transportation planning and program development

with recognition of each individual member's legislated authority for final approval of project implementation. The responsibility of the executive staff consists of day-to-day direction to respective technical staffs and collective review of technical reports before they are presented to the executive board. This organizational structure places maximum responsibility for planning and program development on the representatives of agencies having direct responsibility established by local and state legislation.

The organizational structure for transportation planning in small urban areas (those having populations of 5000 to 50 000) in Tennessee does not involve a formal organization. This is a result of differing local governments and the wide range of technical expertise that is found in different areas. Relatively few of the areas have professional planning staffs, only three have transit operations, none have traffic engineers, and several do not have city engineers.

In small urban areas, TDOT works directly with the mayor and city council, commissioners, or board of aldermen, cooperating with the mayor's designated staff representatives. If there is a planning-services contract between the local government and the state planning office, TDOT solicits cooperation from the planning office to assist in data collection, analyses, and forecasts.

TDOT assumes total responsibility for the technical analyses and documentation of small-urban-area transportation plans. TDOT staff, through frequent meetings with local governing bodies and their appointed planning commissions, is usually able to incorporate local desires and be responsive to local needs within the political, fiscal, and physical constraints provided. The informal and relaxed relationship that exists between state and local government improves planning and program-development procedures and expedites project implementation in accordance with local priorities.

This organizational structure and procedure and the coordination that it achieves is the result of involvement of local and state technical staffs, administrative directors, and elected officials. It has had a high degree of success and resulted in expeditious implementation

of projects that are generated at the systems planning level. Citizen involvement is included at the systems planning level to supplement staff and administrative coordination by permitting public input to the development of programs and the establishment of priorities. However, the question of satisfying of federal requirements by mandated citizen involvement through a formal citizen committee structure during the urbanized-area certification process has become an issue in Tennessee. This condition of certification has resulted in the appointment of citizen committees that provide only superficial citizen involvement. It should be recognized at the federal level that true citizen involvement at the systems planning level is the result of neighborhood and town-hall-type open forums where concerned citizens have an opportunity to communicate with professional staffs on an informal basis. When strategically scheduled meetings allow for citizen input during critical steps in the systems planning process and this is quickly followed by a report, the citizen feels that the process is responsive to his or her concerns. Known interested groups are advised in writing of MPO meetings to supplement citizen involvement where appropriate.

Citizen involvement at the systems planning level in small urban areas is limited to advertised city council or planning commission meetings, which are open to the general public, and presentations to various civic groups. When possible, the media are used to convey results of analyses at key points in the process. In Tennessee, it is felt the special appointed citizen committee is the least effective way to accomplish citizen involvement.

The environmental, social, and economic (ESE) evaluation requirement at the systems planning level is an issue that has developed because of the lack of positive guidance from those requiring it. TDOT has attempted to minimize the issue and standardize the procedure by using a Transportation Research Board environmental-factors checklist that has been revised slightly to correspond to the state action plan and environmental procedures manual. This checklist includes 13 environmental factors and energy conservation. Each route recommended in a system plan is subjectively evaluated by using this checklist, and a narrative documentation is prepared to identify problem areas for consideration at the project implementation step. The ESE evaluation also provides support for nonmajor action determinations and input to negative declarations. The urban transportation planning division of TDOT has been responsible for the ESE evaluation in urbanized and small urban areas but plans to use special environmental expertise available in the environmental planning division in future studies.

Organization, coordination, and the ESE evaluation are all required for the identification of implementable projects and the selection of acceptable priorities. During systems planning, logical implementation projects are identified through the cooperation of local and state participants; the resulting recommended improvement program recognizes implementation priorities received during the local citizen-involvement program. Priority selections for state and federal-aid projects for individual urban areas are documented in the major street plan for the area and used as input to the state highway program. The state-established, annual highway improvement program and schedule is based on needs, availability of funding, and time required to initiate construction for all projects in the state. The scheduled projects are subsequently grouped by development district, and programmed implementation is monitored through a computerized biweekly schedule that is provided to all involved representatives.

Priority selection for local and federal-aid urban projects is carried out by the local government; the priorities established during systems planning generally prevail. The state then monitors project development for federal-aid urban projects due to its financial participation in project implementation. Coordination of implementation is maintained throughout the project by frequent contact with the local government. Thus, the TDOT offices of research and planning and of programing cooperate with local governments in the preparation of annual transportation programs. Local government, through the transportation planning process, has a voice in the division of responsibility for project implementation. The state is generally responsible for the management of major projects, and the local governments are responsible for minor improvements within their personnel capability and expertise.

Funding in Tennessee presents the same problem as elsewhere. It is difficult to allocate the limited financial resources to the urban areas across the state and maintain meaningful programs. The federal-aid urban funds are apportioned to all areas on the basis of population distribution. Several of the urbanized areas, however, contain small urban areas, and this results in a reduction of funds to the central city when the urban-system funds of the urbanized area are distributed. Distribution to each area is required because no single local government or agency has legislated authority for project implementation beyond its jurisdiction. The joint planning regulations have caused significant problems by creation of the myth that the A-95 agency has implementation responsibility. These problems can be resolved by the coordination of individual local improvement programs in the preparation of the annual transportation improvement program; the individual implementing agency representatives in each area collectively reach agreement on an areawide selection of and funding allocation for projects, and the MPO then reviews the program and transmits it to the federal agencies.

Coordination of program preparation for small urban areas is initiated by TDOT through contact with local public works or street departments. During this contact, each implementing agency is advised of available funds and the local federal-aid urban program is developed by using (when available) local capital-improvement programs. The implementation of projects in the small urban areas where MPOs are nonexistent is carried out with a minimum of effort because of the close working relationships between TDOT personnel and local officials.

Trade-offs between short-range solutions and longer-range, more expensive projects are given careful consideration during the annual coordination required to develop the federal-aid programs. Limited available funding has a significant effect on the consideration of trade-offs. Many Tennessee areas have elected to initiate the required environmental studies and implement the low-cost traffic-operational recommendations documented in the planning process while accumulating funds to initiate the longer-range, more expensive projects. This approach has resulted in the development of plans for several computerized signal systems, installation of signal hardware, preparation of environmental-impact statements, major project design in several areas, and elimination of numerous capacity-deficient route segments.

TDOT, through the project-monitoring procedure and administration of federal-aid urban funds, performs an annual evaluation of program implementation and individual-urban-area fund balances. The result of this evaluation is reviewed with each area before new program development is initiated. As a result of this

evaluation, TDOT is able to recommend shifting of fund balances among areas to obtain maximum advantage of available funding and satisfy local program needs for major projects. Careful coordination and understanding between TDOT and the local public works or street departments during the administration of the federal-aid urban program have led to agreement by local officials that this manipulation of available funds is in their best

interests. Each area has been assured that its fund balance will become available for program implementation at the time projects are approved for construction; to date, there have been no problems of coordination or scheduling that could not be overcome nor has any urban-area implementation program suffered as the result of fund manipulation.

*Abridgment*

## Transportation Planners and Local Elected Decision Makers

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What is the perspective of a city manager toward transportation planning? Often, the transportation planner is not as cognizant of the needs and concerns of the elected decision maker as he or she should be.

Elected decision makers have varying characteristics. They come from diverse backgrounds in many respects, such as

1. Economic status,
2. Political views,
3. Vocational condition,
4. Level of education,
5. Motivation toward the decision-maker function,
6. Amount of available time, and
7. View of their role.

However, regardless of their background, these persons want to participate in the decision-making process.

In local decision making, the matrix for understanding has many categories, e.g.,

1. Transportation,
2. Housing,
3. Crime and delinquency,
4. Environmental concerns,
5. Cultural and recreational affairs,
6. Economic conditions,
7. Human services,
8. Education,
9. Employment and job-related conditions,
10. Utilities, and
11. Health.

How can the levels of responsibility in such a matrix be organized? A desirable format is described below:

<u>Organization Trichotomy</u>	<u>Primary Decision Makers</u>	<u>Secondary Approval</u>	<u>Data-Information Recommendations</u>
Strategic policy	Council, city manager	Citizens	City staff, other—regional, state, private, federal

<u>Organization Trichotomy</u>	<u>Primary Decision Makers</u>	<u>Secondary Approval</u>	<u>Data-Information Recommendations</u>
Managerial (programmatic)	City manager, department managers	Citizens' council	City staff, other—regional, state, private, federal
Operational (project)	Operational managers—for water, air, bus transit, rail, street, human services, recreation, and education	Citizens' council, city manager, department managers	City staff, other

This format, however, may or may not agree with the present responsibility levels in a given urban area.

The relationships between transportation plans and planners and elected decision makers also vary. There are various responsibility levels in transportation planning, e.g.,

1. Community direction statements,
2. Local ordinances,
3. Community long-range planning,
4. Transportation system management,
5. The metropolitan planning organization,
6. Zoning and land-use regulations,
7. The capital-improvement program,
8. Budgets,
9. Subdivision development, and
10. Other categories.

In the real world for elected decision makers, the most important levels of responsibility usually involve land use and zoning. Thus, it behooves transportation planners to work more effectively with local elected decision makers to improve the transportation planning and programming process.