

Results of the Workshop

Cochairpersons: Alinda C. Burke, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation, and David R. Koski, City of Minneapolis

Recorder: Linda Samuelsen, Office of Planning Management, Urban Mass Transportation Administration

The purpose of this workshop was to discuss appropriate organizational roles for transportation system management (TSM) planning, programming, implementation, and operation and ways of developing a constituency at the local level for TSM programs. The composition of the workshop was excellent for such a purpose; all levels of government, including the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and the local practitioner were represented, as were educational institutions, private industry, and consultants. We began by discussing the four resource papers that had been prepared for the conference—those by Jones, Shunk, and Volk in this Special Report and an unpublished paper by Brooks. These discussions covered a wide range of topics, and seeds were planted that eventually set the direction and conclusions of the workshop. A variety of observations were made: "I see our role as problem solving not planning" and "the MPO is a political reality, it exists, the planning is going on—to argue about the MPO is abstract. How do you actually make something happen?" "Those that have direct accountability have the most interest in implementation", "the person most likely to benefit is the person that must manage", and "we shouldn't be arguing over top-down, bottom-up approaches. Every locale in the United States is a unique setup that works politically. The real problem is how to increase management of entrepreneurial effort expended in urban areas." "Entrepreneurship includes the identification of attainable priorities", "entrepreneurship should be developed at all levels of all agencies", and "an organizational entrepreneur begins to become that when a number of people within that organization begin to act like entrepreneurs." All these helped to focus our efforts on the major topics that surfaced in this workshop.

Considerable discussion was given to the term "entrepreneur." This is a term that seems to stray from the traditional transportation system management terminology. Nevertheless, we kept returning to it to describe a person in any organization or any position in that organization, public or private, who accepts responsibility for implementation of a transportation plan, project, or program; identifies attainable priorities; and understands and accepts the risks involved. It was decided that the real issue in TSM is not what role the institution plays or how to help various professional disciplines to understand their role, or such factors, but the timely implementation of transportation services. To accomplish true TSM, implementation responsibility must be accepted by the individual (or organization) to whom (or which) it is most applicable. Entrepreneurs must therefore be developed in all organizations that deal with the transportation system.

Thus, we concluded that there is no one planning process or organizational arrangement that fits the diversity of metropolitan areas in the United States. No institutional arrangement for effective TSM can or should be prescribed from above. The most-effective arrangement will vary from region to region. And, within regions, different planning styles and organizational arrangements are appropriate for the TSM planning and implementation that occurs at the level of the workplace, the neighborhood, the activity center, the corridor, and the region. Federal rules and federal funding should be sufficiently flexible to reflect this diversity and to en-

sure the timely subvention of funds in a variety of channels to a variety of organizations.

It is possible, however, to identify the institutional and financial barriers that have hindered effective TSM implementation and an entrepreneurial style of program management that would foster implementation. An entrepreneurial style of program management is necessary to bridge the gap between planning and implementation. Cultivating professionals who have these entrepreneurial skills is necessary for building constituencies, combining the expertise of various disciplines, involving the private sector, and responding to local public and special-interest groups. Each of these skills is an important ingredient of TSM. The entrepreneur may be employed by either a planning agency, an operating agency, or a private enterprise.

OBJECTIVE (IDEAL) FOR FIVE YEARS IN THE FUTURE

We see, as a broad general goal for the five-year future, a TSM environment in which there will be a large number of actors involved in implementation and in which there are an increasing number of professionals who have the following characteristics:

1. They are comfortable serving multiple objectives.
2. They are able to cross the lines between the public and the private sectors.
3. They are able to operate in complex political environments and build or catalyze political coalitions to achieve implementation.
4. They have the technical ability to identify and define problems and yet can also assess alternative options.
5. They can provide expertise in a politically acceptable way.
6. They can operate at different levels of problem scales and in response to different constituencies (sometimes simultaneously).
7. They can visualize the need for, and ensure the provision of, a variety of different services designed to meet different needs.
8. They are able to accomplish all of this quickly and effectively.

(It is this package of professional skills and implied roles that we have characterized as entrepreneurship; other words that describe the same qualities and style could be "broker" or "manager".)

As complements to this entrepreneurial style in our general vision of a five-year goal, there are two necessary changes in the mechanism for delivering funds to assist in TSM implementation:

1. There should be a single, annual metropolitan process that has a clearly defined focus—to produce an agreed-on program to be used for all planning and implementation funds available to the locality for the next year and
2. The federal and state processes must be streamlined so as to produce project approvals within six months of local program adoption. (As an even longer-term goal, we also see some merit in increasing fund

flexibility through combining various categorical programs and perhaps formalizing some discretionary programs.)

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE EXERCISE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Federal, State, and Local Red Tape and Funding Inflexibility

Project development procedures (red tape) constrain timely exercise of the entrepreneurial style, and funding inflexibility in program categories, suballocation of funds, and eligibility limitations constrain innovative and timely program implementation.

1. The programming step is a key point in the implementation process. Thus, we recommend that an annual program plan be developed in each metropolitan area to open up the selection process and ensure that TSM options are considered along with major projects. The main feature of the annual program plan is that all funding sources and all significant actions (capital and non-capital), studies as well as projects, should be included. The projects should be capable of implementation, federal and state program requirements should be met, and there should be an explicit annual decision point.

It is recognized that such program plans will be developed from programs in the various jurisdictions and operating agencies in the metropolitan area during the year. But it is important that there be a metropolitan-level annual decision point when commitments are made to the significant projects to be implemented in the region.

2. We also recommend that federal and state project development procedures be streamlined: The U.S. Department of Transportation should establish a task force (including state and local representatives) to review and streamline delivery procedures, and state and local agencies should minimize the number of procedural requirements beyond federal requirements.

3. It is strongly recommended that each state implement certification acceptance procedures for federal-aid highway act (23 U.S. Code) projects to help streamline delivery.

4. The Urban Mass Transportation Administration should adopt procedures comparable to certification acceptance to eliminate individual project requirements.

5. There should be maximum flexibility in allocation and use of federal, state, and local funds.

Lack of Knowledge of Role Models and Employer Acceptance and Reward

The way agencies and staff conceive and execute missions creates an artificial separation of the elements of the transportation system and artificial distinctions among activities such as planning, persuasion, implementation, and management. Thus, we recommend that agencies

1. Encourage staff to conceive transportation problems broadly and multimodally, even though their individual roles may be more specialized;
2. Encourage employees to feel and act like system managers;
3. Tolerate failure;
4. Describe the behavior expected;
5. Establish incentives and reward for such behavior;
6. Help employees to feel part of the whole system; and
7. Establish training or activities to develop skills—(a) develop intern or apprenticeship programs, (b) allow

release time for professional development, and (c) allow participation in transportation-oriented forums.

Many transportation professionals have a narrow view of the transportation system, often defined by the mode or discipline in which they work. This often results in a single-goal orientation. Transportation education and professional development should

1. Encourage broadening of education to expand professional scope;
2. Build more-effective and more-varied relationships at the local level;
3. Propagate changes in one's discipline, emphasizing the new state of the art and changing values and objectives through professional journals and contacts;
4. Foster mixing of professional associations and interdisciplinary approaches;
5. Support and reinforce the value of using coordination skills to do the job; and
6. Emphasize the need to communicate effectively as one of the necessary TSM job skills.

Underdeveloped Communication Channels

The interagency communication channels necessary for cooperative problem solving are not well developed. Many practitioners work in isolation or have contact with others only through formal channels such as committee arrangements. Professionals are often discouraged from developing informal communication networks that could link agencies together and allow entrepreneurs to develop constituencies. Thus, we recommend that agencies

1. Encourage staff to develop informal communication networks by encouraging staff participation in workshops, training seminars, meetings, and professional organizations of topical interest and by making available publications featuring both topics and individuals that have entrepreneurial characteristics;
2. Provide opportunities for promising staff to be exposed to and gain knowledge of extant communication channels throughout the transportation funding and service delivery systems;
3. Identify available information sources, both written and personal, for developing entrepreneurs;
4. Equip developing entrepreneurs with the skills involved in mass media communication, including knowledge of press releases, news conferences, and public meetings; and
5. Sanction and encourage the development of an informal network of contacts in the community and in other agencies.

Information on the planning, design, and funding of TSM actions is not readily accessible to the many actors in the TSM process. Therefore, we recommend that

1. Both the Transportation Research Board and the federal government should disseminate timely information in the following neglected categories: innovative projects in progress, actions where significant impacts have been achieved and those where results have been lower or counter to expectations, and innovative projects initiated by state or local agencies without federal assistance (federal evaluation funds might be made available to particularly promising programs, even though federal funds were not involved in implementation);
2. Federal program specialists should be identified as a hot-line resource for local implementors;
3. The transportation research information service

(TRIS) and highway research information service (HRIS) capabilities should be readily available to a larger clientele—many TSM activities involve quick implementation, so the updating and maintenance of the TRIS and HRIS files on TSM should be given priority attention;

4. Because local agency professionals are frequently unable to attend distant conferences, a series of regional conferences and workshops should be held to disseminate information;

5. Information on closely related or readily combined TSM activities should be available in package format—federal program managers in closely related program areas should communicate frequently to improve the information they can make available to state and local practitioners;

6. A systematic procedure should be developed to accumulate, digest, and disseminate information on the state of the art, the performance of programs, and the identity of TSM innovators—articles in professional and trade journals should become a major information-sharing vehicle; and

7. Much of the performance data routinely collected and analyzed by operating agencies can be critical for effective TSM planning—advances in the choice, collec-

tion, analysis, and application of operating and performance data should be shared.

Relevant and Systematic Analysis of Options

The traditional comprehensive, continuing, and cooperative methodology is long range in scope and not generally applicable to TSM, and a range of methodological techniques for TSM is not readily available to the general practitioner. Thus, we recommend that

1. There be greater emphasis on professional judgment and reporting of experimentation (i.e., demonstration projects),

2. The comparative assessment of options—often unlike options—be part of the planning process,

3. Methods reflect project cost and complexity,

4. Encouragement and financial support be available to evaluate TSM projects and that there be a timely dissemination network for this information, and

5. There be better appreciation of the cause-and-effect relationships that are involved in the impacts of TSM measures.