

# Conference Overview

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Many of the nation's major metropolitan areas have begun, or will soon begin, the reconstruction of heavily traveled urban freeways. Transportation agencies have long been responsible for highway maintenance and rehabilitation, but seldom have such activities occurred in so many places and with such a potentially large disruptive nature as is found with some of today's projects. Reconstructing major highways while still maintaining the ability of highway users to travel within acceptable levels of delay and providing reasonable access to sites within the highway corridor is a complex and politically sensitive undertaking. Maintenance of traffic for such projects is now more than just a matter of on-site traffic control. Opportunities to minimize traffic disruption can now be found in contract administration, construction management, and a wide variety of transportation system management (TSM) actions applied throughout the affected corridor.

To better assess the state of practice of corridor traffic management during major highway reconstruction, the Transportation Research Board held a conference in Chicago on September 28–October 1, 1986, under the sponsorship of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The objectives of this conference were

- To provide an educational forum for exchanging technical information on planning, implementing, and managing highway reconstruction to minimize traffic disruption;
- To ensure that project planners consider contract administration items that can minimize traffic impacts without affecting construction quality;
- To promote TSM actions as means of managing travel demand and easing congestion; and
- To identify recommendations or related research to address issues discussed at the conference.

Representatives from FHWA, over 30 state transportation agencies, several cities, public transit agencies, regional planning agencies, contractors, and private consultants attended the conference. The conference was organized around several major activities.

First, a major benefit of the conference was the exchange of information on what has worked elsewhere. Therefore, representatives from Syracuse, Philadelphia,

Atlanta, Seattle, Los Angeles, and Chicago made presentations on the corridor traffic mitigation strategies used on their respective projects. These case studies are presented in Part 4 of these proceedings.

Second, five major issues served as the major topics of discussion throughout the conference. Four of these issues—policy and plan development, mitigating measures, active plan management, and public information and public relations—were introduced to the conference by noted speakers who spent 30 minutes discussing the importance of these areas to effective traffic mitigation and the key characteristics of successful experience. The fifth issue area—construction and contract management—was discussed by a panel. The discussion papers for each of these areas, as well as an overview of FHWA's perspectives, are given in Part 3. After each of the major discussion points had been presented by the speaker, conference attendees were divided into roundtable discussion groups and spent an hour or so discussing the salient points of the issue.

The third major conference activity was a workshop session in which the conference attendees, again in small groups, listed conference recommendations and developed a checklist of important traffic mitigation tasks that could be undertaken by those facing such a challenge. The results of the workshops relied heavily on the issues covered in the roundtable discussions during the conference.

A summary of the roundtables, the checklist, and conference recommendations are found in Part 2.

By the end of the three days, conference attendees had analyzed key aspects of successful corridor traffic management efforts and had produced a useful project checklist. Most important, conference attendees shared a belief that transportation agencies can no longer afford to treat major highway reconstruction in the traditional engineering manner. Successful reconstruction projects rely heavily on public outreach and a heightened sensitivity to traffic management.