

Conference Welcome

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The outcome of this conference is important for at least two reasons. One relates to the need for reconstruction projects, and the second relates to the way the projects are handled.

It's entertaining to speculate about what changes in urban transportation capacity are on the horizon and what may evolve from emerging technology. Automated guideways, in-vehicle guidance hardware, new traffic surveillance and control systems, even new modal systems—all will no doubt have favorable effects on the urban transportation scene in a few years. The Transportation Research Board has even started a research project to measure such impacts. But their benefits are some years away from realization, and urban congestion is growing apace in many communities. What happens in the interim? The fact is, most gains in highway capacity will have to be achieved by rebuilding within present rights of way. Others will cover this subject in detail in the next two days.

Second, given that reconstruction projects will be part of the scene in many urban areas, how they are handled becomes extremely important. Most of these projects are expensive, more expensive perhaps than the original construction that they are replacing. Effective design and construction management are therefore significant in keeping costs at optimum levels. Apart from direct project costs, the effects on communities are likely to be great. High traffic volumes are the rule in these cases, so cities must reckon with congestion and delay. And reconstruction probably affects adjacent neighborhoods and their traffic as much as it affects the traffic that would normally use the facility. So traffic management provisions are costly, may affect construction staging, and can have broad community impacts. It behooves the transportation professionals involved—whether consultant, contractor, local official, or state engineer—to look for and weigh the many trade-offs among project construction costs and the safe and efficient movement of people. Procedures for such examinations might well be one of several products of this conference. Which brings me back to the conference objectives.

We at TRB do not overlook the fact that besides serving as an excellent medium for information exchange among all of you, this meeting has an obligation to deliver results to the sponsor. The program for the next two days points towards Wednesday morning and its concluding sessions entitled "Summaries", "Results", and "Rec-

ommendations." The results of this conference will be a report that contains whatever recommendations the group arrives at, as well as the presentations given.

In addition, as you may already have noticed, video cameras are here. We will be producing a videotape also to present the conference recommendations. This tape should be available to a wide range of audiences in 1987.

To insure a balanced view of the issues addressed at the conference, we have worked hard to include the variety of viewpoints and the types of agencies that have an interest in the problems generated by rebuilding urban freeways. Not surprisingly, state transportation agencies are best represented. In fact, attendees come from over half the states. State agency staff members here include not only those concerned with administration and project management, but also traffic engineering and community and/or public relations. People who hold similar positions in several cities are here as well. Also from state and local public agencies, we have a few enforcement and transit officials, who also have a vital role in the issues to be addressed.

The private sector is represented mostly by contractors and engineering consultants. And it's good to note that the commuter is not forgotten, though Carolyn DiMambro, Executive Director, Caravan for Commuters in Boston, and Patricia Price, District Manager, Commuter Transportation Services, Ventura, Calif., may have to speak for all of them.

There is every reason to think that this conference will be a success. You will be hearing not only from administrative leaders of organizations concerned with urban highway reconstruction. You will also hear case studies brought by others with specific successful experience in such projects. And you will also hear from one contractor, Robert Buckley, whose achievements in early project completion have earned substantial dollar rewards—perhaps the best measure of success.

Once you have heard these presentations, you will have the opportunity—in small groups—to learn about and discuss the experiences of other agencies. These discussions will then be compiled and presented to the whole conference for further consideration on Wednesday morning. The opportunity to focus on recommendations derived from discussing a wide variety of experience suggests to me that those recommendations should be both valid and valuable. If that is so, TRB will have done its job. So let me say thank you now for being here and for the contributions you will make in the next two-and-a-half days. May you have a pleasant and productive conference.