

EMERGING STATE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION

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The emergence of state departments of transportation since Hawaii's in 1959 has been for a multitude of reasons: emphasis on modal interdependency, socioeconomic implications of growth in the urban and suburban areas, and so forth. The need exists to address transportation not as simply a fringe benefit but as a social need. Mobility is an important factor, but integration with other societal goals takes on increasing importance. This paper discusses the role of state DOTs in addressing and providing leadership in the transportation area and gives examples of how one state, Maryland, has assumed its role.

•SINCE 1959, when Hawaii organized the first state department of transportation, 23 states have created transportation departments. Currently, at least 12 other states have proposals before their legislatures or are in the process of in-depth study in anticipation of such a move. This move transcends the fact that the states represent the full spectrum of geographic, economic, sociologic, and demographic characteristics.

The reasons that the states are moving toward departments of transportation are varied and complicated. One, of course, is the establishment of the U.S. Department of Transportation, which continues to broaden its multimodal approach to planning and financing transportation facilities. Since its establishment in 1966, U.S. DOT has encouraged increased emphasis on modal interdependency, particularly in response to local socioeconomic needs. The philosophies and principles espoused at the top are not, I believe, being adopted and implemented rapidly enough by the administrative and program elements of the bureaucracy. It is up to the federal government to go further in that direction and to work with state officials to achieve transportation goals.

Another factor is that the primary focus of highway agencies has been to design and construct highway facilities without giving consideration to the multimodal approach or to many other alternatives now examined. Increasing concern with the socioeconomic impact of transportation facilities, coupled with the current shortage of transportation resources, is pushing us to change. State officials realize now that we must probe the relations between transportation and other societal phenomena such as urban growth, the environment, energy consumption, economic development, and community needs and values, to name a few.

The automotive industry provides a good picture of the rapid rate of change we must deal with. In 1900, there were 8,000 registered motor vehicles. In 1910, that figure had jumped to more than 450,000. In 1920, there were over 9 million motor vehicles. Within the next 30 years, there were more than 48 million motor vehicles and, by 1970, almost 109 million registered motor vehicles. This growth and many other factors left those responsible for design of transportation facilities reacting in a Pavlovian manner, trying to serve urban areas and to provide the vital links between rapidly growing suburban and urban areas. By even modest standards, we have been unable to accomplish that and retain an acceptable urban environment.

Through the early days, highways were developed in response to the burgeoning traffic on rural roads. The Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916 provided the foundation for state and federal involvement in rural highway development and authorized \$75 million in appropriations over a 5-year period on a 50-50 basis. A revealing restriction in the 1916 act was that improvements to urban highways were expressly prohibited.

The change in attitudes, approaches, and programs has increased geometrically over the years. The creation of the U.S. Department of Transportation placed national leadership behind a broader approach to transportation problem-solving. Milestones

in federal legislation include the Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act of 1970 and the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973.

This historical background has set the stage for the states, who must address the changing environment. We know now that transportation planning must be comprehensive. Experience indicates that there is benefit to be derived from statewide transportation planning and financing. We know that there must be multimodal integration and coordination among federal, state, and local levels. We know that the new urban-suburban society is evolving a new role for transportation. It is no longer adequate to simply increase capacity and give no consideration to purpose, form, and acceptability.

The logical question, then, is, What is the role of state departments of transportation? One answer that we know is that no single organizational structure, financing arrangement, or philosophical approach will meet the needs of all states; each jurisdiction must respond to its own needs and problems.

In that Maryland is something of a "United States in miniature" based on its demographic, geographic, and social characteristics, perhaps I can discuss the emerging role of state departments of transportation through review of the activities in Maryland.

THE MARYLAND EXPERIENCE

Maryland has progressed well beyond the expectations of the governor's task force that set up and implemented the changeover to a broad-based, multimodal department of transportation. Maryland has the most flexible financing system in the states. All funds are available in a single, unified, nonearmarked trust fund for use based on priorities. Maryland has the organizational capability to implement integrated planning at the secretarial level. This can then be applied and acted on by modal components.

Maryland is currently negotiating with two railroad corporations to develop a rail commuter program. Maryland has also committed a lot of capital to the rail rapid system being constructed in the Washington metropolitan area. Maryland will soon be contributing to operating deficits there. The state-owned and -operated bus system in the Baltimore metropolitan area now has close to a thousand buses and serves 106 million passengers a year. There are also plans to break ground for a rail rapid system in the Baltimore area soon.

As have other states, Maryland has recently completed a controversial and innovative transportation study for a corridor in Prince George's County. That study reversed a long-standing intention to extend I-95 on new right-of-way into the District of Columbia. From that study have come solutions to existing transportation problems—solutions that include buses, new stations and alignment for rail rapid lines, bike and pedestrian paths, reserved bus lanes, and, of course, further studies.

Another transportation mode in which Maryland is involved is air travel. Maryland owns and operates the Baltimore-Washington International Airport, which serves both metropolitan areas. The state's plans for the airport were instrumental in its being named the Airport of the Year by Airport World magazine. Under way currently is a federally assisted aviation needs study.

Yet another transportation mode is bicycling. Maryland both supports construction of bikeways on a statewide level and assists the counties and municipalities in constructing and planning their own.

Maryland has initiated and implemented smaller urban area and rural transit assistance programs that rely heavily on priorities and policy-making of the localities.

Maryland has also accelerated development of the port of Baltimore to increase its competitive posture as one of the leading seaports on the East Coast.

We in the Maryland DOT recognize that services and facilities cannot be developed in a vacuum, and, where such has been the case, the result has been devastating and long-lasting. In the Maryland DOT, high priority is placed on developing the philosophy and capability to relate. Basic to relating is identification of statewide transportation issues—issues that ignore local, regional, and state boundaries. We must keep a firm but flexible hand on statewide resource allocation to be responsive to changing needs. We must move toward development of transportation facilities and programs that demonstrate statewide concern for economic development, land use, and preservation and

enhancement of the environment. Each of these efforts requires redirection, commitment, and the ability to perform. The obvious goal is to provide mobility for people and goods in a safe, efficient, and economical fashion.

The wisdom of the Maryland legislature has created an environment in which jurisdictions can exercise initiative and form regional or local transportation authorities with whom the state DOT can deal as a legal entity. Maryland reconstituted the highway planning and approval system. The state DOT assesses needs for highway transportation and makes decisions commensurate with that analysis. At the same time, authority is delegated to the local jurisdictions to designate priorities and make decisions. The state redistributes a portion of the revenues to the counties to be used by their discretion. Jurisdictions in all parts of the state—the Baltimore metropolitan area, the Washington metropolitan area, the Eastern Shore, southern Maryland, western Maryland—are developing solutions to their transportation problems.

THE EMERGING ROLE

In the past, transportation was assumed to be a function of land use, and land use was developed helter-skelter. Great efforts and advances have been made in improving the techniques of transportation planning and implementation—trip generation, trip distribution, assignment, and modal-split models—but corresponding advances have not been realized in integrating the technical advances into society.

State agencies realize that transportation must play an integral role in the resolution of socioeconomic, political, and environmental problems. Transportation decisions must be made alongside other societal considerations. Transportation can no longer be addressed as simply a fringe benefit; it is a social need. Therefore, one of the primary roles of state departments of transportation is to provide a single and broad leadership for meeting the varying transportation needs throughout the state. State DOTs must serve as a clearinghouse and equalizer for priorities that might differ from urban to rural settings.

The solution lies in a formula that is applicable now and in the future: financial assistance from the federal government plus direction in multimodal planning and implementation at the state level in concert with priorities of the local jurisdictions.