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FOREWORD

The papers contained in this RECORD focus on the problems of coordination of transportation planning and policy development at the federal, state, and local levels.

Hughes discusses the emergence of state departments of transportation and the changing social-political environment in which they operate. As Hughes states, transportation can no longer be conceived simply as a fringe benefit; it is a social need. Mobility is an important factor but its integration with other societal goals takes on increasing importance. The experience in the Maryland DOT is discussed.

Walker discusses a study of metropolitan transportation conducted by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. The primary question being addressed is whether metropolitan transportation can be made to have a greater impact on transportation implementation activities. The framework for this study as well as emerging issues is addressed by Walker.

Dean discusses the impact of the creation of the Federal Assistance Review program, which was designed to simplify the various federal systems for administering assistance to state and local governments. Important elements of the Federal Assistance Review program were the establishment of 10 standard regions, designation of administrative headquarters in cities within these regions, and establishment of federal regional councils in each region. The problems in creating the regional offices and the relation of the councils to transportation are discussed.

EMERGING STATE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION

Harry R. Hughes, Maryland Secretary of Transportation

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.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION IN AN AGE OF SUBSTATE REGIONALISM

David Walker, Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

The substate regional level—that level below the states but above the cities and frequently the counties—is discussed as it relates to implementation of metropolitan transportation planning. The status of substate regional development is discussed, and the advantages of this reorganization are given. ACIR developed an umbrella multijurisdictional organization strategy, which is recommended as one means of reorganizing jurisdictions at the substate level. The role of the metropolitan transportation planner is related to the development of these substate regions.

•THE Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 mandated metropolitan transportation planning for all urbanized areas as a prerequisite to continued federal funding of highway construction. The Urban Mass Transportation Act also requires such planning. These requirements have spawned a tremendous amount of planning in metropolitan areas. All such areas, except a few SMSAs established since 1970, now have comprehensive transportation planning programs. Moreover, detailed planning techniques have been developed since 1962 to support this type of planning. As a matter of fact, transportation planning is probably the most highly developed type of metropolitan planning in existence.

Nevertheless, the literature in the field reveals that planners are doubtful about the adequacy of their efforts and that most of this planning has not been implemented.

In 1973, ACIR completed a 2-year study of substate regionalism in which 24 federal programs with an areawide thrust and over 600 regional councils that are beginning to coordinate many diverse substate regional activities were analyzed. ACIR has also studied the continuing growth of special districts and public authorities as well as recent annexation and consolidation efforts, some of which have succeeded in establishing metropolitan governments.

Of course, federally aided transportation programs encourage establishment of substate bodies for planning and implementation purposes. But this study, while encompassing transportation, is concerned with the gamut of recent districting and re-organizational activities at the substate level. Its findings and recommendations merit some attention.

SUBSTATE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Substate regionalism has become a top-priority item on the federal agenda. For more than 2 years, ACIR has probed the wide range of recent substate regional developments that have combined to make it the challenge it is.

More institutions, more programs, more coordinating efforts, more comprehensive and functional planning, and even more servicing at the substate level exist now than did a decade ago. There is clear evidence of major federal involvement, lesser state concern, and basic local governmental anxiety. Above all, more confusion and conflict exist at this level than ever existed before. And no wonder!

The rapid pace of recent regional council and districting developments has transformed the jurisdictions of practically all metropolitan areas and most nonmetropolitan regions. This transformation has been due largely to federal 701 funds, the Metropolitan Development Act of 1966, and the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968. About 450 clearinghouses have been designated pursuant to these acts, and most of them have a council-of-government format. About 1,800 federally encouraged districts

have been established at the substate level under 19 separate categorical and block grant programs (transportation, comprehensive health planning, law enforcement, air pollution). Independent special districts and authorities, many in the transportation field, numbered about 25,000 in 1972, making them the fastest growing unit of local governments, but only about one-quarter of these had boundaries that matched those of cities or counties. Finally, and partially in response to some of the federally encouraged districting efforts, 44 states (as of 1973) have officially sponsored substate districting systems; and Nevada has taken tentative steps in that direction. In contrast, a decade ago there were only about 25 councils of government, a handful of areawide transportation units, three or four states with substate districting systems, and 5,564 fewer special districts and authorities.

Indications

What are some of the indications of these substate developments? Functionally, these developments—particularly the special and federally encouraged districts—signify the emergence of various servicing problems and programs that transcend local government boundaries. They show that the federal government has been the prime sponsor of district planning and coordinating mechanisms while most states have assumed a more passive posture. But all government levels, particularly the states, have encouraged the growth of special districts and authorities, most of them independent, with operating responsibilities.

Bureaucratically, many of these districting mechanisms can be viewed as efforts on the part of middle management and program specialists to establish functional planning, coordinating, and fund disbursing counterparts at the substate level.

Jurisdictionally, they reflect the growing impatience of federal and state policymakers with the areal inadequacies and fragmentation of local governments in nearly all metropolitan areas and all nonmetropolitan regions.

In terms of power, they suggest that the functionalists are winning out against politically accountable, elected officials of general-purpose governments because of the weakness of most councils of government, the continuing strength of special districts, the separate status of a majority of federally encouraged districts, and the embryonic character of most substate districting systems established by the states.

Finally, in basic policy terms, these districting developments demonstrate that the traditional federal, state, and local levels have adhered to an ambivalent substate regional course; they have sought to strengthen general multipurpose mechanisms on the one hand, and encourage separate, single-purpose units on the other.

A Substate Districting Reform Strategy

What has been missing in all but a handful of cases is a regional unit with the capacity to link areawide planning with program implementation, to coordinate the diverse activities of separate districts having single-function planning and operation responsibilities—in short, to serve as an effective regional decision-maker. Hence, ACIR adopted an umbrella multijurisdictional organization (UMJO) strategy.

As a consequence of a series of federal, local, and state actions, the UMJO would

1. Adopt and publicize regional policies and plans, along with a program for their implementation;
2. Provide planning and programming inputs into the state's planning and budgeting process;
3. Serve as the region's A-95 review agency;
4. Implement all federally encouraged areawide planning, programming, coordinating, districting, and servicing programs as well as similar state undertakings;
5. Act as the basic policy board for multijurisdictional special districts;
6. Promote mutual problem-solving among counties, cities, and towns and provide services these units may singly or jointly request;
7. Resolve differences between state agency and local government programs and projects that conflict with policies adopted by the council; and

8. In certain instances, assume direct operating responsibilities under such terms as may be set down in the state authorizing legislation, provided half the local member units representing 60 percent of the region's population concur.

This reform regional council then would be a comprehensive and functional planning, coordinating, programming, servicing, and implementing body. (A draft of a state districting bill incorporating these features is now available to all who wish to explore this ACIR proposal in greater detail.)

That this strategy for districting reform is anchored to the real world of substate development is proved by the following:

1. Regional councils with A-95 review and comment authority already exist in 212 metropolitan and 238 nonmetropolitan areas.

2. Two-thirds of the more than 500 substate districts established in 44 states now are organized, and action is under way in a 45th state.

3. The boundaries of the most significant federally encouraged districting programs coincide (or are in harmony) with those of the state-established substate districts in about 50 percent of the cases, and federal agencies have relied on substate districting organizations in more than one-third of the possible cases in those eight program areas.

4. Approximately half of the regional councils already are the administering regional unit for the federally encouraged areawide districting programs operating in their regions.

5. Seven states have reviewed and approved some or all of their regional councils over certain state projects.

6. Four-fifths of the 3,800 city and county officials surveyed by ACIR agreed that regional councils should perform the duties of an umbrella agency, especially with regard to the activities of independent special districts.

7. The Metropolitan Regional Council in Minnesota's Twin Cities area, the Atlanta Regional Council, and as many as 10 percent of the other councils already possess many or most of the proposed powers and functions assigned to the reformed regional councils under ACIR's recommendations.

The UMJO strategy relies heavily on the building blocks at the substate level but goes beyond the status quo in a systematic effort to provide an effective umbrella unit that can cope with the growing demands for better management, coordination, implementation, and decision-making in areawide programs and institutions.

The Other Side of the Coin

But what of modernizing local government? Federally supported districts, state-established substate districts, the growing number of special districts and authorities, regional councils, and areawide coordinating procedures are, after all, merely one huge chaotic commentary on the fact that the present jurisdictional pattern at the multi-county, county, and municipal levels is, in all but a few cases, markedly dysfunctional and in many respects undemocratic.

No analysis of the complexities and challenge of recent substate developments would be complete then without consideration of the local and areawide government reorganization issue. The strengthened regional council strategy should not be viewed as hostile to, or incompatible with, local and areawide government reorganization. Both are necessary components of an overall effort that must be mounted to bring the structure and functions of units below the state level to a point where they can cope with the electorate's current and future servicing demands in a more efficient and accountable fashion.

For some, the UMJO strategy is primarily a reaction to the recent rash of substate regional developments and should be interpreted as a short-range response to an immediate problem. For others, the UMJO proposal stands as a major reform objective by itself, given that in several areas such a unit is the only regional innovation possible. It is seen, then, as the only feasible long-range solution to a number of present and prospective areawide problems. Still others see the UMJO as a transitional mechanism that may serve as a prelude to more fundamental government reorganization. Finally, there are those who stress that, in most of the complex, multicounty regions, restruc-

turing government units below the substate level will always be a top-priority issue, regardless of what the upper tier unit is. They feel that subareawide government reorganization is as much a part of the substate regional dilemma as the areawide governance question because they believe that consolidation is an unlikely reorganization option in most areas and any regional unit, to be effective, will need strong and viable constituent general governments.

Each of these perspectives has merit. The differences among them are largely a product of varying views on timing, the feasibility of various reform options in divergent regions, and the kinds of jurisdictional and servicing problems confronting the areas.

From a national viewpoint, then, districting reform and local government reorganization are policies that must be treated together. What the specific interrelationships are is basically up to each state, its localities, and citizenry.

The Reorganization Record

What has been the nation's recent experience with local government reorganization and modernization? In general, the record has been impressive, but less significant than the reformer would want. For example, nearly 75 percent of all metropolitan county expenditures are still earmarked for traditional (state-mandated) county functions such as corrections, roads, health, hospitals, and natural resource development, but libraries, parks, recreation, and fire protection are emerging as more common urban types of services in these jurisdictions.

Four-fifths of all counties still possess a commission type of government, though manager or elected executive have enjoyed a rapid growth in urban counties in the past 10 years.

Nearly two-thirds of all urban municipalities annexed territory during the 1960s, and more than 6 million people were affected by such actions, but the bulk of these annexations were small and in only a few instances was a means of achieving a de facto metropolitan government provided.

More city-county consolidations (11) took place between 1962 and 1972 than during the previous century and a half, but, of every four attempts, on the average only one succeeded and the bulk of these in the southeast.

Rarely has the multitier approach to local and areawide government reorganization been tried in the United States. Miami-Dade County is the only example of a deliberate chartering of a federated urban county. A few states permit incorporation of metropolitan multipurpose servicing districts and a few are functioning at present. The state-supported regional council, best represented by the Twin Cities Metropolitan Regional Council, is the past decade's contribution to the multitier approach. This general-purpose policy-making unit has responsibility for developing areawide plans, coordinating the major functional agencies operating in the region, and guiding the area's development.

Most local governments are found within 95 percent of the nation's land, which is classed as nonmetropolitan. This includes 70 percent of the municipalities, 85 percent of the counties, 80 percent of the townships, and 67 percent of the special districts and authorities, but only 30 percent of our population resides in nonmetropolitan areas. These units, unlike their metropolitan counterparts, provide fewer services, exhibit less administrative capacity, suffer from more diseconomies of scale, have weaker financial bases, and are subject to fewer reorganization efforts.

Finally, six states have established broad-ranged boundary control boards or commissions on a statewide or county basis, and a number of these are contributing to orderly expansion of municipal boundaries and a slower growth rate for new special districts and municipal incorporations.

New Moves Toward Local Government Modernization

In light of these findings, ACIR is developing a series of proposals that we hope will combine to form an action agenda for local government modernization that complements its strategy for substate districting reform. The tentative agenda encompasses six broad and interrelated objectives.

1. It seeks to place the sanction of state statutory authority behind a set of enforceable standards relating to municipal incorporation, local government viability, and annexation.
2. The states are urged to establish boundary commissions, where lacking, to apply these standards in specific instances and to assume a continuing responsibility in matters such as the dissolution or merger of special districts and of nonviable general governmental units and adjustments of county and substate district boundaries.
3. It provides reform proposals geared to revitalizing the structure of county governments, to sorting out and reconciling county and municipal servicing responsibilities, and to carving out a new state role that is supportive of these efforts.
4. The states are encouraged to enact permissive legislation providing five regional home-rule options for consideration by the general governments and the electorates within the substate districts. The distinctive features of each of these options are designed to meet the special problems of different types of substate regions. The options include multicounty consolidation, city-county merger, the modernized county, the multipurpose regional service corporation, and conversion of an UMJO into a regular government unit.
5. The proposed agenda calls for the formation of broadly representative, permanent state advisory commissions on intergovernmental relations to probe the structure, functions, finances, and relationships of lower tier, middle-tier, and state governments.
6. The agenda includes a federal policy on the local government modernization question that complements rather than cancels well-conceived state and local efforts on this front.

THE MEANING FOR METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION

How do these approaches relate specifically to the needs of the broadly defined metropolitan transportation community? In metropolitan transportation planning literature, the interrelation between transportation and almost everything else is apparent. Land use generates transportation demands, and transportation facilities generate land use demands. Transportation is essential to our economy, but transportation produces a major share of air pollution and other adverse environmental impacts. Transportation provides access for individuals to better opportunities for jobs, cultural activities, medical care, and many other services, but transportation facilities displace many people and reduce the quality of life for many others. So we cannot look at transportation alone.

This reinforces the proposition that pulling together all regional activities in a single areawide organization at the regional level is the right way to go. This, of course, is not without its problems. Much of the transportation activity at the present time is in the hands of state government. The state then must be accommodated. ACIR believes that a regional level organization, controlled to a large extent by local elected officials, is the most appropriate because (a) local residents are most directly affected by transportation improvements and (b) the regional level is the lowest level at which metropolitan travel patterns can be perceived and planned. There is provision in the ACIR recommendations on substate districting for direct participation by the state in the regional organization. There are also ample opportunities through the grant-in-aid process for state interests to be felt in both the planning and implementation of transportation projects. The great need in most areas is to get federal, state, and local levels of government working together through metropolitanwide substate districts that have some degree of decision-making authority and planning responsibilities. Where effective regional government exists, it should be the focus of these efforts.

Many transportation planners are already deeply involved in, and part of, the regional council and substate districting movement. But others, who are employees of state, city, or county government rather than a regional agency, are not. This inevitably affects the way in which they see the metropolitan transportation problem and the ways in which they react to it. A greater awareness of the metropolitan view of transportation is needed by all urban highway, public transit, airport, and water transportation program planners. This awareness should not be just at the technical level, but include the political, social, economic, and environmental realities of these areas.

Metropolitan transportation planners then should become involved, along with politicians, social scientists, engineers, implementation officials, and others, in developing adequate, representative metropolitan organizations that can plan and influence transportation implementation activities. In most cases, this will involve helping to delineate appropriate boundaries for the region and to develop effective metropolitan councils or UMJOs.

Metropolitan transportation planners should help to develop new programming techniques to translate general plans and policies into specific actions scheduled and funded on a coordinated multiyear, multifunctional basis. This is a tall order, but some progress has already been made. One of the biggest complaints against existing metropolitan planning is that it has not been translated into immediate-action proposals. Sometimes this has even been its purpose, so that controversial immediate-action proposals would not interfere with the adoption of long-range goals and plans. As well based as that fear might be, long-range planning that provides no means of getting from here to there cannot be expected to have an impact on implementation agencies. Too frequently, the long-range plan is one thing and the action program of an implementing agency is another. It is the metropolitan transportation planner's responsibility to propose a bridge between the two that sufficiently takes into account the political, economic, environmental, and other realities of an area. Without this, no policy of an authoritative and politically accountable metropolitan decision-making body will be effective.

Metropolitan transportation planners seeking to have a real impact on implementation activities must also take their responsibility for monitoring implementation projects seriously. A more significant review process is needed than is currently practiced in most areas under OMB Circular A-95. ACIR recommends that the A-95 process be given the additional clout that would enable the metropolitan clearinghouse to resolve any conflicts between metropolitan policy and proposed implementation projects. Such resolution would have to come before the project requests federal assistance. ACIR also recommends similar review powers for projects that are not federally aided. These responsibilities would provide a tough test of the realism of metropolitan plans. It would require, as a matter of course, that metropolitan plans become a part of the area's political process. It would undoubtedly involve compromise and the mixing of politics with the more technical aspects of research, planning, and programming. It would mean, in short, that planners would have to "get their hands dirty." But there is really no alternative to this, except to continue to keep planning and implementation apart and to acknowledge that we do not expect planning to have much practical effect on our transportation systems.

CONCLUSION

Transforming existing metropolitan transportation planning organizations into general-purpose metropolitan decision-making bodies with policy control over implementation organizations will not be easy. There will be institutional difficulties as well as personal problems. But a number of our metropolitan areas have two decades of experience in transportation planning, and the techniques of capital improvement programming, investment analysis, multiyear budgeting, and project review and coordination have all been around long enough so that we can build a bridge between planning and implementation based on existing experience. In short, the techniques are largely available, and the real question is whether we have the will to apply them.

COORDINATING REGIONAL OPERATIONS THROUGH FEDERAL REGIONAL COUNCILS

Alan L. Dean, Special Adviser to the Under Secretary,
U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Until federal regional councils were established to coordinate programs for assistance to state and local governments, each federal agency charged with field operations designed its own regional structure and paid little attention to other agencies dealing with similar problems. The Federal Assistance Review program was established to simplify and make more understandable the various federal systems for administering grants in aid and other assistance to state and local governments. Under this program, 10 standard regions were established, administrative headquarters were located in designated cities within these regions, and federal regional councils were established in each region. Some of the problems encountered in establishment of the councils and how these councils relate to transportation are discussed.

•AS FEDERAL PROGRAMS for assistance to state and local governments have become more numerous, their interrelationships have grown more complex and effective coordination in the field has become more essential. Yet, until recently each federal department and agency charged with field operations designed its own regional structure with little or no attention to other agencies involved in related programs. Comprehensive machinery for interagency coordination was virtually nonexistent, and it became difficult for state and local government officials and individual citizens to understand where to go or what to do when federal assistance was desired.

In March 1969, the Federal Assistance Review (FAR) program was launched, which sought through administrative measures to simplify and make more understandable the various federal systems for administering assistance to state and local governments. The FAR program established 10 standard regions, located administrative headquarters in designated cities within these regions, and established federal regional councils (FRCs) in each region. It was hoped that, being located in the same cities and concerned with administration of programs in identical regions, regional officials of the designated grant-administering agencies would achieve a degree of cooperation and program coordination previously unattainable.

DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERAL REGIONAL COUNCILS

FRCs did not emerge full grown like Athena from the brain of Zeus. Pragmatic federal field officials had tried to bring about coordination within the framework of the older Federal Executive Boards to cope with pressing urban problems involving the programs of a number of agencies. Some of the FEB Critical Urban Problems Committees began in the 1960s to show a potential for cooperative action, which attracted the attention of the Office of Management and Budget and the interest of a number of departmental headquarters. The potential of these committees was limited, however, by the largely metropolitan-area orientation and the unwieldy size of FEBs.

In the summer of 1968 the Critical Urban Problems Committee of the San Francisco FEB completed a study of federal assistance programs in Oakland, California. The study showed that both federal and local officials were ignorant of the scope and impact of federal assistance programs and recommended that the four agencies most concerned with urban socioeconomic problems form regional councils to address these problems.

Pilot regional councils were established in San Francisco, Chicago, Atlanta, and New York. These councils initially included only principal regional officials of the Departments of Labor, Housing and Urban Development, and Health, Education, and Welfare and the Office of Economic Opportunity. The participating agencies recognized the commonality of interest stemming from the social and community orientation of their programs and were pleased to have an ongoing, high-level field mechanism to aid coordinated action. They, therefore, supported extending the FRC experiment nationwide.

After meetings and discussions, the Office of Management and Budget concluded that FRC establishment should be made an integral part of the FAR program, and, in March 1969, FRCs were established in the headquarters cities of the 10 standard regions. Council membership was increased by the addition of a Department of Transportation official. In spite of the fact that it was the second largest grant-administering department, DOT encountered difficulties in securing acceptance as a regional council member because its field organization was based on the needs of its administration and DOT field officials did not represent the Secretary.

The obstacle to DOT participation was quickly overcome by establishment of secretarial representatives in each of the 10 standard regions. Although the secretarial representative was not given line authority over the regional officials of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Federal Aviation, Federal Highway, and Federal Railroad Administrations, he was made chairman of a departmental field coordination group and empowered to convene DOT regional officials to secure coordinated departmental positions on matters coming before the federal regional councils. The secretarial representative also received assistance from the Secretary and Under Secretary of Transportation and other officials in resolving matters that could not be resolved through the DOT regional officials.

In 1971, council membership was further expanded by the addition of regional directors of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration of the Department of Justice and the Environmental Protection Agency. The councils now numbered seven members and could receive ad hoc participation from regional officials of nonparticipating agencies.

FRCs were designed to foster coordination in federal assistance programs. Although they had been mentioned in a Presidential directive, FRCs had little formal structure, they lacked staff, and there were variations in the degree of agency commitment to the council concept. Nevertheless, the councils conducted innovative experiments in integrated grant administration, initiated contacts with state and local governments, coped with various emergencies, undertook to improve common services, worked to bring about the collocation of regional offices of council agencies, and in a variety of ways provided evidence of their potential as field coordination devices. As a result of this initial experience an executive order was issued in February 1972 that provided for Presidential appointment of FRC chairmen, a more precise articulation of FRC functions, formalization of the Under Secretaries Group for Regional Operations, and specification of the roles of the Domestic Council and the Office of Management and Budget in FRC matters. A month later, the Under Secretaries Group for Field Operations issued FRC guidelines that identified the responsibilities of council chairmen, procedures for the conduct of council affairs, the means to resolve conflicts, instructions for the development of work plans, and the responsibilities of member agencies in providing staff to the councils. The combined effect of the executive order and the guidelines was to place FRCs in a more formal position in the administrative apparatus of the federal government and to enlarge the capacity of the councils to deal with field coordination problems in the administration of grant-in-aid programs.

Formal FRC chartering generated apprehension among some of the member agencies. Departments began to fear that the Office of Management and Budget would use the FRCs to oversee field operations, which would jeopardize the traditional control by departmental headquarters over their regional organizations. Through special efforts of Deputy OMB Director Frank Carlucci, who also served as chairman of the Under Secretaries Group, agency fears were ameliorated and agreement was reached on the details of both the executive order and the guidelines for the councils.

Three significant changes have been made in the organization and operation of FRCs in the 2 years since their chartering. Another executive order modified the scope of FRCs to include coordination of direct federal assistance to state and local governments as well as grant assistance. Still another executive order enlarged the membership of the FRCs to include officials of the Departments of Agriculture and Interior. DOA was added to reflect its responsibilities under the Rural Development Act of 1972, and the Department of Interior was given council membership because of its growing concern with land use planning.

The third change provided the Chicago and Denver FRCs with full-time chairmen to determine whether council performance would improve if the chairmen were undiverted by day-to-day agency responsibilities. In both of these ongoing experiments, the chairman is drawn from a member agency and is carried on the rolls of his department. In Denver, the full-time chairman is the regional director of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and, in Chicago, he is the DOT secretarial representative.

FRCs have now been in operation long enough for their effectiveness to be evaluated and for their problems to be identified. Most observers of FRCs in action feel that they have made an important contribution to the coordination of federal field programs that involve assistance to state and local governments. There is considerable disparity in the quality of performance among the councils, and there are a number of things that need to be done to increase FRC effectiveness.

One of the current needs is to clarify the role of FRCs. Originally, FRCs concentrated on improving the administration of grant-in-aid programs, and all council members were involved in assistance to state and local governments. The FRCs have tended to drift away from the coherence that characterized their early activities and to become involved in matters that could better be handled by Federal Executive Boards or other mechanisms. The more diffuse the activities of the councils become, the less commonality of interest exists among the members. The councils could evolve into something like regional Federal Executive Boards, useful as forums for discussion and exchanging information but ineffective as devices for program coordination. A rethinking of the role of the councils could lead to a reduction in the present membership, which has grown from the original five to nine.

There is also a need to strengthen the participation of some of the member agencies. If a regional council is to effectively coordinate related programs, the representatives of the departments and agencies must be able to commit their organizations to specific courses of action or, at a minimum, to secure a commitment without undue delay. Several member agencies have been characterized by decentralized management and strong regional directors. Some, however, are represented by field officials who do not have the knowledge and authority to make an effective contribution to the affairs of the council. This has been particularly true of the Departments of Agriculture and Interior, the two newest members, and to some extent of the Department of Transportation, whose secretarial representatives have only limited authority in the field.

Another prerequisite for effective regional councils is agency decentralization. This point is closely related to the need for effective agency participation. Even talented and forceful council members find it difficult to contribute meaningfully to council work if the agencies they represent have retained necessary program authority in their headquarters and have refused to delegate to field officials the authority needed for cooperative action with the representatives of other agencies.

Although decentralization has been stressed as an important management reform from the beginning of the FAR program in 1969, much remains to be achieved in several of the council agencies. HEW, which is the largest grant-administering department, has long been a laggard in achieving decentralized management, but, since March 6, 1973, HEW has been conducting an all-out effort to move authority to its field officials and to strengthen the powers and capacity of its regional directors.

Staffing arrangements have greatly improved since the early days of the councils, but much remains to be done. There has been excessive turnover in staff directors, who are usually brought in by chairmen from the staffs of their agencies. Because chairmen frequently only serve 1 year, many councils have suffered from discontinuity in staff leadership. The other professionals supplied by the member agencies for support of

council activities have occasionally lacked the competence and dedication needed for optimum effectiveness.

The councils are also heavily dependent on the personality and competence of the chairmen. Although every effort is being made to place in the chairmanship officials qualified to give the necessary leadership, there has been substantial variation in performance. As more experience is gained with the council mechanism, it should be easier to ensure that the chairmen selected are able to fill the role at the level required.

Confusion over communications with the councils and their individual members has caused unnecessary friction. Most of the departments and agencies represented on the Under Secretaries Group in Washington, which coordinates field matters falling within the jurisdiction of the councils, are concerned that the agency regional directors continue to receive program instructions through traditional command channels. They would not welcome a situation in which the Office of Management and Budget appeared to be directing FRC affairs. Because the Deputy Director of OMB is the chairman of the Under Secretaries Group, a mechanism exists for headquarters officials to reach agreement on all matters affecting the functioning and work programs of the FRCs. Once the Under Secretaries Group is in agreement, it should not be difficult to ensure that council members receive guidance from their agencies supportive of any OMB communications to the FRCs.

None of the problems that I have discussed is so difficult that it cannot be resolved. Bringing about such things as adequate decentralization and sufficiently potent agency participation takes time because significant changes in departmental organization and management systems may be required to produce these results. Nevertheless, there is no reason why FRCs should not become increasingly important and effective in bringing cohesiveness to those aspects of federal field administration that involve assistance to state and local governments.

WHAT FRCS MEAN FOR TRANSPORTATION

Earlier, I mentioned the initial difficulty encountered by DOT in securing admission as a full member of the original FRCs. I have also mentioned that the limited authority and resources of the secretarial representatives continue to handicap the department in some regions. Yet DOT now administers some of the government's largest and most far-reaching grant-in-aid programs. Included are aid for highway construction, highway safety grants, urban public transportation assistance, and aid to airports. The transportation systems and facilities receiving assistance often play a crucial part in the development and prosperity of states and communities. It is only natural, therefore, that the councils often become concerned with the way in which DOT programs will support a community plan, an integrated grant, or some other project of broad interest to a state or local government.

DOT is seeking to unify its planning in the field through intermodal planning committees, which should facilitate DOT cooperation with other FRC agencies. Yet, because DOT lacks a departmental regional structure (as opposed to the field organizations of the administrations) and has little prospect of developing one in the near future, DOT involvement in FRC matters is less intensive and less effective than the importance of its transportation functions would warrant. More will have to be done by the department to facilitate interagency coordination in the field, and its representatives will need greater authority and resources. This does not mean that operational authority should be taken away from DOT program administrations. It does suggest, however, that DOT has not gone far enough in the development of regional planning and coordination capability.

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