rail plans will improve; for example, a simple decision to subsidize every line is not much of a decision. At the same time, states should not be content to look only at branch lines scheduled for abandonment. No state has reached the point where it will recommend that a railroad abandon a given line. This is admittedly a difficult role, and some do not like the political implications of it. However, if states fail to accept the role, how can there be state rail planning?

At the outset of this paper, I noted that rail planning would be integrated into the transportation planning process during the 1970s. However, objectivity is clearly a prerequisite to such integration. If we conclude that state unwillingness to abandon rail lines stems from a desire to analyze the lines in more depth, resolution of the research problems and questions noted here should lead to a general improvement in the quality of rail plans and to the establishment of a true state role in rail planning.

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One State's View of State Rail Planning

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This paper describes a variety of views on rail planning now held by states. It differentiates between the state role in planning for rail lines that have interstate significance and those that do not, and it describes three possible levels of involvement for the states with regard to each type of line. The paper also discusses the way in which state rail planning relates to planning by the railroads and federal rail agencies.

Although it is a major railroad center, Illinois to date, compared with a number of the northeastern states, has lost relatively little rail service by abandonment. Today, Illinois supports continued rail service on only 292 km (182 miles) of track and leases another 15 km (9 miles) on which no service is currently provided. We are entitled to less than 4 percent of the rail service continuation funds provided pursuant to Title IV of the Regional Rail Reorganization (3R) Act of 1973. However, Illinois is involved in 8 of the 10 corridors of consolidation potential defined in the Final Standards, Classification, and Designation of Lines of Class I Railroads in the United States published by the Secretary of Transportation on January 19, 1977, and 1952 km (1213 miles), or 11.3 percent, of the state's railroad system has either been filed for abandonment or identified as potentially subject to abandonment by the railroad companies. We do anticipate playing a major role in rail planning in the future.

This paper reflects one state's view, not the states' view. In my capacity with Illinois and with the National Conference of State Railway Officials, which is a confederation of state rail planners and administrators from all regions of the country that is affiliated with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation

Officials, I have been exposed to a number of widely divergent viewpoints on state rail planning. If there is a single state view on what state rail planning should be, it has eluded me; some states are even skeptical about what some other states are doing. This is true both within each region and among regions. It is going to be some time before a single state view of rail planning emerges, and I am not sure it ever will.

From our point of view in Illinois, this is as it should be. First, the questions associated with how to best approach the prospect of a rapidly contracting rail network are relatively new. Thus it would be remarkable and not necessarily healthy if a single approach were now being followed by the states. Second, divergent state views on rail planning reflect the variety of underlying approaches to transportation and economic development among the various states and regions.

Some states have chosen to approach rail planning primarily as an exercise in job retention and economic development. These states have placed relatively little emphasis on the current and in some cases the potential economic viability of each rail line. Other states, at the opposite end of the spectrum, have embraced a policy of minimizing public subsidies to transportation, greatly stressing the ability of each rail line to stand on its own in the near future. Many states, of course, have chosen positions in the center of the spectrum. Several, for example, have distinguished between public subsidies for capital improvements and public subsidy of operating expenses, embracing the former and discouraging the latter. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), to date, has recognized this variety of approaches and has permitted the states to develop significantly divergent rail plans based upon significantly different philosophies and objectives.

In Illinois we believe that as long as each state consistently applies its chosen philosophy and objectives to each line within its boundaries we ought not to be disturbed, and in fact we ought to be encouraged, by the fact that the states are approaching rail planning from a variety of viewpoints.

In addition to holding various viewpoints on how to approach state rail planning, the states also hold a variety of opinions as to which rail lines ought to be subject to state planning. Some states have adopted system-oriented viewpoints in an effort to evaluate every line within their borders. Other states have taken a narrow point of view and have concentrated only on those lines that have been or may be abandoned. In Illinois, we believe that the state should distinguish between lines that have interstate significance and those that do not, and that the state's involvement with the former should be less direct than its involvement with the latter.

The problem with this viewpoint has been that the breakpoint between the two categories of lines has been less than clear cut. It could be argued that the breakpoint lies between those lines designated by the Secretary of Transportation as A mainlines and those designated as B mainlines. Lines designated A carry 18.1 million megagrams (20 million tons) each year, or are required to provide rail linkage between transportation planning zones generating 75 000 or more carloads of freight annually or form important parts of the strategic rail corridor network. Lines designated B fail to meet these requirements but carry at least 4.5 million megagrams (5 million tons) of freight each year. It might also be argued that the breakpoint falls between B mainlines and A branch lines, which carry at least 907 000 megagrams (1 million tons) of freight per year. The breakpoint may lie elsewhere. It would be helpful if the Transportation Research Board, or another organization of acknowledged expertise, were to examine this question and determine an appropriate measure for lines of interstate significance.

LINES WITHOUT INTERSTATE SIGNIFICANCE

Let us turn first to those lines that are found, by one measure or another, to be without interstate significance. In Illinois, we see three scenarios that might develop with regard to state involvement with these lines.

The first might be called the reaction scenario and is where we are today. The northeastern states became involved in the planning process under the 3R Act only after the United States Railway Association (USRA) found that a line was not necessary for inclusion in the Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail). Subsequently, the states become involved only after the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) rules that a line may be abandoned. In each case, the state is reacting to another party's decision in which it has had only minimum involvement. In this scenario state rail planning is planning only in the sense that it allocates resources among lines chosen by someone else.

The second scenario might be called the affirmative scenario. Here, each state would target for investment not just lines that are abandoned but also lines that because of their physical condition are likely to become candidates for abandonment in the future. This latter category would include the category 1 and category 2 lines identified by the railroads pursuant to 49 CFR 1121.20(b). The rationale for this scenario is that, by identifying lines that could be viable but for their physical condition and by directing public investment to them before they enter the abandonment cycle, the states could be more effective in planning for their transportation systems. This approach would not, of course, prevent states that desired to do so from awaiting the abandonment of a line before making a public investment in it. The federal role could remain virtually unchanged, save for a change in the entitlement formula reflecting the change in the types of lines eligible for assistance.

The final scenario might be called the comprehensive scenario. This would assume the existence of a federal funding mechanism, such as a unified transportation fund, in which money would be made available to each state for transportation investments, regardless of mode, chosen by that state. The rationale for this scenario is that it would emphasize the intermodal trade-offs that should be examined to maximize the effectiveness of public transportation investments. For example, the decision as to whether public investments to facilitate the movement of heavy freight in rural areas ought to be made primarily in highways or railroads would come into better focus, because the dollars available for such investments would be interchangeable. Again, each state could segregate both its transportation dollars on a modal basis and its planning in a similar manner. Those states that desired greater flexibility would have it. The federal role would, of course, be substantially altered to reflect the more flexible decision making at the state level.

LINES WITH INTERSTATE SIGNIFICANCE

Let us now turn to the states' role in planning for lines that are found to have interstate significance. Again, Illinois sees three possible levels of involvement.

The first level might be called the no-role level, which is approximately what we have today. In some instances the states are asked to comment on national rail planning

documents produced by the FRA and other federal agencies, but no extra weight seems to be given to the states' comments and no particular effort seems to be made to solicit them. For example, a number of states recently asked for the opportunity to comment on a report about to be published in final form by the FRA and were told that they would have to come to that agency's library in Washington to see a copy. That is something less than seeking the full participation of the states. In some cases, of course, the states are not asked to comment at all.

The second level of involvement might be called the comment level. This could be established either administratively or by statute, and it would provide a guaranteed mechanism through which the states could evaluate plans developed at the federal level with regard to rail lines with interstate significance. While a state veto of federal plans is clearly not contemplated, some mechanism for assuring that the states' comments were thoroughly considered would be implicit in this level. The rationale for this level of state involvement would be that the states, which have an intimate knowledge of their own rail systems, could provide a cross-check on federal planning for the interstate rail system.

The final level might be called the cooperative level. Here, the states would become involved early in the process of national rail planning through such mechanisms as briefings, cooperative data gathering and analysis, loaned state manpower, early state review of specific preliminary findings, and final state review of the finished product. The rationale for this level of state involvement is that it would enable the federal government to undertake more detailed planning for the national system. It could complete its products more quickly because of the increased resources.

STATES' PHILOSOPHICAL ROLE

So far this paper has dwelt on the mechanics of the state role in rail planning. Let us turn briefly to the states' philosophical role. In Illinois, we believe that the role falling to the states in the national debate over rail planning is that of keeper of the long view. While some railroads would surely disagree, we believe that the severe economic pressures confronting the railroad industry are forcing the companies in it to embrace the short view of railroad planning.

This was recently illustrated at a luncheon meeting of the Chicago Traffic Club. One speaker advocated at some length the necessity of keeping most current railroads in place until a definitive national transportation and energy policy can be established, perhaps until demand for rail transportation increases toward the end of this century. At the conclusion of the speech, a representative of one of the more economically marginal midwestern railroads addressed the speaker and, while agreeing with much of what he had to say, wondered who was going to pay the considerable expense of preserving the current rail system until such time as all of its component parts were once again economically viable. He clearly felt that this responsibility should not fall to the railroads.

The short view of rail planning held by the railroad industry is, perhaps, more dramatically illustrated by the several railroad companies currently engaged in massive abandonment programs that seem to have, among their primary motivations, the desire to obtain second-hand track materials to repair those lines that will be spared. In many cases, Illinois believes, the lines being cannibalized could be made viable if they were physically upgraded.

The federal government also seems to have staked out a short-term position on railroad planning. In the view of Illinois, USRA pursued a policy of minimizing initial investment in Conrail's physical plant even if by doing so it accepted higher long-term operating costs. This led to a decision in Illinois to utilize a longer route with severe geometrics and operating limitations instead of a shorter, more geometrically favorable route that would have required rehabilitation. In at least one instance in Illinois, USRA decided to abandon a profitable market, basing this decision largely on the fact that servicing it would have required a high initial investment in track rehabilitation. FRA's insistence on using traffic density, which as common sense indicates tends to correlate with good current track condition and a low requirement for government financial assistance, rather than using length, geometrics, operating characteristics, and long-term operating costs as indicators, also seems to us to reflect short-view railroad planning.

The states, on the other hand, are charged with comprehensive transportation planning. It is appropriate that we raise the long-term questions concerning the transportation implications of future energy conditions, industrial development, mineral recovery, and passenger demand. In fact, we raise them routinely in planning for other modes. This is not to say that the states should not be concerned with short-term questions, or that the railroads and federal planners will invariably take an exclusively short view. It simply seems to us in Illinois that we can fill a role in rail planning by making sure that the long-term questions do receive attention.

CONCLUSION

In summary, we in Illinois believe that the states' role in rail planning is just beginning. We are still in the very early stages of development, and many states have yet to begin at all. We are still merely reacting to developments on those lines that have no broad, interstate significance. And we are playing virtually no role at all in the national decision making that will mold the interstate rail network. We have the potential to assist in the national rail planning effort by taking primary responsibility for planning for public investment in lines without interstate significance, by lending our detailed knowledge of local conditions to those making national rail planning decisions, and by assuring that the long-term considerations implicit in comprehensive transportation planning are fully considered.

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