

Keynote Address

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I'd like to welcome everyone to sunny Southern California. Despite the rain, it's a lot warmer here than anywhere on the East Coast, so I'm delighted to be here. As Jim Scott mentioned earlier, I worked hard for him and TRB in 1992 and early 1993. One of the conferences in 1992, Transportation Data Needs: Programs for a New Era, focused on many of the issues of interest to this group.

First, let me review what kinds of issues we were discussing in 1992 and then talk about how things have changed since then. In 1992 the manufacturing sector was starting to use the roads for "warehousing," with the development of "just-in-time" production and delivery systems, enabled by better inventory control. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 was just getting rolling, and there were major questions about how to define and measure congestion. Some of the primary issues for the TRB data conference were implementation of ISTEA, the role of the National Highway System, the Clean Air Act Amendments, flexible funding, and ISTEA management systems.

Some of the recommendations from that conference were

- Data are collected for decision making, and planners need to learn how to communicate data,
- Avoid duplication of use of limited resources—improve coordination between states and metropolitan planning organizations, and
- A data collection program should have a 5- to 6-year horizon, not 1 year at a time.

Many research needs were identified, including vehicle counting and classification in high-volume, congested areas; better data on goods movement; better understanding of the interaction between land use and the transportation system; and evaluation of TCMs. There also was a widely expressed need for improved travel forecasting models to address air quality, delays, congestion, and quality of life.

Now it's 1995. We have a different president, who charged his vice president with the task of reinventing government, and since January 1995, a change in Congress. The Clinton administration has set the direction in reinventing government to make government smaller and more customer-friendly. Government should be less intrusive. The new direction from Congress similarly advocates less government, and particularly, less federal intervention, with a

return of control to states and local governments. This tug-of-war between federal and state control is not a new problem, and conflicts about who is responsible for what are likely to increase. It raises questions about what information states will have and how comparability (or lack thereof) will impact any ability to report on conditions for the nation as a whole.

As part of reinventing government, let me mention some of the Department of Transportation's restructuring efforts. The proposal now is for the 10 administrations within DOT to be merged into three: Coast Guard, FAA, and an Intermodal Transportation Administration. This proposal would have to be approved by Congress. If it is approved, we anticipate it would take 12 to 15 months to put the first phase into place. In addition to combining administrations, the number of program delivery mechanisms, currently at 60, would be reduced to 3, thus considerably reducing the complexity and burdensome nature of grant applications and administration.

So where does this leave transportation planning professionals, especially those of you who have come to this conference to address the issue of household travel surveys? Understanding personal travel behavior remains a critical and recognized component for the larger context of transportation policy and planning, at all levels of government. Personal mobility is considered by many to be a right. In a paper presented at TRB 1995, John Hamburg pondered the question of whether human rights, as affirmed by the Declaration of Independence as the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," include mobility. Should the transportation system in a democracy be designed so that all individuals are ensured mobility?

What do we learn from conducting personal and household travel surveys? We learn how people are traveling today, and we can evaluate how new policies are likely to impact travel choices. We can improve our forecasting and estimation models to predict the outcomes of new or alternative forecasts. Goals for mobility may conflict with environmental concerns. Some programs developed under CAAA and ISTEA, such as TDM efforts, including more carpooling and shared rides and promoting nonmotorized trips, are pushing Americans to "cheat" on their cars.

What are some of the things we have learned from the Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey? On travel by women, we have learned that despite the significant levels of women in the labor force, women continue to make more child-care and family-related trips. Although women make, on average, more trips than men, men still account for a much greater proportion of vehicle miles traveled.

In diverse populations, there is still a lot of room for growth in travel by Hispanic and African American populations. Hispanic and African American women still have substantially lower licensing rates than non-Hispanic whites. These differences have been lessening over time, however, overall, NPTS has not shown "saturation" of travel, particularly in vehicle miles traveled, in these two groups.

As we move toward the 21st century, we need to be concerned with access to data and public participation in decision making via the Information Superhighway. Today, the proportion of households with PCs varies widely by race and ethnicity. Fourteen percent of African American households, compared with 27 percent of white households, have PCs. Equity issues should not be forgotten when data access and public participation via the Internet and other on-line services are raised.

As you look forward to the next 3 days of the conference, I hope you will keep these things in mind:

- We need to do a better job of collecting data
- We need to do a better job of converting data into meaningful information.
- We need to make data available.
- We need to ask ourselves who has access to the data, statistics, and information we collect and make available.