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# Community Conflict and Highway Planning

## *The Case of a Town That Didn't Want a Freeway*

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An objective analysis is attempted of the types of community conflicts that develop when a new freeway is proposed through an urban area. This is done chiefly through a case study showing what actually occurred in one particular city. Although the name of the city and the names of the participants are disguised, the events are based on facts and describe accurately the chief events and the conflicts that developed over a period of 12 years between a State highway department and a local community and its officials over the choice of a freeway location through that city. Although the case describes events and conflicts in just one city, the experience is typical of what has happened and what continues to happen in many cities throughout the country. The case study, together with an analysis of the chief events and the public issues raised by the conflict, gives insight into the fundamental questions that arise with the location of every new highway in an urban area. Also, for public officials involved in selecting highway routings and in gaining public support for new highways, the case and its analysis will suggest approaches that can be used to encourage constructive public debate of the crucial issues involved at a time in a way that can facilitate a wise decision on the final location. By examining the case of a community where attitudes and events frustrated any real possibility for a calm and dispassionate public discussion of the highway location problems and where public passions prolonged and impeded a rational decision on the location by the highway department, attention is focused on the need for better procedures that involve the public in the decision in a more constructive way in harmony with the democratic philosophy of government.

•ONE OF THE major problems facing the contemporary American city is that of adjusting itself to the automobile as the primary urban transportation form. The adjustment calls for a variety of programs, ranging from provisions for additional parking and the regulation of traffic to the location and construction of modern freeways. The freeway, a novelty just a few years ago, is rapidly becoming commonplace, particularly in the larger American city. The master plans of virtually all urban areas provide for freeway construction immediately or in the near future.

### URBAN HIGHWAY PLANNING AS INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROBLEM

#### Highways and Urban Development

The recognition of the need for a freeway is one thing; the resolution of all the questions and conflicts connected with its construction is something else again. Few capital improvements pose as many serious questions for city officials and the citizenry as does

a new freeway. In one way or another, a freeway touches the lives of virtually all citizens of a community and is a key lever in controlling and directing the future physical development of the city.

Depending on where the freeway is located, either it can act to strengthen the central business center by improving access from the suburbs to the central city, or it can work to encourage decentralization and hasten the demise of the central business center. Between these extremes, lesser variations in the location of a transportation route will likewise influence urban growth and may alter the relative attractiveness of different parts of a city for business or for residences. A freeway interchange located near an existing shopping center will greatly enlarge the center's market area and thereby improve business. Its corollary effect on other centers may be to reduce trade, or in the case of marginal businesses, even to bring bankruptcy.

Land values and the attractiveness of open land for commercial and industrial development often undergo startling changes as the results of new highways. Similarly, the character of residential areas may be altered by the changed pattern of traffic movements on local streets which often follows from a new highway. Streets that were once relatively quiet and free of heavy traffic may be transformed into thoroughfares if they become connections between freeway interchanges and points of traffic generation. However, streets in other neighborhoods may experience the reverse effect, being changed from busy routes carrying noisy commercial truck traffic to quiet residential streets.

All such changes carry with them a far-reaching impact on the daily lives of people. Virtually every person living in the urban area is affected in some way by a new freeway. Those directly in the path of the road lose their homes and businesses to make way for the highway. To some families this brings personal distress and sometimes considerable hardship, even if the monetary compensation is fair and reasonable by market standards. Conversely, other persons and groups are benefited by the highway. Thousands each day travel to their jobs in less time and with greater convenience. Downtown business men find not only that more people from outlying areas shop downtown, but that the cost and time to bring in the goods they need and to make their deliveries to customers drop.

The effect of the highway permeates all parts of the city and beyond. This impact will be felt not only for years or for decades, but perhaps for centuries. Few public works projects are as permanent as highways. Few have such a profound effect on the lives of cities and people.

Because of its widespread impact and because of its permanence, a proposed new freeway poses crucial questions for the community and its leaders. Besides the choices it makes necessary for the community as a whole, the freeway proposal impinges on the individual interests of numerous smaller groups. Conflicts between groups with conflicting interests inevitably erupt. The solution of these conflicts and the resolution of the many public issues that are raised are some of the important challenges facing the people living in metropolitan areas today. They also create some of the most difficult and pressing problems confronting the several levels of government involved.

### Transportation Policy and the City

One of the complicating factors in establishing transportation policies in urban areas arises from the necessary involvement of several levels of government. At first glance, the issues raised may appear to be a matter of local interest to be settled by the people of the city within their own political structure. In the case of freeways, however, the urban portion of the route is usually only part of a State route that extends far beyond the city boundary. Its impact reaches to many other parts of the State. On the Federal level, the route may be viewed as a segment of a national system of highways tying together key areas of the country and as an influence on both the national economy and the general welfare. Questions relating to the location of urban freeways, therefore, give rise not only to conflicts between private groups, but also to clashes of policy and points of view reflecting the interests of different levels of government.

Perhaps the chief reason the city has not been able to retain control of the urban transportation problem and its solution is financing. Urban freeways are extremely



expensive; costs running from \$5 million to \$10 million per mile are not unusual. Few cities have been able to raise such large sums for highway improvement within the tax structures available to them. For a long time the State and Federal governments took little interest in urban highway problems. They took the position that the provision of urban highways was really the city's problem, to be solved by the city government with its own funds. In the 1920's and 1930's they felt that because the cities already had good paved streets, the main problem was to improve and surface the rural roads and to "get the farmer out the mud."

The urban problem, therefore, lay virtually neglected for two decades while traffic congestion mounted. Soon after World War II, however, fears of "traffic strangulation" were being voiced in major cities throughout the country.

### Federal Aid to Urban Highways

A 1944 change in the Federal-aid highway law helped focus the attention of State governments on the urban highway problem. In that year Federal-aid funds were made available to the States on a 50/50 matching basis specifically to finance highway improvements in urban areas. The total Federal funds available, however, were feeble compared to the size of the problem. It was not until 1956 that a large-scale attack was launched on the highway problem, including routes through urban areas. This came in the form of a Federal law providing for the construction of a 41,000-mile National System of Defense and Interstate Highways. The general routing of the Interstate system had been designated as early as 1944 as the key highway system in the nation, a system that would interconnect 90 percent of all the cities with populations of 50,000 or more. Almost half of the total estimated cost of \$41 billion to be spent on the system was scheduled for freeways in urban areas. The Federal government would pay 90 percent of the cost. Administration of the program in each State—including the location, design, and construction of the urban sections—rests with the State highway department, subject to review and approval by the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads at each stage in the development of the project.

The Interstate highway program stimulated the upsurge of urban highway planning and building that has been in progress in the past eight years. In 1956 most of the highway departments had a long backlog of urban highway deficiencies crying for attention, but which they were unable to act on because of inadequate funds. Public demands for relief of traffic congestion in the cities were mounting everywhere. Consequently, as soon as the promise of Federal funds became definite, State highway engineers moved rapidly to advance plans for urban freeways. In many cases they moved so rapidly that some city officials and city planners protested that they were not being given an opportunity to integrate highway plans with their master plans for the city.

### Urban Highway Planning by State Highway Departments

In the initial stages of the Interstate program, except in a few cases, there was little close consultation between State highway engineers and local officials and planners about future highway plans. One of the reasons was the speed necessary to get the program under way. Another reason was that both the responsibility and the authority for carrying out the highway program were in the hands of highway engineers, many of whom saw the highway location problem almost exclusively in terms of moving traffic and keeping down cost. They did not have extensive prior experience in constructing freeways in urban areas, and they viewed urban freeway location and design as just a more complicated version of their experience in rural areas. The new engineering problems alone were enormous and would demand their full attention. As for finding the right location for the freeway, some highway engineers had been making urban traffic studies for years and the needed solutions seemed clear to them. They felt confident of how to locate the routes to give the most traffic service at the least cost; they were eager to get on with the job. They showed little understanding or patience for the numerous and time-consuming consultations and debates needed to win local support in the city. Nor did they appreciate the power of public opinion. Consequently, the public information machinery of the State highway departments during the early years of the program was weak and sluggish when measured against the monumental program they had to carry out.

Similarly, in the early stages of the program, the rapport between highway engineers and city planners was strained. The highway engineers, believing they knew what the solution to the urban highway problem was, were anxious to proceed with the steps that would lead to early construction. They were inclined to be unsympathetic to the urgings of local city planners who wanted more time to study the overall problem to find an ideal highway location that would harmonize with other city objectives. The city planners, on the other hand, were resentful of the intrusion of highway engineers into their bailiwicks. Many were genuinely alarmed at the possible harmful effects on the city of a highway location that was conceived too narrowly, that is, in terms of vehicular traffic alone. They recognized perhaps better than anyone else that any important transportation artery, particularly a freeway, structures the growth of a community more than any other single influence. They saw the traffic-carrying function of the freeway as only one part of the contribution it should make and wanted to use the freeway to promote other values as well—for example, to physically separate incompatible land uses, to create better neighborhoods, and to stimulate the growth of new industries in selected parts of the city.

The highway engineers, though generally sympathetic to these additional goals, became frustrated by the city planners' inability to translate generalities into specific and workable design recommendations. They were also reluctant to change the location or design of freeways (and thereby to enlarge the costs of right-of-way and construction) for city planning goals that to them seemed speculative at best.

An additional antagonism that produced disharmony between the city planner and the highway engineer was the viewpoint of some city planners that freeways built into the downtown area did not solve any problems but rather aggravated those already existing. These city planners saw improved rail mass transit as a better investment than freeways, and often were outspoken in publicizing this view. Some particularly articulate planners received national publicity when they denounced the entire Interstate program as ill-conceived and a threat to our cities.

Inexperienced in their understanding of city politics, inadequately prepared either by inclination or skill for effective public relations, and suspect by the city planners with whom they should have been naturally allied, the highway engineers, once they began to get serious in urban areas, soon found that they had a tiger by the tail. Storms of protest erupted throughout our cities at any and every proposal that was introduced, public hearings were crowded with angry mobs who shouted derision at the moderators and the highway departments, and letters of protest flooded the governors' offices and the offices of Congressmen in Washington.

The early violent public reactions to urban freeway proposals stunned and shocked the State highway departments into awareness of the complex of values and interest which were inextricably intermeshed with their proposals. It confronted them with the difficult problem of how to discover all the values and interests involved in the question, how to interpret them correctly, and finally how to combine them with engineering considerations so as to achieve the greatest public benefit in the final design.

### Highway Public Hearings

To insure that highway engineers would hear all sides of the issue before proceeding to carry out a highway proposal, the Congress in enacting the 1956 Highway Act provided that a public hearing be held on any Federal-aid urban highway project before any irrevocable action is taken to execute the project. The purpose of the highway public hearing is described as follows in instructions to field offices by the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads, the agency responsible for overall administration of the highway program:

The objective of the public hearings is to provide an assured method whereby the State can furnish to the public information concerning the State's highway construction proposals, and to afford every interested resident of the area an opportunity to be heard on any proposed Federal-aid project for which a public hearing is to be held. At the same time the hearings

afford the State an additional opportunity to receive information from local sources which would be of value to the State in making its final decision as to which of possibly several feasible detailed locations should be selected.

The hearings are not intended to be a popular referendum for the purpose of determining the location of a proposed improvement by a majority vote of those present. They do not relieve the duly constituted officials of a State highway department of the necessity for making decisions in State highway matters for which they are charged with full responsibility. The public hearing procedure is designed to insure the opportunity for or the availability of a forum to provide factual information which is pertinent to the determination of the final location considered by the State to best serve the public interest and on which improvement projects are proposed to be undertaken. (1)

The Federal law itself requires that any highway department when submitting a Federal-aid project located in an urban area to the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads for approval must certify that a hearing has been held and that the department has considered the economic effects of the location.

The public hearing, although it has succeeded in providing an opportunity for all those interested in the proposal to express their views, has not visibly reduced the controversy that usually follows an urban highway proposal. Some observers even believe that the hearing, by providing a convenient platform for public opposition by small private interests, actually increased the frequency and intensity of conflict and often became spectacles tending to exaggerate both the size and severity of opposition to highway proposals.

It is sometimes not possible to resolve all controversies raised by a proposed urban freeway by the time a final decision on the routing must be made. In the case of most States the final authority to fix a highway location rests with the head of the State highway department. If a local community is seriously dissatisfied with the highway department's decision, its final resources may be to appeal to the Governor of the State, or to influence the State Legislature to enact legislation preventing the highway department from carrying out its action.

In the case of Federal-aid projects subject to approval by the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads, the local community also can appeal to the Federal agency to withhold approval, at least until the community has had an opportunity to present its side of the case. Failing proof of dereliction or outright fraud, it is not clear on what grounds the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads could reject a route decision by a State highway department which usually has full legal authority to make the decision. Undoubtedly, if the Bureau had grounds for believing that the location proposed by the State is seriously deficient and against the general public interest, it could force the highway agency to reconsider its proposal by refusing to approve the project for Federal financing. Where the State's proposal is fundamentally sound, however, and where the dispute with the local community is simply one of difference of opinion, it is difficult to see how under the law the Federal agency could follow any other course but to uphold the State highway department.

#### Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962

The experience of State highway departments in urban highway planning since 1956 has produced in many States better procedures than existed then and immediately thereafter for soliciting public views on highway proposals and for achieving close cooperative relationships with local officials. Section 9 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 carries this trend even further by requiring that after July 1, 1965, all Federal-aid projects in urban areas of more than 50,000 population must be based on an urban transportation planning process carried on cooperatively by States and local communities. Whereas this new provision of the Federal law will undoubtedly further advance the structure for State-local cooperation, sources of possible conflict over urban highway proposals will still be numerous. The highway administrator will always be challenged



to appraise correctly the potential for community conflict inherent in his proposals and to take advance action to reduce such conflict to the extent possible. Recognizing that the conditions described thus far and in the following case have certainly improved in many States, the fundamental issues and principles brought out here are nevertheless as relevant to the future as they were to the past.

## THE CASE OF A TOWN THAT DIDN'T WANT A FREEWAY

### North-South Highway Through North Ridge

Many of the problems and conflicts involved in reaching a decision on the location of an urban freeway are illustrated by the case of a specific American city which, for present purposes, we shall call North Ridge. The actual name of the city and the names of the participants have been fictionalized. The real names are of no special significance for this purpose. What is important is the nature of the conflicts that occurred and the events that led to their occurrence. Though these conflicts are reported as they happened in one particular city, many readers will recognize them as typical of community conflicts in cities throughout the country where freeway locations are being debated. It is this universality that makes these conflicts of interest to highway administrators. By exposing some of the fundamental issues that lay behind highway conflicts, this report aims to encourage and assist highway administrators to examine objectively similar conflicts they may encounter in their own experience so that they can plan in the early stages of projects courses of action to minimize conflict and to reduce opposition to highway proposals by local officials and by the general public.

The controversy over the location of the north-south highway through North Ridge raged for a period of 15 years, from 1945 to 1960. The conflict was a stubborn contest of wills between the State highway department, which had the responsibility for locating and constructing the highway, and the local officials who saw the highway as a threat to the preservation of their community in the form its citizens desired to keep it.

Ten alternate lines for the route were studied during the 15-year period before a final decision was made: eight developed by the State highway department and two proposed by representatives from North Ridge. The final location adopted was not the line most preferred by the highway department, nor was it a line desired by the town itself. It was a location that the town fought unrelentingly to the bitter end, when its final appeal to the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads in Washington was denied.

The case of North Ridge raises a number of questions of interest to the student of highway administration. Recognizing the mutual interests of both the State highway agency and the government of North Ridge in the location of the freeway, is there some procedure that would have made possible a better and an earlier resolution of the conflicting points of view? Was the highway department too narrow in the factors it was willing to consider in selecting the highway location? Were the city officials of North Ridge too parochial in their own point of view, willing to sacrifice arbitrarily consideration of regional transportation needs for their own local interests? Did the State highway department adequately consult with North Ridge officials about the highway location? And most importantly, is it possible to make the highway public hearing a more effective forum for a constructive public discussion of broad questions of values and goals related to the freeway, instead of a protest rally as was the case in North Ridge?

These are some of the questions the reader should keep in mind throughout the following report. Although neither the case itself nor the discussion following the case will provide complete answers to these questions, they should expand the reader's awareness of the nature of these crucial issues. Hopefully, they may also expose insights into the directions that can be followed to find better solutions to the problem of determining highway locations through procedures consistent with the rights of local communities and the democratic process.

### A Route Through North Ridge

The first discussions on the part of the State Highway Commissioner with the Mayors of Ridge City and North Ridge about the possibility of a north-south freeway through

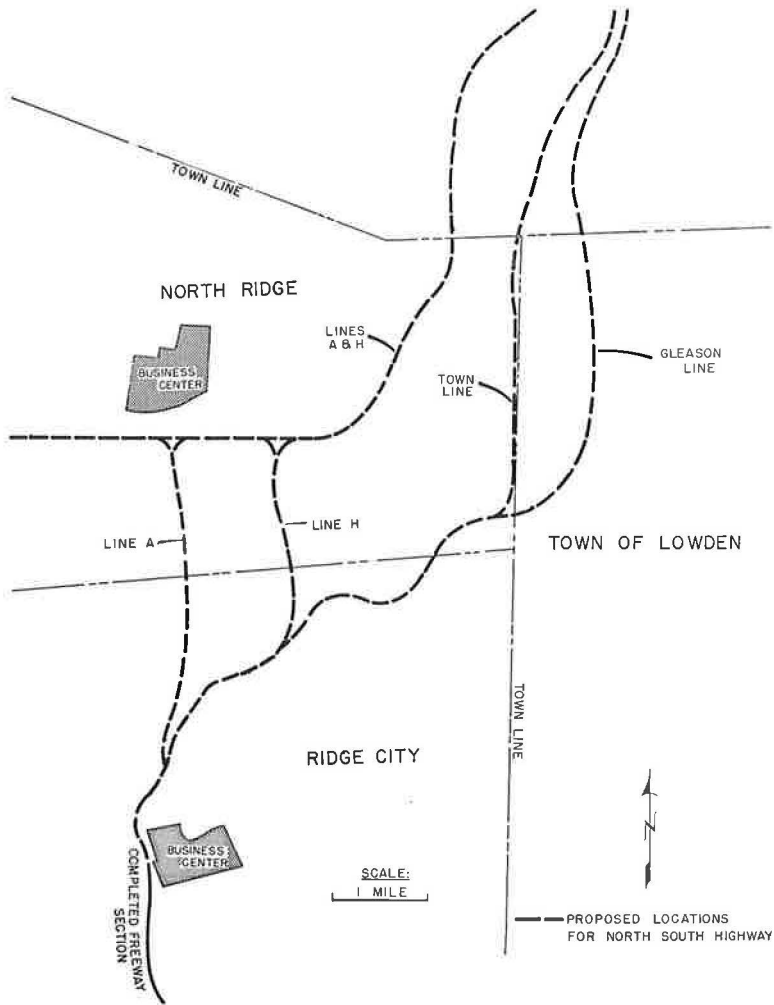


Figure 1.

both cities were held in 1944. This was the year before the State published its detailed reports on the most urgent traffic bottlenecks in the Ridge City metropolitan area. The report listed the priority projects to which the State would need to direct its attention in the years immediately following. When the report was released it showed the State's recommended location for the north-south highway, Line A, as running almost due north from the business center of Ridge City to the business center of North Ridge about four miles away (Fig. 1). The freeway would parallel Elm Street, the main thoroughfare between the two centers. At the southerly limits of the North Ridge business center, the route would turn east and then northeast in its eventual course toward the northern end of the State. The primary function of the proposed north-south highway as conceived in that early report was to link the centers of the two cities with a high-type traffic facility to relieve the already seriously overburdened north-south streets, particularly Elm Street. This would be only its first function, however. The route would continue northward beyond North Ridge to permit eventual connections with two important State highways running to the northeast and northwest corners of the State. In this single north-south highway, the highway department aimed to combine service for long-distance traffic traveling across the state with service for one of the most heavily traveled com-



muter corridors between Ridge City and North Ridge. In the succeeding 15 years of controversy over the location of the route, the State engineers never lost sight of these original goals; any compromises they were willing to make stopped at the point beyond which the accomplishment of these objectives would be jeopardized.

When the 1945 report was released to the public, the initial reaction was not noticeably unfavorable insofar as the North Ridge section was concerned. The reason for this may have been the lack of funds in the highway budget for the project which made it seem far off in the future. The portion through Ridge City, however, ran into opposition from the very beginning. Large companies that were to be displaced or otherwise adversely affected by the route immediately raised objections. These objections, as well as opposition from downtown businessmen over the routing near the central business district of Ridge City, occupied the full attention of the highway department planners from 1945 to 1948.

### Public Opposition Mounts

In the fall of 1948, public dissatisfaction with the North Ridge section began to show itself. At an informal public hearing in that town, homeowners and others directly in the path of the route protested its location to the attending highway department engineers. Members of the City Council asked if the present streets could not be widened to accommodate the growing traffic. They were concerned over the route's dislocating 175 families and over the possibility of creating a psychological barrier across the town. Their doubts were later reinforced by the growing protests of the affected homeowners.

An independent engineering study of the north-south traffic problem was completed in 1945 by a New York consulting firm. The consultants were engaged by a committee representing five large Ridge City companies who wanted a competent and independent appraisal of the highway department's north-south freeway plans. The committee probably hoped the study would differ with the highway department's conclusions and would thus give them a basis for attacking the department's plans. As it turned out, however, the consultants' findings in most part agreed with the 1945 report. Nevertheless, as a demonstration of good faith, the companies had the report printed and distributed to all interested parties.

To point out the long-range impact of a freeway location and the consequences of a weak solution, the consultant cautioned in the report: "Doctors, we are told, bury their mistakes, planners by the same token embalm theirs, and engineers inflict them on their children's children. Of these three types of error, the engineering variety in the long run is the most costly to the community."

The study did not alter the views of North Ridge Town Manager Andrews or the Town Council. In the ensuing years their convictions about the undesirability of the freeway through the developed portion of North Ridge were only to become more deep-seated. State Highway Commissioner Donal A. Clark and his engineers continued to meet periodically with Town Manager Andrews in an effort to persuade him to relax his opposition to the line, but with no success.

Commissioner Clark had full legal authority to make the choice himself and to disregard the views of town officials. He wished to avoid adverse publicity as well as the political consequences that would follow from a unilateral decision. In any event, there was no need for haste. Funds for the construction of the north-south highway were not available, and highway department engineers were fully occupied on other high-priority projects elsewhere.

### Public Information and North-South Issue

A review of the newspaper coverage of the north-south highway throughout this early period showed that much of the initiative in focusing public attention on the issues raised by the highway location was taken by the North Ridge town officials. Council meetings were open to the public and the press; the views of Council members were given prompt and full coverage in both local papers. The engineers of the State highway department, however, did not take the press into their confidence, and consequently their views were given little newspaper coverage. Routine press releases from the highway department

were dry with statistics and lacked public appeal. In most cases the newspapers avoided printing the department's press releases, preferring instead to summarize the salient points in an editorial or a short article on one of the back pages. That the highway department failed to capitalize fully on the news value of the issue in making their side of the question clear to the public is apparent.

As the issue dragged on into 1954, neither side altered its views. In an effort to give added weight to its position, the highway department in the early part of 1954 released its second printed report on the north-south highway. This report showed all eight lines studied by the department and presented complete traffic and cost information for all lines. The report explained why the department preferred its proposed line (Line A) over the others. The concluding recommendation of the report was as follows: "In order to provide a facility that will afford the greatest relief to traffic congestion and the greatest benefits to the road users and the communities, commensurate with the cost, it is recommended that line A be adopted. . . ." The report included four pages of discussion on the highway's effect on the community. This showed for each alternate line the number of buildings that would be displaced, the tax loss, the effects on city street traffic patterns, and the railroad grade-crossing eliminations.

Strangely, this extensive report failed to receive much coverage in the press. Although statistics from the report were occasionally referred to in future articles on the north-south highway, there was no large-scale coverage of the report immediately on its release. One reason for this may have been that it was a technical engineering report requiring considerable work to make it readable to the general public. The press may not have been interested in going to this effort. Secondly, the report was released to the press at exactly the same time as it was sent to other interested parties, which may have eliminated some of its news value.

### New Traffic Study

North Ridge officials still doubted the report's conclusion that it was necessary to take the route through the built-up area of the town to the edge of the business district. In Ridge City, local officials were also dubious about portions of the proposed route within their borders. In July 1954, the two cities joined together to hire a nationally known traffic engineering firm to make an entirely new study. The main question to be answered was whether it was necessary to take the line close to North Ridge center or whether a route bypassing North Ridge altogether might not be as good or even a better solution.

There must have been considerable dismay in the North Ridge City Hall five months later when the consulting firm reported its final conclusions. These coincided very closely with those of the highway department. However, the new report did not deter the town officials or the affected homeowners from their opposition. Indeed, by the end of 1954 their opposition increased as rumors circulated that the approaching session of the State Legislature might appropriate funds for the north-south highway. Early in the following year, protest groups led the North Ridge Town Manager to call a public meeting on the question to which the Governor and the State Highway Commissioner were invited. Both agreed to attend.

Although the meeting was scheduled to be held in the town courtroom, the overflow attendance of 250 persons forced relocation to the high school auditorium. Once the meeting got under way, one speaker after another rose from the audience to object to the line. Most protested because the route would take their homes or disturb their neighborhoods. In a hand vote, only ten persons favored the State's route. All others were opposed.

To what degree this vote reflected the views of the town's total population of 52,000 is unknown, but from all indications the Governor and local officials all interpreted this consensus as the prevailing view of the townspeople. By the end of the meeting the Governor was visibly impressed by the amount and intensity of feeling of the opposition, and he then and there sounded the death knell for the straight-line connection between the centers of Ridge City and North Ridge: "While a straight-line highway is probably the best designed, I am deeply concerned with the economic and social factors in the

highway's construction." The Governor instructed the highway department to look for another line.

### A New Highway Commissioner Takes Office

In March 1955, the same month as the hearing, State Highway Commissioner Clark left office for private reasons and the Governor appointed as the new commissioner a professional engineer from the northern part of the State, Richard D. Farrell. Commissioner Farrell had been in private civil engineering practice throughout his career and had no prior experience in highway planning. His first order of business in his new office was to restudy the controversial north-south highway problem.

In compliance with the Governor's instructions, Farrell sent North Ridge officials a compromise line located about three-quarters of a mile east and parallel to Line A. The new line joined the original line southeast of the central business district. This was the route designated Line H in the 1954 report (Fig. 1). The State engineers considered this new proposal inferior to the original Line A primarily because of the in-direction of travel between the centers of Ridge City and North Ridge, and also because the line would require an additional connector to service the North Ridge business center. It would be inferior in terms of traffic service and more costly. Also, the changed section still cut through high-type and compact residential areas.

It did not take long for the same kind of opposition to mount against Line H as had expressed itself against Line A. Whereas homeowners on Line A gave a sigh of relief and withdrew from the controversy, a new set of homeowners mobilized themselves into protest groups, doubtlessly encouraged by the success of the earlier group in defeating the highway department's proposal.

In May of 1956 at a meeting of the Town Council held to discuss the latest routing, more than 300 persons attended to protest Line H. Many objected to having the route in the town at all. A few days later the Town Council went on record against Line H and moved to ask the highway department to explore further and to consider instead the widening of present north-south arteries in the town. From that point on, the highway department was relentlessly beset by objections to the route; the letters-to-the-editor columns of both newspapers carried numerous attacks on the highway and on the highway department. The storm clouds were gathering.

### Federal-Aid for North-South Highway

Meanwhile in Washington, D. C., an event was taking place that was to have a profound impact on the north-south highway. In June 1956, Congress enacted a bill providing financing to construct a 41,000-mile National System of Interstate and Defense Highways with the Federal government paying 90 percent of the cost and the States 10 percent. Being a link in a cross-state route that had several years earlier been made part of the Interstate highway system, the north-south highway was now brought much closer to reality. With the problem of financing solved, the State highway department now became especially anxious to reach an early decision on the route through North Ridge and to proceed to eliminate this traffic bottleneck once and for all.

One of the provisions in the highway act required the States to prepare a detailed estimate of the cost of building the Interstate system; the apportionment of funds to each State was to be based on the relationship of the estimated cost within that State to the overall nationwide estimate. The U. S. Bureau of Public Roads instructed its field division office in each State to ask their respective State highway departments to have the Interstate route locations fixed by September 15, 1956, if possible, so that a reliable estimate of cost could be prepared. The instructions provided, however, that if it were not possible to fix the location of a particular section of a route by that date, a tentative location could be adopted for estimating purposes subject to change later on if necessary.

Commissioner Farrell decided to use this date to try to force agreement to Line H by North Ridge. In his meetings with town officials he hinted that if the location of the line was not submitted to the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads by September 15, the north-south highway would not qualify as part of the Interstate system. This approach added great pressure to the already tense situation, but the effort collapsed when someone



from the town called the Washington office of the Bureau and found out that the deadline was only for estimating purposes.

Councilman Douglas C. Freeman, representing the area most affected by Line H, called another public hearing in North Ridge for September 11, 1956, to allow public discussion of the highway. Chief Planning Engineer James W. Killian of the highway department attended to answer questions about Line H. The mood of the 300 people in attendance was hostile. They made it plain that they feared the route would damage too many homes and would cut the town in half; they went on record as wanting no part of Line H.

On September 15, the highway department submitted Line H as a tentative location through North Ridge for the official Interstate route.

### Introduction of Gleason Line

Richard G. Gleason, Representative from North Ridge to the State legislature and a stalwart of the "Out" political party, now began to take an interest in the dispute. An attorney, he was also skilled in the art of political maneuver. He saw the controversy as an opportunity to become champion for a popular cause against the "In" party administration. He also believed that here was an encroachment by State bureaucracy on the rights of a town to direct its own destiny. "Does the commissioner and his staff presume that despite the official protests of the Town Council, the legislators from North Ridge, the Chamber of Commerce, the Development Commission, and of virtually every civic group, in their overriding judgment from their lofty perch on the fifth floor of the State office building, they can tell us without fear of contradiction that they know what is best for us?" he said at one of the public hearings.

In December 1956, Representative Gleason announced his own proposal for a routing of the north-south highway. He sent a map to the highway department suggesting an easterly route that would virtually bypass North Ridge altogether (Fig. 1). He contended his route would traverse less densely developed land and thus would avoid disrupting settled residential neighborhoods in North Ridge to the same degree as did Line H.

The State's reaction to the Gleason line was cool, to say the least. As they saw it, this line would require abandoning the primary purpose of the highway, namely as a route to carry the heavy traffic between Ridge City and North Ridge to relieve the congestion on the north-south streets. The Gleason route, by being so far east, would also rule out any possibility of connecting to the cross-state route to the north, another of the original objectives. Even so, the highway commissioner asked a local engineering firm that was assisting the State in its studies of the north-south highway, William Lewis Associates, to make a comparative study of Line H and the Gleason line.

As the year 1957 began, the north-south highway became the top-priority issue before the North Ridge Town Council. In the previous year the town had hired a new Town Manager, Harold C. Canney, and instructed him to do everything possible to defend the town against Line H. Early in 1957 Canney became persuaded that the town's position in the debate was too negative. He believed that rather than just turning down every State proposal, the town should use its own engineering and planning staffs as well as outside experts, if necessary, to make a well-planned and coordinated argument in opposition to the proposed route and to come up with a positive recommendation of its own. Also, because the Federal law requires the highway department to consider the economic effects of the route, North Ridge would find evidence to show that the economic effects of Line H would be harmful to the town.

In August 1957, the State's consultant, William Lewis Associates, published its report comparing the State's Line H with the Gleason line. The overall cost for the Gleason line would be less, \$28,100,000 as compared to \$29,900,000 for Line H. The number of developed properties to be taken would be very similar, 174 on the Gleason line as opposed to 166 on Line H. However, the fatal deficiency of the Gleason line, the report contended, was that it did not serve the main north-south corridor of traffic and thus neglected the problem that the route had originally set out to solve.

### North Ridge Hires a Consultant

Soon after release of the Lewis report, North Ridge Councilman Freeman expressed the sense of frustration of the Town Council when he said, "For every valid objection raised by the town, the commissioner and his palace guard have answers made up in advance. Until such time as we get someone on a par with the State highway department experts engineer-wise, we're not going to get satisfaction. Anyone handy with statistics can prove anything. We need someone who can outstatistic the highway department experts." The Council thereupon unanimously voted to find the best consultant available to study the problem and to "defend the town of North Ridge in its battle with Farrell."

Three months went by, and after Town Manager Canney had approached several highway consultants, he reported to the Council that he was running into trouble getting someone to take the assignment. Undoubtedly the severity of the conflict between the highway department and the town and the fact that the problem had already been studied and restudied by other consultants caused reputable consultants to shy away from the assignment.

Soon after Canney made his report to the Council, Commissioner Farrell announced that the public hearing required by the Federal law would be held in North Ridge on January 9, 1958, to receive the views of the officials and the public on the route through that town. He announced that "The general objection (by the highway department) to the Gleason line and the need for expediting the establishment of the north-south location through North Ridge to forestall development from taking place along the proposed route have led me to the conclusion that we must immediately establish a definite location for the north-south highway through North Ridge."

Town Manager Canney, after several meetings with Commissioner Farrell, finally persuaded him to postpone the meeting for three months, until March 4. Canney then immediately hired a consultant with whom he had been negotiating, Clarence H. Newcomb of New York City, to begin studies for the town, to have the results ready in time for the hearing three months later.

Three weeks before the hearing date, Canney met with Commissioner Farrell to present a new line developed by the town's consultant (Fig. 1). Canney asked that the hearing be postponed again so that more complete studies could be made on the new line. The State took the matter under advisement. Commissioner Farrell announced a week later that the new line "has less merit than the Gleason line," and that "a preliminary appraisal of this new proposed line shows it does not warrant postponement of the hearing or change in the line."

Expressing disappointment at what they felt was arbitrary rejection of their line, the North Ridge officials now became determined to carry their fight to the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads if necessary. Approached on the question of an eventual appeal to the Federal highway agency, one of the State's U. S. Senators, a former resident of North Ridge, forecast the outcome of the final appeal when he said that "the Federal Government has little choice but to accept the recommendation of the State Highway Commissioner. The solution must be arrived at on the State level. The Federal Government, as far as can be ascertained, can act only upon the final recommendation and certification of the State highway department."

### Final Public Hearing Held

The public hearing on the night of March 4 was described by observers as exciting, stormy, and turbulent. More than 1,400 persons filled the high school auditorium, 200 others were turned away by police from the overfilled hall. Most of the people present were from North Ridge and opposed Line H. But about 500 persons were from Lowden, the town east of North Ridge through which the Gleason line would pass. The latter were there to oppose the Gleason line and to support the State's Line H.

Commissioner Farrell opened the hearing by describing the history of negotiations over the north-south highway. Using giant maps, engineers from his staff described in detail the main features of the three most prominent alternate lines. Traffic and accident statistics were presented in support of Line H. But the State's presentation was frequently interrupted by outbursts from the crowd; the audience obviously had little interest in technical information at this stage of the game.

The State's presentation took about an hour. The chairman then recognized State Representative Gleason, who came to the platform to make his statement. Gleason criticized Commissioner Farrell and the highway department for their "bureaucratic type of thinking" and for callous disregard for the rights of the town. He proceeded into a defense of his own line, claiming it to be superior to all others proposed.

Town Manager Canney came next to the platform to present the town's case. With the aid of two traffic engineers from the consultant firm hired by the town, he attacked the State's line as unnecessarily cutting through the built-up part of the town. "The T line does less damage and is more consistent with Interstate highway needs," Canney argued. The town concluded its presentation by handing Commissioner Farrell a lengthy brief stating its position in detail.

Following Canney, a representative of the North Ridge Chamber of Commerce told the hearing that the 450 businessmen in the Chamber favored the Gleason line. An attorney from Lowden, the town adjoining North Ridge on the east, then took the platform to appear in favor of Line H, saying that he had submitted a petition containing 1,659 names of Lowden and North Ridge residents favoring the State's line. Representatives of a variety of groups spoke next, followed by individual citizens. The meeting adjourned at 1 AM, when all but about 60 persons had already left.

The 1958 hearing proved to be the climax of the long dispute. After the hearing was held, the highway commissioner had only to study the transcript and consider the economic effects of the location before making his final decision.

### Aftermath of the Hearing

After the stormy public hearing, Commissioner Farrell was undoubtedly wary of making an immediate decision. Passions were high, and if anything, the hearing simply entrenched all interested groups further into their original positions. Besides, a slow-down in the Interstate program would be necessary on account of the reduced Federal-aid Interstate funds that were available to the States as compared to the amounts they expected originally. This relieved some of the pressure for an immediate decision on the north-south highway. Farrell may also have been advised by the Governor to let things calm down before taking any other action; elections were only eight months away.

The elections came and went. The Governor was reelected by one of the highest pluralities in the State's history. By the end of 1958, Commissioner Farrell replied to reporters' inquiries that he was still studying the information brought out at the hearing and was not yet ready to make a decision. Two months later, in February 1959, Representative Gleason publicly criticized the highway commissioner for dragging out the decision so long.

The long delay had an unsettling effect on many people who were in the paths of the three possible routes. Uncertainty about where the route might go made it difficult for anyone to sell his home. Many families and businessmen could not make or act on future plans until the location of the route was decided. Public resentment began to grow over the time it was taking to announce the decision.

A month after Representative Gleason made his statement, the North Ridge Chamber of Commerce and a group of manufacturers in the town publicly called on the highway commissioner to make his decision. Still there was no response from the highway department. Finally in May 1959 the State Legislature passed a resolution, introduced by Representative Gleason three months earlier, calling on the highway commissioner to announce his decision on the route by August 1 of that year.

In turning down another proposed highway in North Ridge over which a second storm was brewing (this was an east-west route in very early stages of planning), the Governor made a statement to the press criticizing Farrell for "poor public relations in not allowing the town to work with him in the selection of an east-west route." Coming at the time it did, this was interpreted by some as an indirect criticism of the highway department's handling of the north-south highway routing. Following the Governor's statement, one member of the Town Council said, "I hope the commissioner has learned his lesson and will proceed with future highways in the correct manner."

On June 17, 1959, barely two weeks after the Governor's public criticism of him, Farrell announced his resignation. The new commissioner was to be Jeffrey E. Banks,



a professional engineer and former Deputy State Highway Commissioner under Clark. Banks had been a long-time career employee of the highway department, but for the past four years had been out of public service and an executive with a large concrete company. Banks was known as a highly competent highway engineer and an able administrator.

Upon assuming office on July 1, 1959, Banks took on as his first order of business the resolution of the north-south highway controversy. He was briefed on all the issues by his engineers, he met several times with Representative Gleason and the officials and staff of North Ridge, he flew the three lines by helicopter on two different occasions, and finally he discussed the entire question with Clyde Barner, the Division Engineer of the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads, who was in charge of the Bureau's office in Ridge City. At a press conference in his office on July 24, 1959, after three weeks of study, he announced that he was persuaded that "the alignment which will be most advantageous to both North Ridge and the State is Line H." His press release went on to say that to disregard the local street considerations, as urged by North Ridge, would be to disregard 93 percent of the problem. "The capacity of the existing street system cannot be expanded sufficiently to handle the growing traffic loads."

On August 12, 1959, the State highway department submitted to the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads office a formal request for approval of the north-south highway project for Federal-aid financing. With the request was the required certification that a public hearing had been held and that the highway department had considered the economic effects before making its final decision.

Being intimately familiar with the long debate over the highway and being personally convinced that Line H, though inferior to the original Line A, was now the best line available, Public Roads Division Engineer Barner took little time to approve the State's request. The State's and Division Engineer Barner's reports then went on to the Bureau's regional office. The Regional Engineer, after reviewing the entire record, also approved the decision and forwarded the record to Washington.

When they learned of Barner's action, the North Ridge Town Council decided in a 5 to 3 vote to carry their appeal to the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads in Washington. A full legal brief was prepared setting forth the town's position and was sent to Washington with a request for a formal review of the case by the Bureau.

#### North Ridge Officials Go to Washington

On November 2, 1959, six key officials from North Ridge met in Washington with the Commissioner of the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads and members of his staff. The meeting lasted three hours. At its conclusion the Public Roads Washington staff agreed to review the entire record and report its conclusion as soon as possible.

Two months later, on January 15, 1960, the court of last resort for North Ridge rendered its verdict. "The Bureau has examined all facts of the problem. As a result of the studies we do not find any justification for withholding approval of the location selected by the State," read the Bureau's letter.

The State highway department took immediate steps to acquire rights-of-way. Construction was set to begin early in 1962.

### IMPLICATIONS OF NORTH-SOUTH HIGHWAY CONTROVERSY

The conflicts that raged over the north-south highway could not all have been avoided even by the best public relations practices or by the closest possible consultations with the town on the part of the State highway department. Many of the conflicts were over basic differences in values and point of view and these are never easily resolved. To North Ridge officials the number of homes that would be razed for the freeway seemed an intolerable price to pay to solve the traffic problem. Also, they felt it their duty to protect the quiet atmosphere of the town's residential communities against the disturbances and pressures for dense land development they believed would come with the construction of the freeway.

These objectives for North Ridge were not compatible with regional and statewide values as interpreted by the State highway department. The latter believed that the

traffic congestion in the traffic corridor between Ridge City and North Ridge would continue to plague them until it was solved, regardless of the willingness of the officials of North Ridge themselves to tolerate it. The Interstate highway program gave them an excellent opportunity to solve several transportation problems at once, and at very little added cost. To build the bypass route recommended both by Representative Gleason and North Ridge, thereby ignoring the local traffic congestion would be only a temporary solution, State engineers believed. Sooner or later the congestion would reach the point where the public would demand another route. Two separate routes would involve almost twice the cost, and they were determined to avoid this.

In reviewing the case, it is well to bear in mind that conflict over public issues is not necessarily or inherently bad. As Simon, Smithburg, and Thompson put it:

Conflict may be the means for bringing to bear on individual decisions a wide range of specialized competences. It may also be the means for bringing into the view of high level administrators, of legislators, and the public, basic issues of public policy that need resolution. It may prevent these issues from being decided anonymously at obscure levels of the bureaucracy, and hence may be an important means of securing democratic control. (2)

Though many of the conflicts in the North Ridge case were deep and unavoidable, one still cannot help wonder whether the debate and the search for consensus could not have proceeded on a higher and more constructive level. One difficulty encountered by many who tried to see the problem objectively was the inadequate information available to the general public on both sides of the question. The highway department took little pains to present complete information to the public via the press. Having complete technical reports to support their own conclusions and responsibilities, the State highway engineers seemed unaware of any responsibility to furnish the public with sufficiently complete information to permit the formulation of intelligent opinions.

One can certainly make a good case that the press was also negligent in its failure to adequately inform itself on all sides of the issue to make possible a well-rounded coverage for its readers. As it happened, the press gave heavy coverage to news that was easy to come by and that had immediate dramatic appeal, thus obscuring many of the more complex technical facts and arguments that had an important bearing on the overall public interest. It behooves highway administrators not to assume that their proposals will automatically receive adequate press coverage on their intrinsic merits alone.

Without complete information, and informed debate on objectives, the function of the citizenry in a democracy, is not possible and government is deprived of the views of a community on its choices between competing values. On this point, Laski comments:

Things done by government must not only appear right to the expert; their consequences must seem right to the plain and average man. And there is no way known of discovering his judgment save by deliberately seeking it. This, after all, is the really final test of government; for, at least over any considerable period, we cannot maintain a social policy which runs counter to the wishes of the multitude. (3)

Unless he deliberately seeks the reactions of the public to his proposals the government decision-maker fails to gain the benefit of additional information and other views early in the process when these can be incorporated in the formulation of specific design proposals. According to Banfield:

A decision-maker, even one of long experience and great capacity, is not likely, when an issue first arises, to be fully aware of all the interests that are at stake in it or of the importance that is attached to each interest by those who hold it.



He gets this information (except with regard to the most obvious matters) only as interested parties themselves bring it to his attention. (4)

The officials of North Ridge resorted to the collection of data and to debate over questions having technical substance late in the process. By then they were psychologically and publicly committed to continued opposition to the State's route. It is highly doubtful that any amount of factual information or persuasive argument could have altered their course once they saw their responsibility as not to debate the issues in terms of broad values and community objectives, but rather to stand firmly against any trespass of the town by the highway, regardless of the wider and long-range consequences of such opposition.

### Public Hearings and Highway Planning

The experience with the North Ridge hearing raises many questions about the purpose of a public hearing. Is it chiefly to permit the release of passions and emotions, described by Thomas Erskine as an advantage of free speech?

When men can freely communicate their thoughts and their sufferings, real or imaginary, their passions spend themselves in an air like gunpowder scattered upon the surface, but pent up by terrors, they work unseen, burst forth in a moment and destroy everything in their course.

Or is the function of a public hearing of the type held for highways "to provide the opportunity for effective participation in citizenship" by fostering a process of discussion which results in agreement of objectives? Professor Arthur Maass states as an element in his theory of the political process that one of the functions of democratic government is to emphasize the search for consensus or community values through discussion and debate: "A constitutional democratic system is based on man's capacity to debate and determine the standards by which he wishes to live in political community with others" (5).

Laski also emphasizes the same point in his essay on the limitations of the expert:

Every degree by which he (the citizen) is separated from consultation about decisions is a weakening of the governmental process. Neither goodwill in the expert nor efficiency in the performance of his function ever compensates in a state for failure to elicit the interest of the plain man in what is being done. For the nature of the result is largely unknown save as he reports his judgment upon it; and only as he reports that judgment can the expert determine in what direction his plans must move. Every failure in consultation, moreover, separates the mind of the governors from those who are governed; this is the most fertile source of misunderstanding in the state. (3)

The North Ridge public hearings on the north-south highway, although they gave opportunities for men to express "their thoughts and their sufferings, real or imaginary," certainly were a far cry from the type of public forum that would encourage a "search for consensus or community values." Those who attended the hearing had little interest in or patience for facts or views; they were afraid that the highway would seriously hurt them in some way and were there to express their protests and to defeat the proposal.

In reviewing reports by observers at the hearing, there is no indication that any disinterested parties were present to speak concerning the effect of the various routings on long-range community goals. Moreover, the hearing failed to attract any individuals or groups who stood to benefit from the transportation advantages of the route. The local automobile association, trucking companies, commuters, downtown Ridge City businessmen—these and many others had constructive roles to play in the discussion and yet none spoke at the hearing. This can only reflect their view that the hearing was

not a hearing in the sense of a constructive discussion, but rather a protest rally. In creating this impression and failing to attract those with positive views, the hearing again fell short of its possible constructive value.

Whether it was possible for anyone to have an open mind on the question by that time, or to see the question in terms of broad community values and objectives, seems highly doubtful. Yet lacking this, the hearing was not constructive either for the highway department or for the community itself.

It seems likely that the hearing would have been more successful in focusing attention on the important values and objectives if it had been held much earlier in the planning stage when no specific location proposals had yet been formulated. Once the concrete physical proposals are made public, attention becomes immediately focused on the effect of the proposal on individual interests, at the exclusion of any concern for larger goals and objectives.

In the case of North Ridge, the State highway department would have found it easier to get approval for a specific route location through the town from town officials if in the early planning stages it had conducted discussions with them on the broad objectives to be achieved by the route. At that time most of the interested parties in the town may well have agreed to the need to solve the problem of north-south traffic congestion and to connect the two urban centers. It is not unreasonable to assume that a solution in the public interest of differences about a specific highway location would have been reached more easily if there had been earlier agreement about broad objectives.

### Highway Planning, Citizen Participation, and Democracy

Earlier discussions with local officials, the public release of full information bearing on the question phrased in plain language, and a public hearing designed to focus on questions of community values and broad objectives rather than on specific designs—all these working in concert would undoubtedly have raised the level of the debate over the north-south highway.

The value of this process goes even further than the resolution of particular questions of public concern, such as the location of major highways; the process itself brings dignity and responsibility to each citizen. It stresses the citizen's responsibility to search for community values and long-range objectives and to make community decisions at this level. It takes away emphasis from the attitude that often prevails that sees the resolution of conflict on the basis of competing private interests and pressure politics. In this way the procedure leads not only to more constructive community decisions but also to a strengthening of the democratic process.

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# Organization Planning and Management

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Highway organization planning and development and its purposes and accomplishment are discussed. Some principles to be observed and the conditions conducive to success are outlined and existing efforts are examined critically. Additionally, the paper deals with some of the management tools available for the direction and control of an organization. Also covered are the indicated needs in view of today's unprecedented expansion and ambitious planning, and in the interest of imaginative experimentation and new ways of doing things.

•THERE IS no need here to repeat the cliches about the scope of the highway program. But it is evident by now that it is severely testing the skill, imagination, and initiative of highway administrators and straining the capabilities and resources of their organizations. No serious thinking administrator could possibly conclude that the job can be done by blindly following and adhering to the settled concepts, techniques, and procedures of the past. In fact, reliance on so-called "time-tested principles and procedures" may have been somewhat of a pitfall.

The early and constant emphasis on the engineering and technical aspects of the highway production problem has tended to obscure the tremendously large and complex administrative and management implications of the program. Advance planning, sound organization and competent personnel, re-examination and adjustment of the administrative system to provide for scheduling and checking on performance, and the addition of more safeguards and controls are all parts of the job of planning and organizing to handle the increased responsibility involved.

Early and frequent exhortations by leading administrators, U. S. Bureau of Public Roads, AASHO, Congressional spokesmen, and others of the urgent need for examining organization, administrative methods, and procedures apparently got only scattered response and action by highway departments. In August 1962, the Federal Highway Administrator felt the need for again admonishing all State highway administrators to "consider organizational, administrative, procedural, and control changes, whenever it appears that they will be effective" as part of "a continuing effort to improve the efficiency, competence, and integrity of the highway program." All together these warnings may be taken as an indication that deficiencies were existent or incipient.

Many State highway officials have been trying to handle the greatest administrative challenge in highway history with a patched up and inadequately designed organization which very likely was inherited. Moreover, any ideas they may have had for modernizing and adjusting the organization plan perhaps had to be deferred in the face of the overwhelming need for getting the program under way or was abandoned because of apparent opposition to any change or because of the inconvenience or disruption presumed to result therefrom.

It is axiomatic that for an administrator to be successful he must have at his command an organization properly designed to accomplish the mission or purpose of the department as well as for top performance and effectiveness. Today's organization must also provide specialized services and skills and yet permit the administrator to exercise more effective control over the organization. Poor organization makes ad-



ministration more difficult. Highway departments would do well to follow the pattern in the business world of modernizing their organization to eliminate this unnecessary handicap to administration. Unless a department has undergone a recent overhauling to bring it up to requirements, it is probably time to consider reorganization seriously even though it may be somewhat disconcerting during a peak period of activity. However, the ultimate benefit in terms of output and performance will far outweigh the temporary disadvantages, slight disruptions, and inconvenience that a well-managed effort may cause.

### REASONS FOR REORGANIZATION

Among the more impelling reasons for modernization or reorganization of a department are the following:

1. Organization is often deeply seated in tradition and past practice.
2. It is often a reflection of strong personalities and accommodation to temperamental problems.
3. In most cases organization represents a concession to previous personnel capabilities and limitations, and particularly to then existing available executive and management talent.
4. It may have been unduly affected by legal provisions which have not permitted development along logical and functional lines. Many States have statutory provisions that may handicap the design of the best form and arrangement.
5. In many cases organization structure has been copied from other States in the hope that because it has worked successfully elsewhere, it will likewise work in the State adopting the plan. There is a strong tendency to transplant patterns of organization which are common in highways, but in many cases patterns have been transplanted that are actually going out of date.
6. Organization planning and design frequently reflects amateurish and superficial efforts based on a study of other department organization charts rather than on real study and analysis of the needs of a department.
7. Purposes, functions, and objectives have changed materially over the years and organization changes have been made accordingly in a piecemeal manner, thus resulting in sprawling and uncoordinated organization.
8. Although objectives and purposes have multiplied, emphasis has shifted, and technology has been revolutionized, corresponding organization adjustments and arrangements have not been made. Tremendous technological change and advancement have occurred, but the basic organization and administrative systems are lagging. Highway departments are now in the big business class; outmoded, inadequate, and small business management and organization will not meet requirements.
9. There is a tendency to regard an organization plan as a more or less permanent fixture rather than the flexible arrangement it should be. Thus, organization has tended to remain static or subject to periodic grafts to the parent body which have caused incongruous and disproportionate offshoots.
10. Although this is not really a reason for reorganization, it should be noted that the belated interest and concern of highway officials and the lack of research has hampered progress, initiative, and experimentation in organization and management.

In the past the causes and occasions for reorganization of highway departments have been varied. In some cases changes in State government administration following the election of a governor who may have campaigned on a platform of highway reform have provided the impetus for reorganization of highway departments. An unfavorable or critical attitude toward the highway department and its administration and dissatisfaction with progress in the execution of improvements and programs have been factors in other States. Demands of the Legislatures for reforms in highway administration and the recommendations of interim highway study groups have also been instrumental in bringing about reorganizations. General government reform movements such as the "Little Hoover Commission" studies have recommended highway department reorganization as part of the general reorganization of State government. Politics has

also been a factor. In the past, and still to some extent today, every election results in changes in State highway administration and organization which, in effect, are reorganizations with new management and operating personnel.

Dissatisfaction on the part of administrators with the performance of their organizations has infrequently been the cause of modernization and reorganization of departments. Usually associated causes such as those mentioned previously have been the real determinants. In any case, such conditions as lack of coordination, evidence of buck-passing, abnormal delays and slow response in handling matters, difficulties of communication, and general inability to manage or control their organizations are the items most often given as evidence of the need for reorganization.

### ORGANIZATION PLANNING

Organization planning is perhaps the most important tool for the direction, control, and management of a highway department, or, for that matter, any other enterprise. Simply stated, it is the process of arranging in a formal manner the personnel of an organization into logical, related, and manageable units or groups of people or skills in a way that these groups can work together effectively in accomplishing the purposes of the organization. A corollary requirement to make such arrangements work, however, is the assignment of commensurate responsibility and authority needed for the accomplishment of their obligations. This is, of course, an oversimplification of the problem which can be complex and difficult, particularly in the public service where seniority, civil service, employee and clientele groups, politics, administrative approval and review, among other considerations, may enter the picture.

The purpose of organization planning and design is to make it easier to manage as well as to foster cooperation, coordination, and the necessary interaction between people and organization units, and organization functions. In fact, effective organization planning should tend to force such interaction and make it automatic. In general, a plan should never be adopted unless it offers improved prospects for easier and more harmonious working relationships between people within an organization unit as well as with other units. If that is reasonably well achieved, the organization plan should lead to better and easier management on the part of all concerned. In examining a number of plans it has seemed that often the opposite effect was accomplished. So rigidly and so definitely were the functional and activity areas delineated that they appeared to constitute walls or fences between functions and units of the department. Such results usually come from plans contrived from the assorted ideas of the heads of the several units of the department. When each unit head is permitted to design the organization of his unit, the composite result is more likely to be a confection than a design. It is, therefore, necessary that any efforts toward organization planning are made with proper preparation and timeliness because the conditions existing at the time are important factors to success.

### REQUISITE CONDITIONS

Certain conditions and a proper atmosphere are prerequisite for the successful accomplishment of organization planning. First of all, the administrator or administrative body must be thoroughly convinced of the need for organization reform. Unless he believes in the necessity for it, can outline the objectives for it, and can convince or persuade the top level staff of the need for it, the effort is either likely to miscarry or meet with indifference, cool reception, noncooperation, or sabotage. There is always resistance to change, especially because prerogatives, responsibilities, and prestige are involved; unless the chief executive can overcome opposition and sell each of the principals on the general objectives and the benefits which will accrue to each and the organization as a whole, the effort will start with a serious handicap. Moreover, without top support it is safe to predict that the plan will fail or fall short of expectations. Ultimately, the executive will have to enforce the necessary changes and they will be easier to effect if top-level support has been obtained previously. It should also be noted that considerable follow-up will be involved which requires their support and cooperation. So before attempting any reorganization it is necessary to

prepare a groundwork of understanding and sympathetic support of the principal unit heads, or at least the opposition to the idea of organization change should be minimized.

Support of the administrative or policy body is assumed. It is advisable to have at least tacit support of the Governor, the State personnel body and others who may be even remotely concerned. Public announcement of the intention to reorganize the department is generally advisable. Many, to their regret, have experienced the pressures, complaints, and general dissatisfaction which arise when a proposal for reorganization has not had proper advance preparation for understanding and acceptance.

Organization planning and design is a complex matter which should be directed and managed by someone familiar with organization techniques and procedures. Also, the individual directing the study must have full authority and strong support of the administrator. He will thus be in a better position for getting the cooperation of the key personnel. It is very desirable that the administrator and the organization planner become as familiar as possible with the technical phases and the several steps involved, as well as with the progress of the plan. There must be follow-through, and continuous direction and implementation must be provided, if organization planning is to be successfully accomplished. No plan is self-executing.

Most highway departments do not have specialized skills in organization and management although such services are badly needed. In view of the current concern with these matters, the creation of a unit in the department to deal with the growing problems in this area would be advantageous. Suggested duties and responsibilities are outlined in Appendix A.

The use of a committee for the direction or accomplishment of organization is not recommended. Such committees, usually composed of top personnel, are not necessarily selected because of their interest or competence in the field. They have strong feelings and ideas about organization and how it should be managed and arranged, although their notions may not be too well supported by fact or logic. Because most top men are strong personalities, it is not difficult to conclude that the product of such a group could at best be a compromise of conflicting ideas and opinions—not a logical design. A committee may be useful, however, in reviewing proposals and in getting organization understanding and acceptance of proposed changes.

If a department does not have available a person skilled in organization matters but wishes to undertake organization reform, it would be best to seek outside counsel and advice on the study and assistance with the planning and installation of the plan.

#### ANALYSIS AND PLANNING PROCEDURE

Because we are dealing with a whole, whether it may be the entire organization or a major part thereof, it is advisable to start at the top by defining the objectives and purposes of the department or organization unit. It may seem academic or perhaps unnecessary to mention this simple rule, but often there may be more involved than meets the eye. Departments derive their authority and responsibilities from statutory provisions, legislative resolution, executive direction, administrative definition, custom, etc. Each State has different provisions and uses its own peculiar language in defining them. In some States more general language is used, whereas in others it is more detailed and specifically defines the purposes. Moreover, State enabling legislation is periodically revised, added to, and otherwise supplemented over the years with additional responsibilities, or modifications to meet changing needs. In short, the mission or objectives of a department are continually changing, and under the circumstances they may become unclear, uncertain, or obscured. Therefore, in organization planning it is important that statutory provisions and intent, resolutions and actions of the Commission, policy, tradition, and such items be examined as a basis for setting forth clearly and definitely the apparent objectives of the department.

Having determined the objectives and purposes of the organization, one can proceed with more assurance with the design of the organization into major functions or divisions and specification of the objectives and requisite activities. This and the previous step constitute the basic framework from which the organization structure is designed and separated into manageable units of logically grouped activities. At this point a



functional organization can be prepared summarizing the various grouping of activities and providing the general guidelines for structuring the organization.

Following the functional determination, the organization planner or analyst can consider the positions heading the major functions. It is advisable to learn as much as possible about the operation and functioning of the present organization as a basis for reshaping it into the proposed components and subdivision of the functions. In analyzing the principal positions, a questionnaire is usually used to elicit needed information. The kind of information required for proper analysis and rearrangement of functions, responsibilities, and relationships can be seen from an examination of the inquiries in Appendix B.

Advance preparation for the circulation and explanation of the questionnaire is necessary so that its purpose is clearly understood and to assure the cooperation of the principals concerned. Although it is desirable that the head of each unit participate in the process, each subordinate should supply the information on the substantive matters involved without consultation with his superior. Each should present his own independent answers to the inquiries inasmuch as the concern here is in determining how things are in reality and not as someone presumes them to be, or as some memorandum or directive indicates they should be. Generally, it is wise to follow up the questionnaire with a personal interview to clarify, verify, and obtain additional information on important points disclosed, as well as to check areas of seeming conflict, duplication, and overlapping. Moreover, the analyst, with the aid of the questionnaire, is in a good position to pursue leads of significance and get information from a person orally that he may have hesitated to provide in writing.

In any event, the analyst can now assemble the returns by the several levels of management and principal components and examine them critically for such things as duplicated, overlapping, neglected, and unnecessary activities. Other deficiencies such as conflicting authority, too many subordinates or bosses and similar items undoubtedly will appear. Equipped with this knowledge, the analyst can begin the preparation of revised statements of activities to fulfill the stated objectives of each major organizational component and the grouping or separation of such activities into manageable units as a basis for completing the structural organization chart. The standard criteria for combining similar and related activities, separating activities whenever required for internal check and control, relationships, number of levels, lines of communication, etc., will apply in making these determinations.

Organizational planning should be approached with an open mind with respect to the ultimate functional division and structural arrangement. Advance commitment to a particular rearrangement to accomplish some definite but limited purpose, or any accommodation to a peculiar condition or situation may be detrimental. Such changes, usually superficial and inadequate, merely compound the difficulties and provoke dissatisfaction; they usually result in confusion about authority and responsibilities.

The long-term consequences of any moves should be carefully considered because unwise and expedient adjustments have a way of haunting the scene and plaguing the administrator. In general, the best approach is to think in terms of the ultimate as well as the immediate goals so that when the opportunity and conditions for making changes are favorable, they can be made promptly and with the least disruption. Any plan should take into account eventual expansion and growth, and it should have flexibility for accommodating to the needs without a complete overhaul of the plan.

### ORGANIZATION PRINCIPLES

In the planning and design of an organization one must constantly keep in mind the basic well-known organization principles which can be found in any textbook on administration. The items in such lists may vary somewhat, but in the main they are about as stated by Trickett (1), with some modification by the author as follows:

1. The organization should be built around the main functions, and not around an individual or group of individuals.
2. Functions should be arranged to promote balance in the organization, avoiding duplicated and overlapping functions, neglect of essential and overemphasis of non-essential activities.

3. Executive responsibilities and authority should be clearly defined so that the proper point of decision can be quickly determined.

4. Responsibilities should have commensurate authority specifically set forth, including the limits thereof.

5. Authority should be explicitly delegated and fixed close to the point where action occurs; thus, coordination and decision-making can take place at the lowest level possible.

6. The form of the organization should be such to permit each executive to exercise maximum initiative within the limits of his delegated authority.

7. Whenever possible, line functions should be separated from staff functions and adequate provision made for important staff activities.

8. The organization should be flexible and easily adjustable to changing external and internal conditions; the possibility of expansion and contraction should be inherent in the plan.

9. Each executive should have a minimum number of major subordinates reporting directly to him; most authorities suggest that this "span of control" should be limited to five to seven subordinates.

10. Each member of the organization should know to whom he reports and who reports to him. Many readers will probably think this principle so self-evident that it should not be stated here, yet it is one of the most frequently violated principles.

11. The number of levels of authority should be kept at a minimum; the greater the number of management levels, the longer is the "chain of command" with consequent increased time for instructions and information to travel up and down within the organization.

12. The organization should be kept as simple as possible. Again, this is one of the frequently violated principles.

This list may not be all-inclusive, and the reader may recall others that merit consideration, but it does include the principal ones.

A few pertinent observations may be in order here. In the preceding list, delegation of authority is mentioned or implied in several of the stated principles. It is futile to outline any organization plan unless delegation of authority as proposed is accomplished. Delegation of authority is considered the essence of management. It is the basic process by which an organization is built. In the process, a superior assigns his subordinate part of his responsibility as well as commensurate authority for performance. Unless authority also is delegated, there is, in fact, no delegation at all (2).

A frequent failure of management is that many superiors do not delegate enough authority and tend to hold on to their entire assignment. They simply cannot let go of work and authority, or be convinced that anyone else will do work right or as well as they can do it. But whatever the causes, failures in delegation of authority are at the base of much organization deficiency and malfunctioning.

A common misconception is that delegation of authority removes responsibility for performance from the delegating person or superior. On the contrary, the accountability for performance cannot be shifted. Under no condition should it be possible to delegate or relinquish a superior's overall responsibility for results or any portion of his accountability. Failure to understand and follow this principle is one of the more serious organizational shortcomings. If more attention were given to assuring real accountability in an organization plan, performance would be greatly improved; therefore, the plan and its management should be devised to make accountability for performance a salient feature.

This observer would like to add his emphatic support of the last principle listed. There is a marked tendency to overorganize both vertically and horizontally so that a cumbersome, sprawling, and difficult to manage organization results. However, when attempts are made to correct such situations the organization units are often recombined under too few functional divisions. Although a complex organization may be needed, it need not be of intricate design or structure, nor should it be cluttered with subdivisions merely for the sake of symmetry in design.

In designing an organization, the first concern should be with logical grouping of



functions in accordance with principles and objectives. With that as a beginning any subsequent accommodations and compromises with principles as may be dictated by the realities of specific conditions, situations, and personnel can be made more easily and with the least amount of wrenching of the plan. The reorganization device is a very convenient and useful method of handling or bypassing organization or administrative obstacles and particularly personnel in key positions who may be bottlenecks or otherwise deficient, and the designer should not pass up the opportunity for bringing about the needed changes.

### TYPES OF ORGANIZATION

The organization planner should be familiar with the several types of organization which have been used and developed in highway administration. Although opinion may differ on the subject, in general, four distinct types are identifiable: line, functional, line and staff, and a more recent development, a hybrid staff and line form (3). The line type is the simplest and perhaps the best understood. In this type, as the name implies, there is only one direct line of authority running from the top position to the operating units of the organization. Such an arrangement was common when highway departments were small and the activities relatively simple. This type apparently has outlived its usefulness, although vestiges still persist in some highway organizations.

In the functional type there usually is a group of specialists in top positions under the chief administrator. This type emerged in response to a need for specialized knowledge and skills as the technology developed, as for example, in construction and design. Under this scheme each position or member comprising this group exercised direct control over the operating units (districts or field activity) but only on matters within his specialty. Whereas this arrangement did permit direct supervision and control by specialists and other advantages such as education and training of field forces in the process, it introduced troublesome problems of coordination and management, and encouraged more or less autonomous internal empires. Perhaps the chief fault of this kind of organization is that an operating unit, such as a district, had as many superiors to whom it was accountable as there were specialists in the top group. This condition conflicted with the principle that no one should be accountable to more than one boss.

The line and staff type of organization made its appearance in more recent years in highway administration and was adapted from business experience, particularly in larger corporations. When highway activities got more complex and extensive, department heads could not be expected to be competent in all technical and specialized matters, and it was necessary that they be supplied with a staff of experts in the various phases or functions to furnish the necessary advice and guidance. In theory, such staff were to study, report, and advise the administrator directly who in turn would issue the orders and instructions downward through the direct line of control and supervise their execution by the operating units. Line units were the principle executing and operating components of the organization.

As the enterprise became even larger and more complex, it soon became apparent that the line and staff type needed further modification to provide the administrator with the specialized skills and assistance he needed to manage and control his organization effectively. An altered form emerged in which the staff and line groups have about the same relative position in the organization, except that the staff units which were originally advisory were now invested with administrative duties. Because of the need for his attention to outside affairs and the impracticability of direct issuance of all orders, instructions, and personal supervision of compliance with them, it was necessary for the administrator to delegate such authority to staff units to act in matters within their province.

Under this plan the staff units exercise functional guidance over the operating units on matters within their provinces. Policies and procedures are recommended to the administrator and, if approved, the staff man furnishes the operating units with technical and specialized advice and assistance in the application of the policy and procedures. Operating heads are still fully responsible for execution; they are not subject

to the orders, control, or supervision of staff men. Although under guidance of staff men, they remain accountable only to the administrator. This arrangement assures that the operating head has only one person to whom he reports. To the reader this method may seem theoretical and somewhat contradictory, but it is not difficult to accomplish in practice.

This type of modified line and staff organization has many advantages over the pure form, particularly in that it is well adapted to provide the kind of staff help the administrator needs to manage and control his organization. It also permits help and guidance of a specialized kind to operating personnel more or less directly without destroying the line of authority, or violating the principle that each person have only one superior to whom he is accountable. This type of organization was adopted by Wisconsin a number of years ago and has operated successfully (4). It is especially adaptable to a decentralized system of administration.

### MANAGEMENT GUIDES

In highway organizations examined over the years, we have found no clear-cut and complete statements to guide the operations and activities of the principal components and their heads. Assignments usually were vague and indefinite and did not set forth adequately the function; authority and responsibilities merely rested on tradition, past practice, or a verbal statement. Under such conditions only confusion, uncertainty, duplication, and poor performance can result.

In any new or revised organization plan it is always wise to reduce the management requirements to writing. For all top positions at the management level a guide should be prepared setting forth the functions, responsibilities, authority and relationships so that each member has a permanent source of clear understanding of his position, and instructions and guidance in the objectives and cooperative relationships for which he is responsible. Certainly, a man is better equipped and more able to do his job successfully and can more fully use his energies and capabilities if he has no worries about authority and responsibility and no confusion about the requirements of his position.

With such guides available for reference and study, men in top positions can gain a broader knowledge and better understanding of their place in the organization. By referring to the established guides, conflicts between individuals can be readily resolved, and thus it is possible to handle disputes over authority and responsibilities promptly. Such guides have many other valuable uses, e.g., in training an understudy or a replacement.

To an executive or administrator, a management guide will be useful in maintaining control over his organization and the personnel complements. It will facilitate study of organization problems because the source and cause of failure can be more easily located and the necessary adjustments can be made properly. Not only do management guides tend to make organization more uniform and understandable, but they make changes easier to effect. Finally, they are one of the best means of achieving and maintaining a sound plan of organization.

In the business world, and particularly in large corporations, it is common practice to commit organization plans to writing for all to see and work by. A guide of this kind which is worthy of study is that developed as an organization and administrative aid by the Standard Oil Company of California (5). A sample guide modeled after their form and adapted to a top position in a State highway department is included as Appendix B. The sample may be somewhat outdated, but it will give the reader a good idea of what a position guide should be and also the principal features thereof.

### MANAGEMENT CONTROL

The administrator or executive who does not understand management control will have difficulty in achieving efficient and effective management of his organization. Frequently control is confused with certain devices of management, namely, objectives, plans, policies, organization charts, procedures and similar items. Although they are



principal parts of an administrative system and important factors in any control system, these items are not controls or even a means for control of an organization.

In general, objectives define what an organization is trying to do or accomplish. Plans and programs are related to objectives in that they propose how the objectives will be reached, set up a time schedule for reaching them, and provide positive direction for doing so. Policy may be defined as a statement of an organization's intention to perform in a certain way under specified circumstances. It reflects a general decision expressed as a guiding principle to assist executing officials in discharging responsibilities consistently and equitably. An organization chart is merely a first step in giving and defining an assignment and establishing accountability to a superior. Again, these elements may be indispensable to efficient management, but they are not controls.

Control is really checking and determining whether suitable progress is being made toward objectives and whether plans and schedules are being observed. It is also checking to see whether an assignment is being carried out as intended. Adherence to policies should not and cannot be taken for granted—it must be verified. Control then should depend on information with respect to these and similar items reaching the administrator regularly and in useful form so that, if necessary, he may act quickly and properly to bring about needed adjustments and correct deviations from the planned course. Without verification of the situation there is no basis for control or perhaps no control (6). Control of the kind suggested here is still in its infancy in the highway field. Some efforts along these lines are being made with the use of the computer and automated data processing, but these tools have not been fully developed to benefit management in terms of constant improvement in the quality, quantity, and cost of the product and services to the public.

In industry, electronic technology has evolved information handling tools that will, according to Dr. Elmer W. Engstrom, President of the Radio Corporation of America, alter the historic processes of business management. He believes "their growing use will multiply the effective control of top management over all aspects of the business, and will alter, or may even reverse, the trend toward decentralization." He foresees "with the wider application of the new technology, fundamental changes in the structure of large business enterprises together with greater control over several organizations."

Dr. Engstrom further stated, "The new electronic information handling systems now offer practical means for unified planning, control, and paperwork processing to a degree which has never before been attainable, even for the most diverse and far-flung business" and that "few opportunities before us equal in their potential significance the new technology of electronic aids to management."

## MANAGEMENT AUDITS

Once an organization plan has been devised and put into operation, there is usually little or nothing done to check on how well it is meeting expectations, its performance, acceptance, and the compliance with the new system. Generally, it is presumed that with the issuance of the order putting the new plan into effect, the accompanying policy and procedure statements will automatically insure that it is being uniformly understood and interpreted, and that all will soon adjust and perform reasonably well in accordance therewith. As logical as this assumption may be, however, it is nevertheless unfounded because it relies essentially on custom and trust in the integrity and responsiveness of employees to whom responsibilities have been subdelegated. In less complex situations such confidence may be sufficient, but modern highway administration demands more than traditional assumptions; it needs verification that things are really as they seem. The administrator needs the assurance that only a management audit can provide.

Periodic checks should be made of organization performance through the use of reports, performance schedules, comparisons, and audits of operations. These are some of the methods used to assure accountability for performance which, in the author's opinion, is the most neglected part of management. If a real effort were made to hold persons accountable for their delegated responsibilities and performance, there would be fewer failures to meet deadlines and production schedules. Highway

administrators have and do use reports, administrative review, field visit, and consultation to some extent to check on their organization and its performance, but these efforts usually are only occasional, inadequate, and lack follow-through. It would seem that at the present state of organization and administration maturity, the development of a systematized method of checking performance as a basis for timely corrective action by the administrator would be beneficial.

Because the administrator cannot delegate or relinquish his responsibility for results, or any portion of his accountability, he must be sure of his management. He needs more than the customary paper support and an occasional visit and consultation to be certain that things are being done properly, effectively, and consistently in accord with established policy and procedure. Administrators may feel a lack of knowledge or even authority to make management audits, or be reluctant to check up on the performance of skilled, experienced, and trusted managers, but they can hardly divorce themselves from the responsibility of determining if the ends are being achieved.

Management audits should be done by a division or organization unit not concerned with the operations and activities to assure neutral review and appraisal. Responsibility for the audits should not be placed with the internal auditors of the finance or accounting division. The organization and management unit proposed earlier would seem well suited to performing audits, but if the administrator is uncertain about the capabilities and skill of such staff to do an audit properly and objectively, it would be to his advantage to rely on outside services. In any event, each field office and major division should be periodically subject to a management audit on a complete, partial, or sampling basis without advance warning, and in accordance with prescribed criteria and procedures to ascertain the quality, adequacy, and consonance of operations with policy and procedure.

The results of management audits would, of course, be useful to the administrator in the management and control of his organization, but the benefits go beyond assurance of adequate operation and performance. They would likely disclose situations where skillful operation and management were superb, or where superior performance is producing results better than anticipated. Thus, attention could be directed to such cases as a means for encouraging similar performance in other parts of the organization or in other activities. The audits would also show where, for example, additional men or skills may be needed to insure adequate supervision and inspection. From results of such examination of current practice, suitable standards could emerge for making present methods more productive.

## STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

Organization and management standards and criteria for State highway departments are not specifically spelled out in law or regulations. For example, Federal regulations merely require that as a condition for receiving funds, a State must have an adequate organization, which requirement, but itself and without further definition, is not a very useful criterion. Such a general provision was satisfactory when Federal-State cooperative road building was in its infancy, but after a half century of experience it should be possible to define better and more specifically the organization and management requirements for achieving the intent and purposes of uniformity and performance of the Federal-aid Act.

New standards appear to be called for which can be set forth as a guide and yardstick of organizational and managerial adequacy and competence. The absence of such standards unquestionably has hampered progress in the organization and management area because the States have not had the benefit of accepted standards for determining how they stood relatively, wherein they may be deficient, and where and how improvements could be made to bring their organizations and performance up to accepted standards.

In general, such criteria would include measures of management, administration, objectives, organization, control, personnel, resources, reputation, and performance. This list is not exclusive and other similar factors could be included, but the list of items is at least indicative of the kind of things that should make up the criteria. It



would appear that something of this kind is contemplated under the cooperative research project on highway management and performance mentioned later in this paper.

It should be noted that the good results and performance of the past were not assured simply by making money available under Federal legislation. Rather, it was the imposition and encouragement of certain standards of achievement which led to steadily improved performance on the part of the States. Eventually some more specific and objective criteria related to performance will have to be developed which will have to be met by the States as a condition for eligibility for funds.

### MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

When a reorganization plan is adopted and put into effect, often the general attitude is that the purpose has been accomplished and the administrator and top personnel can now direct their attention to other pressing matters. In such an environment and without the necessary follow-through, the many advantages of the reorganization are likely to be lost. No plan is self-executing; it still needs a complement of skilled and competent personnel, especially at the management level, and continued leadership and control of the administrator to make it function properly. Perhaps the most important job facing management is that of providing for, if not insuring, its succession by striving for the sound development of top-level personnel who are ready, capable, and have the necessary qualifications of leadership to take over new and vacated positions as required. In no other way can the highway service be assured of uninterrupted top performance. One observer summed up the situation thusly: "as everyone knows, there is unquestionably a serious shortage of engineering and technical manpower, but the real deficiency is in the management and executive talents" (7).

The organization survey will have disclosed important information with respect to existing and potential management skills. Accordingly, the administrator should make preparations for the development of an adequate supply of managerial talent with the skill, acumen, self-confidence, education and training which the lofty levels of tomorrow obviously require. Under any good plan of organization a so-called management group or class should be set up roughly restricted to the three top levels of the organization. This group should constitute the select personnel from which future executives and managers must come and, therefore, great care should be exercised in picking the entrants into this class. Eligibles must have supervisory potential, suitable personality traits and attitudes, and in other ways measure up to the qualifying standards.

Highway departments are probably aware of the shortcomings of their management development efforts. Even though a passable job is being done in providing practice in the art of management, it is evident to them that practice without some background and knowledge of management theory leaves something to be desired. Because department management personnel must necessarily come from the engineering class and few have had any formal education in personnel, organization, administration, public relations and related subjects, there appears to be no alternative but to make up this deficiency by supplementing the engineers' practical and technical training with at least a minimum of education and training in organization and management principles and theory.

The AASHO-NHUC management conferences have pioneered in this field by providing an introduction to management training; much credit is due this endeavor for stimulating interest and promoting activity in this area. Under consideration and in the planning and implementation stages is a much more comprehensive executive training course sponsored by AASHO, the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads, and the Automotive Safety Foundation, which should fill a big need and provide a way for highway departments to give executive and management training to top personnel. Both of these efforts deserve the support and participation of the departments. Furthermore, the States' efforts should be designed to complement and supplement these programs.

### NEED FOR RESEARCH

A great deal more research in organization and management needs to be encouraged and accomplished. Research has been infrequent as indicated by the minimal literature

of the Highway Research Board in this area in comparison with reported research in traffic, construction, materials, and related engineering fields. In the past few years, however, notable interest and support have developed in management research and considerable progress has been made. The Highway Research Review (8) reports a continuing study in highway management, practices, and performance sponsored by State highway departments, U. S. Bureau of Public Roads, local highway departments, and the Highway Research Board:

The objectives of this project are to improve administrative efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness of highway operations at all levels of government by making surveys and studies, both general and specific of (1) measurement and evaluation of organization structure and management productivity for use in developing principles and criteria for sound organization and management practices, (2) development of criteria to measure the effectiveness of such management functions as organizing, planning, directing, and staffing, and (3) the study of specific highway agency functions to improve management performance.

This project was started in 1958 and is continuing.

Another significant research undertaking (8) is a county highway administrative study started in 1956 and sponsored by the Automotive Safety Foundation, National Association of County Officials, and the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads. Its purpose is as follows:

To investigate means to improve county highway administration, to study the principles of effective county organization and operation, to produce a management guide and manual of functions and procedures, and to establish within the National Association of County Engineers in the form of a Central Project Development Committee with an Advisory Council and appropriate committees to continue study and improvement in this field.

Through this mechanism and formula many manuals have been completed and are available for reference and guidance (9). This project and its products have been and will continue to be an extremely valuable contribution to the advancement of county road management.

Early in 1963, the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads also disclosed a plan for major research study on highway department management which has as its purpose assisting the States in improving their administration and management. The use of 1½ percent money is now permitted, and this should be a powerful stimulant to such research activities.

The research record is not impressive, and much more needs to be done. Robert F. Baker has succinctly stated the need for and the possible benefits of management research as follows:

There are many opportunities to improve highway administrative procedures and organization, with the twin objectives of cost savings and more efficient management of highway operations. ... Nationwide, the State highway departments are spending at the rate of \$235 million a year (excluding preliminary engineering) on administration alone, and fuller application of modern management should yield substantial savings. The value of greater efficiency and demonstrable savings might be expected to equal 10% of administrative costs, an annual savings of nearly \$25 million. (10)

## CONCLUSION

Some of the problems, conditions, needs, and principles involved in organization planning and management have been presented here. A method of achieving a sound plan has been outlined; some suggestions and guides for controlling an organization and ways of determining its effectiveness have been offered. Organizational and operat-



ing efficiency should not be the sole purpose of an organization plan. It should be emphasized that efficiency usually has to do with means; effectiveness is concerned with ends. Because an organization achieves smoothness of operation does not necessarily mean that it is effectively carrying out the aims and purposes. Confusion and misunderstanding about the difference is at the base of some of the present highway management difficulties.

The immediate and long-term consequences of adopting an organization plan must be carefully considered. Likewise, a plan should take into account eventual expansion and growth possibilities and have the flexibility to accommodate these needs easily. It is not enough to shift activities and persons and offices. Any changes should be accompanied by a clear-cut realignment of functions and activities and reassignment of responsibility and commensurate authority so that there can be no misunderstanding or confusion about the changes and their intent.

Sound organizational planning offers great possibilities for fostering a career service with better than average advancement opportunities. It must, however, be geared to progressive personnel and promotional policies to fit the improved advancement opportunities that a good plan will provide. A good plan will also be useful in management training and development. These are important factors in attracting and holding competent personnel.

In view of today's unprecedented expansion and ambitious planning and in the interest of imaginative experimentation and new ways of doing things, research, management development, and criteria of organization and management adequacy and competence loom as the most needed items and probably as the most productive areas.

Great progress is evident in highway engineering techniques and processes, and rapid advances have been made with the aid of electronic devices, photogrammetry, data plotters, and similar automated systems. In the area of organization and management, however, advancement has been less impressive. Although there is a growing awareness of the need for improvement, at this time when the competence, integrity, and performance of highway management is being questioned and subjected to searching scrutiny, a great deal more effort needs to be applied in bringing about changes and reform through self-examination and initiative of the highway departments themselves.

On the other hand, the current interest and concern with administrative and organization matters is encouraging. Many more things are being committed to writing and the resultant policy statements, guides, manuals, procedures, etc., have advanced the cause of more effective management. Education and knowledge in management has increased, and there is a more general appreciation of management theory and practice and what they can do in terms of production and quality of services. A more reflective and analytical approach to organization and management problems appears to be developing and that is all to the good. Top management also seems to be spending more time in studying and reading serious management literature. The response to highway management conferences suggests the existence of an unsatisfied desire on the part of key personnel for knowledge, education, and training in the art of management.

In this decade highway departments have been called on to exceed the achievements of the past four decades in less than one-half the time. In the next 20 years we are likely to see even greater demand for highway services, and we will need able men to attain these goals and make the most of the years ahead. Highway departments now desperately need trained and trainable employees, and, moreover, the need will grow. Whereas a considerable number may be expected to come from the colleges, it is probable that the bulk of them are already in the ranks of the employees. They must, however, have help in finding their proper niche quickly in the increasingly complex enterprise. Highway departments must do everything that can reasonably be done in the way of education and training to advance their progress and development; in fact, it is the departments' responsibility to do so.

Management seminars and training courses should not only be continued but also expanded into more comprehensive courses designed for top management education and training and they should be more specifically oriented to highway administration and management problems. Such courses should be more intensive and of sufficient

duration to permit adequate coverage of the important areas with which top men are concerned and provide guidance in these areas. The problems of administration and management of the highway service are similar to those found in the field of business and general public administration, and the same principles may apply. However, there are enough dissimilarities, differences in philosophies and purposes, and public interest implications to warrant the development of a specific management philosophy based on new concepts and considerations which take into account important background changes and trends.

Research in organization and management is lagging badly in comparison with the efforts in other fields, and it needs stimulation and acceleration. Study and research in this area needs to be approached with an iconoclastic attitude, healthy skepticism, and irreverent scrutiny of practice and custom. A first and most useful product would be the development of criteria of organization and management adequacy and competence to provide the practitioner with yardsticks for measuring and evaluating his own organization, its management and performance. Such standards would also provide incentives for improvement, as well as proper guidance and encouragement for experimentation under the do-it-yourself kind of approach which has characterized highway management in the past. The eventual goal of research should be toward achieving organization and management based on study, fact and principle, and less on past practice and tradition.

Any department which has aspirations for top performance and distinction must set forth objectives, develop standards, provide for supervision and evaluation of its production and services, and provide for regular upgrading by keeping abreast of developments. It must also see to it that the equipment, management and engineering procedures, and the skilled personnel for making continual improvement are always available. Only the highway administrator can provide the initiative, incentives, and leadership required, and he will find sound organization planning a most useful tool in the direction, control, and management of a department seeking these goals.

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## *Appendix A*

### GUIDE FOR CHIEF OF ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION DIVISION\*

#### Function

As a staff member of management, the Chief of Organization and Management as head of the Organization and Management Section of the Administration Division is charged with advising the Director and furnishing functional guidance to the organizational components by advising and assisting in the development, maintenance, and improvement of plans of management, including organization structures and complements, functions, responsibilities, authorities, relationships, systems and procedures; by developing sound plans and practices for budget administration; and by controlling space utilization, building construction and remodeling contracts, and building leases.

#### Responsibility and Authority

Within the limits of Commission policies and control procedures, and the approved program and policies of the Division, the Chief of the Organization and Management Section is responsible for and has commensurate authority to accomplish the fulfillment of the duties set forth in the following. He may delegate to members of his Section appropriate portions of his responsibilities, together with proportionate authority for their fulfillment, but he may not delegate or relinquish his overall responsibility for results or any portion of his accountability.

#### Operations and Activities.

1. He will participate in developing a suitable organization plan, conduct studies to determine its adequacy, and assist in formulating, or receive and recommend for approval proposals for changes.
2. He will assist in the definition and clarification of functions, responsibilities, authority, and relationships of each new or altered management position, and will prepare or assist in preparing management guides incorporating these factors.
3. He will review the management guides periodically and will formulate, or receive and recommend for approval, proposals for changes in the guides to maintain them in a current state.
4. He will publish the official organizational charts for the Commission.
5. He will formulate or receive, edit, and recommend proposals for policies, and keep the policy file in a current state.
6. He will coordinate and assist in the development of policy and procedure manuals.
7. He will conduct studies of departmental operations, systems and procedures, and make appropriate recommendations for improvement.
8. He will administer the records management program of the Commission, develop standards and controls for forms, reports and publications, inspect files, and make recommendations relating to the retention and disposition of records.
9. He will review and coordinate all matters pertaining to space needs, utilization, and assignment, building construction and remodeling contracts, and building leases, and make recommendations thereon.
10. He will supervise the budget function of the Commission, including the coordination and preparation of the biennial budget for Commission review and approval, and will make recommendations regarding the application of budget controls.

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\*Source: Wisconsin State Highway Commission, revised June 11, 1963.

### Organization and Personnel of His Section.

1. He will recommend changes in the basic structure and complement of his Section.
2. He will recommend employees or outside personnel for positions within his approved basic organization.
3. He will recommend promotion, demotion, or release of personnel.
4. He will approve vacations, sick and personal leaves, except his own.
5. He will prepare the necessary job and position descriptions.

Finances of His Section.—He will advise and assist the Director in the preparation of the annual budget, will administer the funds allotted under the approved budget, or any other approved expenditure program, and will administer approved fiscal procedures.

### Relationships

The Chief of the Organization and Management Section will observe and conduct the following relationships. He may delegate portions of the conduct of such relationships to members of his Section, but may not delegate his overall responsibility or accountability for their proper conduct.

#### Director.

1. He is accountable to the Director for the fulfillment of his function, responsibilities and authority, and relationships, and for their proper interpretation.
2. He will relieve the Director of Administrative detail as outlined previously or as directed by the Director.

Other Staff Divisions and Districts.—As directed or requested, he will advise and assist the heads of Staff Divisions and District Engineers in the fulfillment of their functions on matters within his province, but in so doing he will not assume, nor will he be delegated any function, responsibility, authority or relationship belonging to any other member of management.

Government.—He will conduct such relationships with representatives of government as are necessary to the accomplishment of his function.

Public.—He will conduct such relationships with members of the public as are necessary to the accomplishment of his function, but in such cases he will act only as a representative of the Director.

## ***Appendix B***

### ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The analysis deals primarily with functions, responsibilities, authority, and relationships. A functional statement should be prepared indicating functions and responsibilities of the position. This statement should be confined to essentials and should be as brief as the required detail permits.

To insure reasonable uniformity and comparability the information should be organized in accordance with the outline below:

- A. Functions and responsibilities: (An itemized listing is preferable)
- B. Existing lines of authority: Indicate by name and title your immediate superior or superiors, and the subordinate who is in charge in your absence.
- C. Extent of authority:
  1. For major functions and responsibilities only, i.e., whether recommendatory, advisory, or final.
  2. Over appointment, promotion, demotion, etc., of employees.
  3. For expansion or contraction of activities.
  4. In relations with outsiders.
  5. For delegation of responsibility and authority.

## D. Relationships:

1. Principal contacts within the organization, both central office and field (indicate very briefly the extent of these working relationships and their nature, i.e., whether assigned, customary, or by choice).
2. Membership on departmental, coordinating, or similar committees or activities.
3. Principal contacts outside the organization (indicate with whom, frequency, nature).

## E. Subdivision of work and staff supervised:

1. Indicate major subdivisions of the unit.
2. Specify number of persons in each subdivision by class of employee, i.e., engineers, draftsmen, and clerks.

## F. Do you have adequate authority to permit handling of assigned activities? What additional assignments of responsibilities and authorities do you feel are needed? What specific suggestions do you have for improving operations of your unit internally, and with other affected units?



# Organization and Scope of Public Relations in State Highway Departments

DUANE L. CRONK

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State highway departments are responsible for the development of highway systems adequate for serving the public and private transportation needs of the people. The discharge of these duties requires a relationship with the public which will permit advance planning, create the financial support necessary for maintenance, administration and new construction, and support the organization in its engineering decisions. Consequently, a public relations program is a vital management function.

This study explores the maturity of public relations in State highway departments, including such facets as the historic acceptance of the public relations responsibility; the utilization of professional communications specialist; the professional and personal qualifications of public relations directors; salaries paid to PR directors; PR staffs, including size, expenditures, scope of activities, and continuity of efforts; and status of the PR director in the organization.

•THE MOST IMPORTANT term in this report is "public relations." Some highway administrators may be offended by the use of the term "public relations" for what they prefer to call "public information." Several years ago, the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) changed the name of its Committee on Public Relations and Publicity to Committee on Public Information. It was the sentiment of some members that public relations suggests too aggressive an activity for a public agency to engage in.

The investigator feels, on the contrary, that public relations is a more descriptive term for the programs conducted by the highway departments and that an exploration of the definition may produce closer agreement. He would, first of all, make the point that the practice of public relations, in spite of its detractors, is an honorable profession, and one which by and large enjoys a good reputation. (Having just come through a period of harsh criticism, highway administrations can understand how unjustly a whole profession can be maligned.)

In spite of the AASHO committee name change, papers on "public relations" are still given at AASHO meetings, highway leaders still call for enlightened "public relations" and many highway officials still label their own programs as "public relations" programs. So the term is still meaningful to many, if not most, highway officials. More important, however, is the fact that "public relations" more properly describes what state highway departments do than does "public information."

The most common definition of public relations, applied to a state highway department, would be those activities by which the department (a) provides for the expression of public opinion and adjusts its program in accordance with public requirements, and (b) interprets highway policies, accomplishments, and future needs to the public.

The fact is that state highway departments do provide this "two-way street." As public agencies they are obligated not only to provide public information, but to be governed by public demand. State highway departments do listen to the public; they do plan their programs with the public welfare in mind; they do adjust and modify their

original plans in response to public sentiments; they are governed by public opinion—directly through their own machinery and indirectly through the office of the governor and will of the legislature.

It is true that while in most state highway departments the flow of information out of the department is through the office of the public relations director, the flow of public opinion into the department is through many doors. In such cases there is no one public relations director. Public information director may be a more legitimate title. However, this study has sought to explore the broader public relations problems of the state highway departments.

The difference between public information and public relations is the difference between issuing news releases and holding public hearings. One seeks only to disseminate information so that people may be better informed. The other seeks to disseminate information and provides the machinery for the informed public to express its wishes. Any department which provides for a flow of information into as well as out of the organization is engaging in public relations. It is attempting to develop a constructive relationship with the public.

Another definition of public relations adds a third function to these two—the persuasion of the public to action or to a point of view. Some highway departments have adopted this philosophy. They believe that it is part of their job to build public support, not only through the dissemination of information, but also through promotion of a viewpoint (usually financial) which will advance the highway program. There is a fine line here, but a controversial one. One reflects an administrative responsibility; the other reflects a political responsibility. Probably all administrators feel that the public should be told what they will need in the way of future highways, for example, and what the cost will be. The politician feels that as a leader, he should develop a specific solution to such a political problem (and highway system development is a political problem, in the best sense of the word) and persuade the public to accept it.

In some highway departments, administrative and political responsibilities are closely allied. It is understandable that in an organization where top management has political responsibilities—namely, the promotion of certain specific solutions to the highway problem—its public relations program would be persuasive as well as informative. And the communication avenues utilized mainly by the "more administrative" department for informing the public would be utilized by the "more political" department for persuading the public. Perhaps, because they are in disagreement with this more aggressive concept of public relations calling for promotional activities, some highway officials prefer the term "public information." The fact remains that even the most conservative apparently feel a responsibility that meets both of the conditions of the common definition of public relations, i. e., not only to talk to people but also to respond to them. As public servants, highway administrators would be the last to limit their responsibilities to anything less.

#### ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

The great bulk of highway mileage in the United States falls under the jurisdiction of the 50 state highway departments. In any given state, the motoring and taxpaying public looks to the State highway department for the maintenance and improvement of its roads and streets. Highway administrators have historically accepted this prime responsibility without question. They have evaluated their highway needs and developed long-range plans to correct inadequacies. To what extent have highway departments accepted a correlated responsibility to account to the public for their activities?

For many years, highway engineers felt that their work should speak for itself and that publicity was a superfluous, even a suspicious, activity. The post-war period brought new emphasis to the need to establish relationships with the general public, to be concerned about "public relations." A great deal more money was needed than ever before to rebuild state highway networks, reorganizations were obviously in order, and a flood of new motorists was building up as the result of increases in population and automobile ownership and the growth of the trucking industry.

Before 1952, few state highway departments had the professional skill or the inclina-

tion, apparently, to conduct a public relations program. D. C. Bray, chairman of the AASHO Committee on Public Relations and Publicity found that only about 60 percent of the departments had someone in full-time public relations work, and these men were not experts. Fully a third were highway engineers, and almost all of the remainder had training only in the publications field. In evaluating the extent of public relations at that time, Bray said:

State highway departments do a fairly complete job of announcing high-ways soon to be placed under construction, but this is the only public relations activity that can be said to be carried on by all or a large portion of the departments. Many of the departments do very little to inform the public of the character and extent of highway needs and are not making a planned effort to gain public support for needed improvement programs....

Quite a few states assign funds to public information work annually in an amount equal to the cost of a good size culvert and only a few provide funds that would pay the cost of a mile of high-type surfacing.

The highway financing situation worsened yearly during the early 1950's and as it worsened, more highway officials recognized the need to carry their case to the general public.

William Bugge, director of the Washington Department of Highways, declared that the public relations of highway departments suffered from their reluctance to report to the public. However, he warned, "The fact is that highway engineers are public employees and the public will have what it wants out of us. The public is our body of customers." He urged the engineers to speak up in their plight. "Silence may be golden, but in this business the result may turn out to be something quite different." It had become the policy of the Washington organization, he said, to select engineers who, besides possessing technical qualifications demonstrated an ability to meet the public.

Passage of the 1956 Federal-Aid Highway Act largely solved the financing problem, but it did not lessen the need for the states to develop and maintain good relationships with the public. Obtaining acceptance of the concept of limited access was a major PR problem. Preparing the public for acquisition of wide stretches of right-of-way was another. The Federal act required the states to conduct literally thousands of public hearings and to obtain the approval of their location plans by dozens of local communities. All these requirements forced the highway departments into the spotlight of public attention, and usually at a disadvantage. As it developed, exaggerated claims of fraud, collusion and mismanagement in the highway program created another major PR problem.

It is to the credit of state highway administrators that they began to accept responsibility for good public relations as a pressing administrative responsibility. The size of PR staffs was increased. More specialists in the art of communication were retained. A survey in 1957 by AASHO revealed that 33 states then had PR sections.

The next five years saw rapid development in this field. A survey by the author in 1962 indicated that 47 states had retained a full-time PR director. In the other three states, some other administrative official had some responsibility for carrying out PR activities. Figure 1 succinctly indicates the establishment of PR units in state highway departments.

The trend to place this responsibility in the hands of professional PR men, that is, men trained in public relations work, rather than for newspaper work or some other one of the specialized areas of communication, has lagged somewhat behind. But that merely reflects a general public relations trend. There are still only a comparatively few men trained in the broader field of public relations, communication and public opinion.

Actually, it is apparent, from the variety of PR activities in which the normal highway department engages that these men are quite capable of adopting communication skills other than the one of their previous training. Today's highway department public relations director not only writes releases for the newspapers, but also develops radio



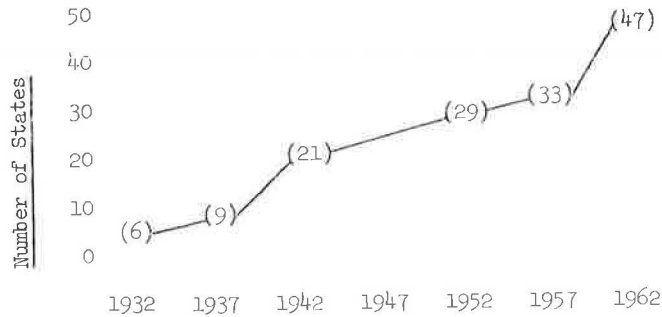


Figure 1.

and television programs, produces motion pictures, conducts essay contests, stages field tours, creates annual reports, compiles material for legislators, produces material for elementary schools, and conducts public hearings.

There is no question but what the public relations director of a state highway department has become a valuable man of many skills and much experience. Few organizations, private or public, require, in one man, the ability to tackle so many communication projects. This is the kind of professional growth which has taken place within the last five years.

Statistically, what do we know about today's state highway department PR director? Following are some of the findings of the author's survey in 1962.

#### Educational Qualifications and Experience

Thirty-three of the 47 PR directors have a college degree. Of these, six have earned Master of Arts degrees. Twelve of these college graduates hold their degrees in journalism or public relations. Of 39 reporting their previous experience, 31 came from mass media. The 23 who reported their tenure in that field gave a total of 240 years of such experience (for an average of 10.4 years each). Twenty directors reported some prior experience in public relations (an average of 8.6 years each). Five had no experience in communication.

#### Size of PR Staff

The 1957 AASHO survey indicated that the states had PR staffs ranging from one to seven, with the greatest number claiming three to five men and women. The total was 218. This number included graphic artists, newsclipping clerks, librarians, receptionists, layout specialists, stock clerks, mail clerks, model makers, depictees, messengers, uniformed patrol officers, audio-visual specialists, delineators, and map makers.

The 1962 AASHO survey found staffs ranging from 1 to 18, for a total of 267 men and women. The gain: 49 persons. The total number of 267 included 82 persons with college training in journalism, 100 with newspaper experience, 76 with other training in writing, and 67 photographers. The supporting personnel force included stenographers, messengers, mimeograph and addressograph operators, mail clerks, filing clerks, newsclipping clerks, receptionists, artists, librarians, layout specialists, map makers, model builders, scriptwriters, radio and television technicians, research and statistical analysts, switchboard operators, exhibit supervisors, and visual aid designers.

The author's survey in 1962 and 1963 sought to determine how many of these were professional men and women, i.e., directors, writers, and photographers, but not graphic artists, stenographers, file clerks, or other supporting personnel. Replies were as follows:

TABLE 1  
PROPORTION OF PR STAFF TO TOTAL  
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN  
DEPARTMENT<sup>a</sup>

State	Size of Staff	Ratio
Ala.	1	1:4,664
Alaska	2	1: 550
Ariz.	2	1:1,618
Ark.	-	-
Calif.	11	1:1,586
Colo.	2	1: 977
Conn.	8	1: 594
Del.	-	-
D. C.	-	-
Fla.	3	1:2,244
Ga.	1	1:6,665
Hawaii	1	1: 915
Idaho	2	1: 749
Ill.	2	1:4,174
Ind.	2	1:2,887
Iowa	2	1:1,627
Kan.	5	1: 799
Ky.	4	1:1,895
La.	2	1:3,611
Me.	2	1:1,511
Md.	2	1:1,922
Mass.	-	-
Mich.	4	1:1,296
Minn.	5	1: 813
Miss.	2	1:1,558
Mo.	4	1:1,541
Mont.	3	1: 658
Neb.	2	1:1,269
Nev.	2	1: 578
N. H.	2	1: 784
N. J.	7	1: 775
N. M.	1	1:2,235
N. Y.	3	1:5,181
N. C.	4	1:2,499
N. D.	-	-
Ohio	4	1:2,815
Okla.	3	1:1,169
Ore.	3	1:1,193
Pa.	-	-
R. I.	1	1:1,176
S. C.	3	1:1,538
S. D.	3	1: 602
Tenn.	1	1:5,952
Tex.	15	1:1,083
Utah	2	1: 944
Vt.	1	1:1,190
Va.	3	1:3,483
Wash.	2	1:2,013
W. Va.	4	1:1,615
Wis.	3	1: 726
Wyo.	2	1: 663

<sup>a</sup>Based on last available staff figure (there is likely to be considerable disparity in this table, inasmuch as some States reported photographers assigned to the PR staff, whereas in other States, they are assigned to some other department).

#### Size of Staff

1  
2  
3  
4  
5-6  
>7

#### No. of States

7  
17  
9  
6  
2  
4

The total number under this definition (in 45 departments) was 143 with an average three per state highway department.

Table 1 indicates how many professional men in each state are devoting their full time to some phase of public relations. It also shows the proportion of PR staff to total number of employees in the department. This proportion runs from 1:550 to 1:6,665. The average is one PR man to each 1,874 other employees.

#### Spreading PR Work Load

As noted previously, size of the staffs reported in the AASHO polls is not a completely valid indicator of how much manpower is actually applied to public relations. The 1957 survey indicated that large staffs usually mean that some other activity, such as safety or personnel training is being handled in the same department as public relations.

In other states, many more are engaged in public relations work than the size of the professional staff indicates. A number of departments hold the philosophy that public relations, as a practical matter, must be carried on by nonspecialists. This is particularly true in the field. In these states, the PR director does not try to carry the full burden. He conducts continuing in-service training programs and feeds material to the field offices to make this aspect of their work easier.

The district engineer, particularly, serves on the public relations "front." In some states, he makes his own editorial contacts, answers all press queries relating to work in his district, serves as spokesman for the department on policy matters, appears on radio and television programs, and conducts such other PR activities as he sees fit. Describing this delegation of public relations responsibility to the field, a California official recently said:

Our program is not handled by one department.... The key man in achieving our objective probably is the district engineer. He is 'Mr. Highways' in his area. It is he who deals with local governments and city and county engineers and planners. It is he who addresses service clubs and other organization. It is he who gets the complaints and the plaudits and answers questions.

In those California districts where the public relations work load has become too large for the district engineer or his administrative assistant to handle, a public information specialist is assigned to the field office. They do not work under the chief public information officer in Sacramento headquarters. They are supervised by the district engineer. At this time, the decentralized California public relations staff organization includes three public information officers and two assistant public information officers in Sacramento headquarters, four public information officers in Los Angeles, and one public information officer in each of two other districts. (In the other districts the district engineer still handles the public information operation.) This full-time 11-man force constitutes the largest staff of professional PR men in a state highway department, not engaging in tourist promotion. Even so, the department feels that it is conducting a rather conservative public relations program.

Other states lean heavily on their engineer field forces to maintain their public relations. According to the Texas Highway Department, this lack of enough professional PR men to go around is a blessing in disguise.

We operate just a little differently in Texas due to our own situation and the size of our state. Texas is 900 miles from tip to tip, and it is simply not practical for us to take part in activities on a local level, except in certain instances where our specialized knowledge is required. We have placed our emphasis instead on thoroughly selling our top administrators on the practical value of public relations, and in seeing that these ideas are carried down the line to our district engineers and their key employees. Over a period of years our district engineers have, as a whole, become aware of the value of good public relations and are quite capable of handling the normal situations which arise in their districts. We believe this is a healthy situation since it means we can conserve our own staff and services for operations on a state-wide level.

This decentralization also fosters a thorough understanding of public relations on the part of our district engineers, who understand what it can and also what it cannot do. As you know, most engineering administrators like to handle their own public relations until they get in trouble and then they call for the professionals. We have been able to avoid this attitude to a large degree because our district engineers have learned that public relations is preventive maintenance which must be practiced day to day, and is not something you merely call on in an emergency after the horse has been stolen.

### The PR Director's Salary

Forty-two states responded to this investigator's request (1960) for information on salaries. The range in base salaries was from \$6,000 to \$12,000 a year. The median salary was \$7,942 and the average salary was \$8,402. The complete range is given in Table 2, along with the range of salaries obtained from the 1962 AASHO survey. The average salary in 1962, indicated by the AASHO survey (using the high figure where a range was given) is \$9,465. Using the low figure where a range was given, the average is \$8,882. The median salary, using the high figure where a range was given, is \$9,100. The median salary, using the low figure where a range was given, is \$8,500. These figures are in vivid contrast to the national average range of \$15,000 to \$25,000 for public relations directors reported to the investigator by the Public Relations Society of America.



TABLE 2  
SALARY RANGE OF PUBLIC  
RELATIONS DIRECTORS

Salary Range (\$)	No. of States
(a) Investigators 1960 Survey	
6,000 - 7,000	10
7,000 - 8,000	11
8,000 - 9,000	6
9,000 - 10,000	7
10,000 - 11,000	3
11,000 - 12,000	5
(b) AASHO's 1962 Survey	
5,000 - 6,000	1
6,000 - 7,000	7
7,000 - 8,000	9
8,000 - 9,000	12
9,000 - 10,000	7
10,000 - 11,000	7
11,000 - 12,000	5
12,000 - 13,000	1
14,000 - 15,000	4

TABLE 3  
SALARY RANGE OF ASSISTANT  
PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTORS

Salary Range (\$)	No. of States
3,000 - 4,000	1
4,000 - 5,000	4
5,000 - 6,000	5
6,000 - 7,000	13
7,000 - 8,000	11
8,000 - 9,000	1
9,000 - 10,000	1
10,000 - 11,000	1
12,000 - 13,000	3

Salary ranges of assistant public relations directors, as reported by 40 states, are given in Table 3. Table 4 gives a breakdown of the salary ranges found.

#### His Job Security

How long can the average public relations director expect to hold his job in the state highway department? The prevailing opinion is that personnel in state highway departments lead an uneasy existence and that political changes in administration are likely to force them out of work. It is commonly assumed that civil service eliminates such threats. With these assumptions in mind, a survey was made by the investigator to determine how many PR directors enjoy civil service standing.

Forty-one states replied to this query. In 24, it was found, the public relations director is appointed to his job. In 17, this is a civil service post, selection for which is made on the basis of a somewhat formal examination and appraisal of the candidate's qualifications.

A survey was made in 1963 to determine just how long state highway department public relations men have held their present position. Forty states replied to this question, with results as follows:

Years	No. of Directors
<1	2
1 - 3	13
4 - 6	11
7 - 9	8
10 - 12	2
13 - 15	2
>15	2

The national average was six years.

In another questionnaire sent to 40 states early in 1963, an attempt was made to determine how often the public information officer is subjected to changes as a threat to continuity. The question was asked:

"How many times has 'top management' changed in the period of your employment as director of public information? (By 'top management' we mean the overall policy-making commission or official, not the chief engineer or top administrative official, unless this man is also the top policy official.)" Replies were as follows:

No change	13 states	One change	4 states
Normal staggered change in commissioners as required by law	8 states	Two changes	6 states
		Three changes	7 states
		No information	2 states

TABLE 4  
RANGE OF SALARIES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTORS

AASHO Survey of 1962 (\$)	Investigator's Survey of 1960 (\$)
15,600	12,000
15,000	11,964
12,600	11,878
11,800	11,645
11,501	11,200
11,280	10,240
11,180	10,140
11,000	10,140
10,744	10,000
10,635 - 11,935	10,000
10,500	9,840
10,380	9,600
10,000	9,500
9,948 - 12,096	9,444
9,875 - 12,839	9,144
9,600	8,664
9,500	8,658
9,500	8,400
9,400	8,100
9,240	8,004
9,000	8,000
8,700	7,884
8,568	7,800
8,500	7,800
8,500	7,764
8,376 - 9,984	7,680
8,316 - 10,608	7,500
8,220	7,440
7,920	7,392
7,800	7,200
7,800	7,200
7,800	6,900
7,600	6,750
7,560 - 9,600	6,600
7,536 - 9,756	6,300
7,488	6,300
7,392 - 9,012	6,156
7,228	6,120
7,200	6,034
7,124 - 9,100	6,020
6,900 - 9,120	6,000
6,900 - 7,800	
6,900	
6,780	
6,600 - 8,000	
6,600 - 8,000	
6,600	
6,577	
6,120 - 8,720	
5,148 - 6,630	

[These two columns do not represent the States in the same order and should not be read across.]

One would judge from this record that the longevity of the public relations director is not threatened by changes in top management.

Where do public relations directors "go from here?" The investigators knows of no instance during the two-year period since this study began of a public relations director being promoted to a higher management post. The probable reason is that in most cases the only higher jobs in the organization are those top-level or second-level management jobs for which some engineering background is a traditional requirement. However, 14 directors have left (or lost) their jobs with state highway departments during this period. A Federal agency personnel director with expert knowledge of state highway department personnel experiences was asked for his opinion of this rate of turnover. His response was that this is a "normal" turnover for this period.

#### SCOPE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES OF STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENTS

The investigator has conducted comprehensive surveys of state highway department PR activities in 1960 and again early in 1963. Findings of these surveys are as follows:

1. In most of the states, responsibility for press relations is a major function of the PR department; 42 states replying to this questionnaire reported that they write news releases, handle press conferences, develop feature articles and furnish other material to the press.

2. In 21 of the states, the public relations director does a certain amount of speech writing for other officials.

3. In 30 of the states, publication of a house organ is a PR unit function.

4. In 27 states, the PR director has some kind of responsibility for the annual report.

5. In 21 states, the PR department has produced a motion picture for general public showing.

6. In 21 states, the PR department is assigned some role in conducting public hearings.

7. It was difficult to determine just how widely radio and television are utilized by the highway departments. Scattered references to these media in papers and articles in the engineering press indicate increased use of radio and television, however. The North Carolina State Highway Commission has reported extensive coverage of hearings by radio and television representatives. On one occasion, a station with wide coverage broadcast the proceedings of a controversial public hearing for 12 hours continuously. The New Jersey State Highway Department reported that radio was used heavily during the 1961 Highway Week. One station conducted a "parade" of highway officials past its microphones, interviewing a total of 18 engineers and other administrators throughout the course of the day.

8. Some PR units have responsibility for distribution of road condition reports, roadside exhibits and rest areas, and tourist promotion.

9. One state, at least, develops educational materials for public schools. Iowa produces a special newsletter for the use of teachers and students which contains material on highway history, traffic safety, accomplishments of the highway department and future needs. Once a year, the department conducts an essay contest and gives public recognition to the student winners. A survey by the investigator in 1954 indicated that most highway departments, if not all, build exhibits for state and county fairs, for use at public hearings, and for display in lobbies of state government buildings. Some of these exhibits, particularly those prepared for state and county fairs, are quite elaborate and expose thousands of men, women and children to the message of the highway department.

In 1952, 1957, and 1962, the Public Information Committee of AASHO asked the states to list their public information activities. The survey by the AASHO Committee on Public Information yielded similar answers. The question was asked: "What single activity do you consider 'tops'?" Forty states reported they give most attention to the "continuing day-by-day service of providing accurate and timely information" to the news media. Other "most popular" activities listed were contacts with television sta-



tions, production of motion pictures, distribution of highway maps, personal contact with the press, public hearings, production of special publications, and observance of "National Highway Week." The full scope of activities and the number of states engaging in each were reported in the 1957 and 1962 AASHO polls. This information is given in Table 5.

Working with the press has historically been the most productive of the highway department's PR activities. Both the AASHO surveys and the investigator's indicate that the department leans heavily on the newspapers to help disseminate its PR story. The subject lends itself to ready acceptance by editors. The annual construction program, tax proposals to finance future projects, the condition of major routes during the summer "detour" months, measures to ease traffic congestion, and the proposed location of new freeways are just a few of the highway developments that rate front-page position. The departments have found that editors will search out the local angle in their news releases, develop their own human interest material, and frequently support the organization editorially. The fact that so many public information officers have worked as reporters also may explain their preference for this medium and their ability to work most effectively with it.

By and large, state highway departments rely on about as wide a range of media as other organizations. Beyond these channels to the public mind, however, they utilize some which are uniquely their own, or at least not common in other PR circles. These include the public hearing, dedication of new highways, construction project tours, and National Highway Week. These activities are relatively new, but they have been utilized so effectively by this specialized corps of PR men that the investigator has singled them out for greater attention.

TABLE 5  
SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES REPORTED BY STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENTS  
IN AASHO POLLS

Activity	No. of States Engaging in Each	
	1957	1962
Planning of activities to educate public	40	50
Feature stories	46	52
Regular news releases	40	51
Special news releases	48	49
Speeches for engineers	37	42
Open house activities	-	36
Informational meetings directed at improving public relations by employees	16	27
Bulletins on road conditions, contract lettings, construction detours, hearings, etc.	46	47
Radio spot news	32	43
Film strips and slides	-	37
Popularized annual report	28	27
Photographs for magazine and newspaper work	46	50
Arranging press interviews	44	44
Leaflets and brochures	37	44
Filling speaking engagements	-	36
Motion pictures	31	35
Television spots and features	35	40
Special work on public hearings	23	28
Employee publications	31	-

## EXPENDITURES FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

How much money are public relations departments given to work with? It was difficult to obtain an answer to this question. In some states public relations activities are not budgeted separately at all; all departmental expenditures are merged under administration. In others, production costs are available, but not personnel costs, or personnel costs are available, but not production costs. Some personnel, such as photographers, draftsmen and mimeograph operators, although involved in public relations, are attached to other departments or work out of a pool.

By rechecking with many states on this point, it was possible to determine approximate expenditures for public information in 31 departments. The range was from \$5,000 to \$167,000, with an average of \$40,000. In 31 states, an attempt was made to relate public information expenditures to (a) total cost of administration, and (b) total disbursements for construction, maintenance, and administration. The ratio of the public information costs to total administration costs was an average of \$1 per \$129 of other administration costs, or 0.008 percent. The ratio of public information expenditures to total disbursements averaged 1:3,666. In other words, these state highway departments spent an average of \$1 for public information for every \$3,666 spent on construction, maintenance and administration. Thus, public information took 0.0003 percent of the highway dollar.

Do the public relations directors feel that their highway departments are spending enough money on public relations? Of 34 responding to this question, 21 answered in the affirmative; PR directors of the other 13 states would like to spend substantially more, from 25 to 300 percent more.

All of these data are drawn from the investigator's 1960 survey, undertaken for this study. Early in 1963, he sought to determine if expenditures for public relations had been increased during that period. Responses from 39 states polled indicated that:

1. Twelve states had increased their budgets in this two-year period—from a collective total of \$555,000 to \$641,000. The average increase was 15.5 percent.
2. Two states had "doubled" their expenditures, but gave no sum.
3. One state had boosted its budget by 50 percent, but gave no sum.
4. Eight states had not increased their expenditures.
5. Sixteen states had no information, mainly because this activity is not budgeted.

## CONTINUITY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS

It is generally accepted in the PR profession that one of the signs of the maturity of public relations in an organization is the continuity it has been able to achieve. Speaking of the importance of this element, Benjamin Fine, education editor of The New York Times, has said, "when an activity has no continuity, it runs the risk of losing impact, a status or quality that may have required years to achieve." John W. Gibbons, director of public relations, Automotive Safety Foundation, believes this warning applies particularly to state highway departments: "The public relations program should be firmly established as a function that carries over from administration to administration."

Continuity depends on several factors:

1. The development of a formal public relations policy—a determined statement of intent and objectives which will serve as a firm guide to all future activity.
2. The development of a long-range public relations action program to reach those specific objectives.
3. The longevity of top management responsible for maintaining PR policy.
4. The longevity of PR directors responsible for implementing the PR program.
5. The designation of public relations as a definite budgetary item that has come through the wringer of a fiscal evaluation.

In some of these aspects, state highway department public relations is still conceptually immature.

### Continuity Through PR Policies and Long-Range Programs

This study found little evidence of (a) policies regarding public relations as such, or (b) long-range PR programs to reach specific objectives. This does not deny that there is a great deal of day-to-day activity. It does mean that this activity, although it may be undertaken in good judgment, does not seem to be governed by a formal predetermined policy from top management, nor does it seem to follow a predetermined program of action. State highway administrators have not yet begun to give to public relations anywhere near the same thoughtfulness and planning which appears to be given to other aspects of engineering and management. For example, highway departments have become very adept at forecasting the traffic volumes and plotting their new construction needs 15 to 20 years in the future. They develop a long-range construction program to meet these anticipated needs. They determine their financial requirements years in advance. They develop a scheme of priorities to meet first needs first. No such effort is made to foresee future public opinion problems, to develop long-range measures to offset adverse opinion, to estimate the cost of maintaining (or rebuilding) public confidence, or to give priority to one type of public relations activity over another in the light of these problems.

This study hoped to determine, first of all, how many policy-making highway directors or commissions have developed what could be called the department's public relations policy. The author was successful in locating only a few such examples. Efforts were made, also, to determine if the departments' public information units are charged with responsibility for developing at least an annual program (based on a specific budget, as an example of intent). These efforts were largely unsuccessful.

Apparently, public information men in highway departments live one day at a time, making decisions as they go along and relying on their general sense of timeliness, relative importance and cost, to determine the wisdom of one activity or another. As one public information director told the investigator: "We drive by the seat of our pants."

The absence of long-range objectives and programs based on priorities may indicate that staff and budgetary limitations prohibit the planning of anything but the most immediate activities. The typical unit runs out of money and manpower before the day-by-day demands on it are met and long before its potential is explored. The development of a long-range program is merely an empty gesture in such circumstances. Consequently, only a handful of the 50 states are waging what might be called a program.

In the absence of a formal PR policy or program, some continuity of effort may be realized through the continuity of people responsible for this function. With this possibility in mind, the investigator attempted to determine (a) the continuity of top management itself in state highway departments, and (b) the continuity of staff personnel in the public relations unit. The possibility of developing a PR policy and maintaining a long-range PR program would depend somewhat on both. If the top management were stable enough to develop and advance a long-range PR program, a certain amount of turnover could be tolerated on the public relations staff level. Conversely, if there were continuity on the public relations staff level, some continuity of program could be expected. At least, the vital personal relationships with the communication media could be maintained. In states where changes are frequently made in both top management and PR staff, it is unlikely that a sound program of public information could be maintained. Both of these aspects of continuity are explored briefly here.

### Continuity Through Top Management

Policy formation in state highway departments is generally the responsibility of top management, which in these agencies generally takes one of two organizational forms: the single executive or the several-man commission.

The Highway Research Board has found that state highway department administrators or commissioners are elected in five states, appointed by the governor with legislative confirmation in 32 states, and appointed by the governor without legislative confirmation in 11 states.

In the 19 states where the department is administered by a single executive, this



chief administrator may serve a term of two, four, or five years, or a period which may be terminated at the pleasure of the governor. The tabulation is as follows:

<u>Length of Fixed Term of Office</u>	<u>No. of States</u>
Two years	3
Four years	9
Five years	1
May be terminated at pleasure of governor	6

In actual practice in six selected states (Connecticut, Illinois, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and New York), a total of 30 appointees to the top administrative post served a total of 227 years, for an average of 7.6 years. The average per state ranged from 5.7 years in New Jersey to 14.3 years in New Hampshire.

In the 29 states where the department is administered by a several-man commission, the term of office for commissioners runs from two to ten years, with the majority of them four years (in 10 states) and six years (in 12 states). In 28 of the states having boards of commissions of some kind, the terms of members are staggered. The objective of this practice is to build considerably more continuity into highway administration in these states. However, again, in spite of established terms, many commissioners do not serve their full term of office. In 14 selected states (Missouri, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Arizona, Iowa, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Oregon, and Kansas) only 290—or 54.4 percent of the 566 commissioners appointed—served their full terms. The average term of office held was 4.2 years.

#### Continuity Through Public Relations Staff

The longevity of public relations directors has already been examined. To summarize here, the average public relations director is under civil service protection in 17 states. The average PR official has been in his present job for six years. His position is not ordinarily threatened by changes in the policy-making top administrator or commission. It appears from these findings that the average public relations director is on the job long enough to establish rather firmly whatever public relations policy or long-range program is developed.

#### Continuity Through Budget

There is something about evaluating and formalizing an activity on a dollars-and-cents basis that tends to establish it. The investigator found in his survey that 28 states include public relations in their budgetary deliberations and allocate a firm sum for the conduct of that program. In the other states, this activity is treated as an administrative expense. The disadvantage is that the public relations director is placed in the position of having to prepare a case for every unforeseen opportunity. He can make no advance plans with the assurance that financing will be available. Such uncertainty weakens the continuity of public relations programing.

#### DOES STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT PR DIRECTOR INFLUENCE POLICY?

One of the basic definitions of public relations is that it functions as a two-way street. This definition assumes, first, the development of operating policies and activities that will win public support, and second, the publicizing of those policies and activities, to gain public recognition of the organization's good works. A more formal definition which says much the same thing is:

Public relations is the continuing process by which management endeavors to obtain the goodwill and understanding of its customers, its employees, and the public at large; (first) inwardly and through self-analysis, and (second) outwardly through all means of expression.

Some public relations men visualize themselves in this dual role (a) as a molders of top-level policy, and (b) as a molders of public opinion. There is general agreement on the second role. Most PR practitioners accept their duty of disseminating information—preferably slanted—about their organization, elaborating on the importance of the organization to the national economy and community life, and interpreting organization policy and activities in the most favorable light.

It is on the first point that a diversity of opinion exists. To exert such influence on operating policy would require, first of all, a rather elevated position in the organization, one in which the PR director would have the ear of top management. It would also require a reputation as being an expert on public opinion. Conceivably, in a high position of influence, and as an authority in matters of public opinion, the public relations director could exert an influence on company policy decisions.

The variety of opinion on this score is infinite. Some believe that the PR man is not equipped by training or education to assume such a lofty role. Some say the PR director should be merely a symbolic reminder to management that such an element as public opinion exists and warrants consideration in policy formation. There are others who go to the extreme and insist that public relations is the new "social conscience" and that the director of public relations should be the mentor and the instructor of top management in things of the spirit. The exercise of his wisdom and his influence on policy formation, these people believe, is the most important function of the PR director.

John P. Symes, director of industrial and public relations for Johns-Manville, takes this view in "Practical Public Relations." Mr. Symes said:

Public relations has two phases, then. It has first a management responsibility to see to it that basic policies are sound, and that these policies are carried out from day to day. No program can succeed unless the public relations man has both the authority and the energy to see that the company's policies are sound both in practice and expression. Its second phase is the constant development of ways and means to translate these policies and actions into simple, understandable expressions which will serve to create in the public mind a true and accurate impression of industry's vital role in the everyday lives of all of us.

To be effective, your public relations organization must start at the top. The chief public relations officer of every company should be the president, the managing director, or the chairman of the board, whichever is responsible for the creation of policies.

J. Handly Wright, a public relations consultant, asserted in an article in the July 1952 issue of the "Public Relations Journal" that the public relations director should initiate policy and then sell it to the top management. He listed several benefits from such procedure.

Third, the act of explaining or selling the plan to top executives provides a priceless opportunity to exchange thoughts on the fundamentals of public relations. The discussion which may be held with the executive committee or board of directors, and the final presentation of your plan with appropriate charts and graphs provides an opportunity unobtainable any other way to concentrate topside thinking on your operations. As a corollary to this, the approval of such a plan by the board or executive committee provides you with all the authority you need to pursue your operations under this blanket endorsement and removes the necessity of going back to the board for approval of every single step.

He then explains how the public relations department, with this authority can take its plans down the line to the department heads and key officials.

Herbert Baus, in "Public Relations at Work," lists the PR man, the "weathervane of public opinion," first among those who are responsible for policy development:

The making of the policy and the changing of it is the combined work of the public relations counsel, the top management, the board of directors, the research people, unsolicited reports, activities of every person in the organization, and information from any source that delivers it.

Management executes policy, which in the final analysis defines the blueprint of the public relations program.... Today management more and more engages public relations counsel, outside or staff, as the weathervane of public opinion to help maintain a healthy control and direction of policy, its application and its adaption to changing conditions.

Another author declares the public relations director "always acts only as an advisor." He makes the point that public relations men "must recognize that theirs is the subtle task of planting ideas which management will eventually proudly espouse as its own." This author says also, "He (the public relations director) must work with other departments and help to make workable policy decisions."

Some highway administrators have expressed this view. Ellis Armstrong, former chief administrator of the Utah State Highway Department, and former U. S. Commissioner of Public Roads, said:

Just as the public relations counsel is a professional advisor to the president and Board of Directors of a corporation, so the public information officer of a state highway department is a professional advisor to the top officials of his agency.

A highway administrator can avoid (trouble) by consulting his information officer early on policies that affect the public.

A few years ago the Automotive Safety Foundation, in a management study of the Pennsylvania Department of Highways, considered this problem. Among other things, ASF recommended that a "public information" unit be established directly under the supervision of top management. According to ASF officials, this would be the most effective position for public relations in any state.

This study sought to determine how closely the public information director of a state highway department conforms, in theory and in practice, to this general concept held by the public relations profession. To determine if these men wield an influence on highway commission policy was an important objective of the research problem. The task required ascertaining:

1. Who makes policy in state highway departments;
2. Where, on this organization chart, the public relations director is placed in relation to the policy-makers; and
3. Whether he is called on to advise the commission on operating policy, regardless of his position in the administrative scheme.

#### Who Makes Departmental Policy?

There is no one standard form of administrative organization among the state highway departments. The Highway Research Board reports that a department may be directed by (a) a single executive, (b) a single executive with an advisory commission, (c) a single executive and a coordinate commission, (d) a limited-control commission, or (e) an administrative commission. The Board has classified each state by its particular administrative organization and identified the chief administrative officer. In another survey, completed in 1959, this same organization collected organization charts for each state highway department (1). These two studies together indicate at what level operating policy is formed in each state highway department and at what level it is administered.

#### PR Director in Organization Chart

The investigator relied heavily on these studies to help determine the position of the PR director in relation to the policy-making commission or official. He also ap-



proached, by various questionnaires and correspondence, the public relations directors, their immediate superiors, and independent organizations which have made management studies for highway department studies for highway departments.

It was necessary to resolve a number of inconsistencies. For example, 13 of the organization charts (1) did not include any mention of public information officers and it was necessary to ask each of the public relations directors of these organizations for his idea of where this unit fits. The chief administrator was approached, too. In a number of cases, it was difficult to ascertain the lines of authority.

One of the questions asked on the initial questionnaire was: "To whom does the public information director report?" Replies from 49 states, much additional correspondence, and a number of personal interviews have produced the following conclusions:

1. Thirty public relations directors work directly under the supervision of the official or officials who are responsible for development of policy.
2. Thirteen work under a chief administrative official who is not responsible for policy.
3. Six work under a division or bureau chief, two, three, or four levels removed from policy development.

In numerous cases the highway department is managed by a single executive or a commission chairman who is responsible for both policy determination and administration. In the 30 states where the PR director works under the supervision of this individual, it was difficult to ascertain if he is placed in this position to make a contribution to policy or for effectiveness of administration.

The investigator has interviewed a number of public relations directors on this point. It appears that when the average PR man reports that he advises his commission, he means that he advises it on matters relating to his department or to policy governing press relations. He speaks as a department head, not as an interpreter of public opinion. When the average PR director reports that he attends all commission meetings, he means that he does so, not necessarily as the representative of the people of the state, but as a representative of a department which must be informed on commission actions so that it may better represent the department's interests to the press. He attends not to bring something to the meeting, but to take something from it.

In the state highway department situation, the advice of the public relations director may be superfluous. Perhaps this is a case in which top management is exposed to public opinion oftener and more continuously than the public relations director. The highway commission is a politically sensitive organization, either directly involved in justifying itself politically, or at best, just one step removed from the political arena. No department, to the investigator's knowledge, is so insulated from public opinion that it can plot an arbitrary course. The public highways are public business. They are not the business of an agency so independent that it can plan and construct without regard to anyone except its own staff engineers.

Highway commissioners and administrators listen to chambers of commerce. They listen to testimony at public hearings. They listen to questions posed by reporters and television interviewers. They listen to queries posed by luncheon audiences. They listen to farm groups, motorists, truckers, contractors, county commissioners, mayors, and garden clubs. In fact, they listen to any aggrieved individual who has the courage to climb the capitol steps. This is the practical reason highway departments do not hire public relations directors to serve as staff experts on public opinion. Not only are they not usually exposed to public opinion as often as top management, but they are not particularly trained to interpret it.

There are exceptions. However, the dualism of public relations is not centered (in a state highway department) solely in the person of the public relations director. Here, for better or for worse, public relations is a shared responsibility.

The policy makers of the department—whether they be the members of a commission or the chief engineer—represent the public viewpoint in their policy deliberations. The administration implements these decisions in terms of planning and programming. The

public relations director interprets the organization—its policies, its objectives and its accomplishments—to the general public in such a way as to indicate the organization is acting in response to their interests.

His special contribution to the organization is his skill in disseminating meaningful information, and so helping to build public understanding and public confidence in the highway department.

### Full Authority for Public Relations Programming

Another point must be made. Replies from both top administrators and PR directors indicate that the public information director is given responsibility for conducting PR activities with the authority he needs and apparently without too much direction. He formulates a press relations policy which may be imposed on the entire department. His recommendations for publicizing the objectives and accomplishments of the department and obtaining better public understanding are respected.

To an increasing extent, highway administrators realize their most persistent management problems are not those of personnel, purchasing, engineering or planning, but of public opinion. They respect the influence of the mass media and recognize that dealing with these media requires an expertness as specialized as designing bridges. These attitudes have been instrumental in leading many highway administrators to give their public relations directors a position in the organization from which they can work most effectively.

It is the investigator's conclusion that the dualism of public relations is not centered in the state highway department in the person of the public relations director. Only one branch of the "two-way street" to which public relations is likened, runs through the highway department PR office. This official is not considered the "social conscience of the commission." He serves that other vital aspect of public relations—the interpretation to the public of the organization's work on its behalf. His status depends not only on how seriously the administration takes its public relations, but also on the skill and imagination with which the PR director has played his vital role in this management function.

### SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE INVESTIGATOR

The underlying objective of this study has been to determine, with as much validity as is possible, the status or the maturity of public relations as a function of state highway department administration.

All of the areas explored by the investigator yield some indications of "the state of the art"—the historic acceptance of the responsibility by top management, the current attitudes of highway officials toward public opinion, the recruitment of professional public relations directors and their qualifications, the status of these men in the organization chart, the size of public relations staffs, the amount of expenditures, the development of unique PR activities for gaging or influencing public opinion, the budgeting of public relations activities, and the existence of long-range programs.

As might be expected, only a few generalizations can be made. In others, there is no pattern. Some departments are far advanced; others lag.

Although it would be unwise to draw many generalizations from this study, the investigator would like to reveal several of the rather firm impressions his research has given him. He has been impressed by the attitude of contemporary highway administrators toward public relations. Top management seems to subscribe, with genuine sincerity, to several basic PR principles:

1. The belief that performance is the first prerequisite and that public relations activities cannot make up for any lack of conscientious, capable service in discharging the planning and engineering responsibilities of the organization;

2. The belief that the people whom an agency serves have "a right to know" and that given the facts they will make the right decisions—in highway matters, as in any other political problem;

3. The belief that the agency cannot act arbitrarily, but must make provision for



the expression of public opinion and must maintain a willingness to modify original plans to fit public desires; and

4. The belief that an organization must present a personality of complete integrity in dealing with the public, and that press relations must be constructed on rules that foster a relationship of mutual confidence.

The importance of such attitudes is simply that without them almost no progress could be made toward greater public relations maturity, and with them greater progress seems almost assured.

The investigator has been impressed, too, with the professional proficiency of some of the PR men now directing the public relations activities of the departments. The aggressiveness that goes into exploitation of National Highway Week, the candor which attends public hearings, and the imagination that characterizes highway dedications and press tours, are all indications of the capability of these men. Given money and opportunity, they have, as many administrators are quick to proclaim, produced more goodwill for the department than was previously thought possible.

There is another side of the picture. In a few states, public relations is still not considered important enough to warrant the recruitment of a full-time PR director. In many states, this activity receives far too small a portion of administration monies. Some states are dealing largely with the newspapers and are not developing enough contacts or program materials for radio and television. Motion pictures, probably the most powerful and popular media, are not widely utilized. Only a handful of states produce external house organs; not many have developed the annual report into an effective public relations tool. The investigator knows of no highway department in which the PR director has time to establish and build the vital, productive personal contacts required with media people.

Much more serious is the impression that one or two men can carry the public relations burden of the organization. Highway administrators have difficulty visualizing the work load of a PR department and the opportunities which could be seized if they had a proper complement of experts working for them. For some states, with two men at the professional level, the department probably should have six; states that seem satisfied with four should have ten.

The inadequacy of the public relations operation has been noted by consulting firms evaluating highway administrations. In several states where it has made such studies, the Automotive Safety Foundation, for example, has recommended substantially increasing the resources applied to this function. ASF's public relations director and a veteran in professional public relations circles, John W. Gibbons, believes that administrators have not yet set their sights high enough in this respect. He told an audience of western highway officials recently, "The number of qualified men and women now employed in public information work by state highway departments is, in my judgment, completely inadequate."

He pointed out that the needs and opportunities for public relations in the least populous state in the union may be infinitely greater than in some private enterprises which may have a staff of 12. "How many trained public relations practitioners are assigned full time to this work in your department? Is it 20, 40, 75? Or is it only a handful?"

Mr. Gibbons described, by way of contrast, the productivity of highway traffic safety agencies. The latest summary (for 1960), he said, showed that these state agencies produced 632 special publications, made a total of 190,000 speeches, conducted 140,000 film showings, created 226 motion pictures and slide films, distributed 17 million driver manuals, and scored column inches in newspapers and audience impressions on radio and television which were "astronomical."

A mental obstacle to a full-fledged public relations program, Mr. Gibbons felt, is the attitude that PR is something that can be accomplished by the courteous conduct of employees in the field and telephone receptionists in the headquarters office. Such a "passive policy" overlooks the fact that there is no comparison between the number of constructive impressions a professional public relations man can create through the mass media and the extremely few opportunities open to the average employee.

This investigator is inclined to feel that Mr. Gibbons' observations are valid. He



would add two more to the general judgment that too little money and too few men are assigned to this function of management:

1. There seems to be an almost total lack of advance planning and programing of public relations activities. The limitations of manpower and money may, as previously suggested, make it impossible to think beyond the problems of the hour. But, the lack is striking in the light of the great amount of research a state undertakes to determine other future needs.

2. There is an almost total absence of research in this area of highway administration. This investigator has been unable to locate one formal research project designed to increase the effectiveness of public relations techniques. Numerous papers have been given at annual meetings of AASHO, including the surveys of activities undertaken periodically, but apparently no funds have been allocated by any of the highway organizations for studies. The subject is covered only infrequently at meetings of the Highway Research Board. And the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads which supports millions of dollars worth of research in economics, engineering, and administration, has not yet seriously explored this aspect of administration.

The cardinal rule of healthy public relations is "performance first." No public relations man would question the wisdom of spending millions of dollars on research which will permit highway engineers to build better roads. However, as chief highway administrators have repeatedly said, one of the major problems of the department today is the problem of public relations. Widespread misunderstanding about factors such as highway costs, highway needs, and highway benefits, the operations of the department, the equality of highway taxes, and the economic and social effects of highway location probably produce more tension for the typical highway administrator than any one or a dozen technical problems. How much easier, how much more pleasant would be the work of the highway administrator if he knew for a certainty that the people of the state understood what he is trying to accomplish, were sympathetic to his problems, and were willing to give him the financial means for serving them better!

These are the natural by-products of a public relations program. They can be achieved, slowly but steadily, as highway administrators and their public relations specialists learn how to strengthen the bonds of goodwill between their organizations and their publics. The field for research is wide open.

At least three areas come immediately to mind as logical hunting grounds for the answers so urgently needed—the area of public opinion, the area of internal organization, and the area of public relations techniques. Specifically, such questions as:

1. What do people really think about their highway department? Is it possible that its reputation is better, or worse, than management imagines? Do people consider it effective, thoughtful and considerate, or arbitrary and overbearing in its decisions and negotiations? To what extent is public knowledge of highway matters adequate? What impressions need correction?

2. How many professional communications specialists are needed to conduct a public information program? How much money? Should these men work out of headquarters or field offices? How much of the load can resident and division engineers carry without reducing their effectiveness as engineers? What assistance can be expected from highway organizations and citizens' advisory committees?

3. Considering that money and manpower will always be limited, what are the most effective PR tools a department can utilize to widen the channels of communication between it and the public? What priorities should be assigned to press relations, public speaking engagements, National Highway Week, public hearings, annual reports, and external house organs? Is too much or too little effort and management time spent on dedications, for example, considering the return in public understanding and goodwill? Are motion pictures worth the cost?

The list could be lengthened almost indefinitely, for not only is the subject many faceted, but the body of present knowledge is skeletal.

The need is not for grand expeditions which lead only to academic conclusions, but

for individual studies which will produce enlightening answers--answers which will increase the effectiveness of the two-, four-, and six-man information staffs of typical highway departments and which will enable them to squeeze \$200,000 worth of goodwill out of a \$100,000 public relations budget.

Only through such intensive study and application, can state highway departments expect to enjoy the public confidence and acclamation which makes public service so personally and professionally satisfying.

#### REFERENCE

1. State Highway Organization Charts, 1959 Revision. Highway Research Board Special Rept. 53 (1960).