

coverage of transportation research topics is likely to require new mechanisms to earmark research funds from a broader range of transportation revenue sources, and the design of a comprehensive array of research programs that includes all of the different types of research that are needed. The current efforts to formulate post-interstate federal transportation programs provide an immediate opportunity for researchers to advance some new proposals for funding and managing transportation research in the highway and transit areas. This and other avenues for increasing research funding and topic coverage would appear to be worthy of continued attention.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Richard P. Braun
University of Minnesota

I think most of you here today would expect that a Department of Transportation (DOT) head, which I was for eight years, or someone who is on a top administrative level within the DOT, would have a different perspective on research than some of his or her staff might have. A key issue for some DOT heads is timing. You might look at that almost as impatience. But what it really involves is the fact that the person on top, the administrator of a specific unit, feels that something has to occur fairly rapidly.

In the case of the chief administrative officer of a DOT, just think about the longevity issue right now. Very few heads of DOT's last more than four years. I think there has been a turnover of more than thirty state DOT heads in the last 15 or 16 months.

Those in these top positions feel that they need fast answers; they need answers to respond to some political questions, some constituency questions or something a legislator might ask them. It is difficult to say "you're going to run that sort of request through a whole long process," such as the NCHRP process. That was one of the reasons why the synthesis projects were developed. This is a process in NCHRP where you could get a fairly exact answer in a relatively short period of time on a specific issue.

Actually, if you go back to, let's say, the late seventies, that was one of the reasons why the Commissioners of State DOT's (COSDOT) was created. COSDOT was a group of impatient young DOT heads who felt that AASHTO wasn't moving

fast enough, and they started to organize entirely on their own. Over a period of years, for a variety of reasons, COSDOT went out of existence. Perhaps most of you don't even recall that there was such a group just a few years back.

The subject of research needs in administration next arose at a meeting that was held in 1986 to take a look at what the research needs are of administrators in general and more specifically the chief administrative officers. This meeting resulted in the research project NCHRP 20-24, which will be reported on by the first speaker.

The second speaker will discuss the trends in research funding in the public and private sectors. This is a critical topic for all of us, particularly in the current period of cutbacks in federal funding resulting from a large federal deficit and uncertainty as to the future of federal funding. Our third speaker will discuss gaps in research funding, the reasons for those gaps, and the possible remedies. This is a summary of the Group One Council meeting that occurred last summer.

I don't think there is much need for me to talk about the minute percentages of funds that are actually allocated to transportation research. I recall that Bill Agnew who is the technical director for environmental and human sciences at General Motors, did a really super job presenting this subject a year ago in an article in Transportation Quarterly. It was in that same issue that Tom Deen, the Executive Director of TRB, pointed out that less than three percent of the non-defense research goes to transportation. If you added in the defense research, less than one percent of the total money allocated to research nationally went into transportation.

TRENDS IN RESEARCH FUNDING IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

Nancy Humphrey
Transportation Research Board

I was asked to provide some background information on research spending trends in both the public and private sectors to provide a context for your more specific concern about the adequacy of research funding in the area of transportation planning and administration. Basically I've organized my talk around four central topics:

1. an examination of overall R&D spending trends;