

ISTEA. This meeting here in Seattle is really the "Dream Team" of transportation planners. It represents as far as I can tell the very first time that AASHTO, APTA, NARC, TRB and various representatives of the environmental community have gathered under one roof to discuss a common planning agenda.

The tasks at hand are not going to be easy because the problems we face don't lend themselves to easy

solutions. As you deliberate the processes that we're going to use to face these issues, please keep in mind a few suggestions. Figure out the problem first and have some vision. There are lots of alternatives out there, find out which ones make sense. Don't be exclusively quantitative, but remember money does indeed matter. And finally, don't try to do it alone. Listen, listen to what people out there are saying. Thank you very much.

A NEW ERA IN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

Thomas D. Larson, Federal Highway Administration

Early in my career I heard a speaker at Penn State, Dr. Eric Walker, who was the President of Penn State. He went on to become the first President of the National Academy of Engineering, and subsequently Vice President for Research for Alcoa. The thing that I remember the most about Eric Walker is the talk that he gave at two or three commencement addresses. He said the world is divided into three kinds of people. There are the undertakers, the people that do a job so poorly that it dies under them and has to be buried. Secondly there is the broad middle class of caretakers, and there are lots of those. As a matter of fact, whether we like it or not, most of us probably fall into the category of caretakers most of the time. We kind of move the dust balls around a little bit. Finally there are a few, just a very few, innovators that make all the difference.

Eric Walker in his speech talked about innovators and said that these are people who suffer a persistent itch, an irritation with the way things are, and they are never satisfied. They know that it can be better and they know that if they are just turned loose, they can make a difference.

I've never forgotten this little story by Eric Walker. I believe that we need innovators in America and the reason I'm so enthused about being here is because in this room, there are probably more transportation innovators than you could put together in any one setting or that have ever been together in the recent past. I know a very large number of you and I know that the innovation skills are here to make a difference in the future of this country.

It's appropriate that we are in Seattle. As I flew out on a Boeing 737 this afternoon, I thought about the aircraft industry here in Seattle. This industry has been innovative to a point of being world leaders and the leading edge of our export trade. In an industry that is

clearly one of the most demanding in terms of technology in the whole world, the Boeing Company has in fact been a world leader that has allowed us to prosper as a nation in unique ways.

Not only has industry been innovative here, the City of Seattle, in its approach to transit and land use, has been uniquely innovative in the country. Under Duane Berentson, the State of Washington, and the Washington Department of Transportation have been innovative. You should know if you don't that Duane is the second ranking member of that club called the CAOs of the Departments of Transportation. I know personally the kind of innovation that Duane has brought to this department. He didn't come to this position as a career transportation person. He was Chairman of the House Legislative Body in Washington, Speaker of the House, and really had reached eminence in the political world before he transferred into this world of ours, the world of transportation. So he was innovative in terms of his career, and brought that innovative spirit to transportation.

Some of the fruits of that innovation are clearly evident and you will see them and experience them while you are here. They can be seen in the state legislation that ties transportation and land use together. Growth management legislation exists here in Washington. It is something that most of us talk about but can never bring to reality because we say it's impossible. Here they've made it a reality.

The thing that I think is most interesting though that Duane has done is to take the ISTEA legislation very, very seriously. He picked out some of his very best people and said you folks are going to be the ISTEA interpreters for us. He locked them up and threw away the key, from what he says, and they've been struggling to figure out all the nuances of this legislation and how it can work for Washington. That's exactly what the Congress and this Administration intended. This innovative legislation is a tool to be taken seriously and put into motion by people like Duane Berentson that believe that new things are possible.

This organization, this little group, that Duane has put together reports to the Washington DOT and they in turn report to a larger group, and as I look down the list of the people that are in there, it's the kind of group that we really need. I will repeat this two or three times before I finish my remarks tonight. The group includes the Association of Washington Cities, the Washington State Transit Association, the Governor's Office, the State Regional Planning Councils, the Washington Public Ports Association, the Association of Washington Counties, the Legislative Transportation Committee and, of course, the Washington Department of Transportation. That's the kind of interaction that ISTEA demands. I hope that you go away from here realizing that that's what this legislation is intended to do, bring new partners together.

In addition to the innovation that is evident here in Washington, I also want to address three other things. One is the challenge that I think is before us in this new legislation. Clearly we have a challenge that's very explicit, I believe, in that our citizens, our customers, expect more from us than we've been delivering. Secondly, I will focus briefly on what's happening in ISTEA. You will hear about it from other people, perhaps in better terms, but in that context I would like to talk about the National Highway System. I feel that if there's anything that is uniquely a federal responsibility it is the National Highway System, and I will focus on it in terms of our ongoing progress. Finally, I will close with what needs to be done, the immediate challenges before us.

The message, and I'm going to say it three different ways, is a message that the transportation system that we feel responsibility for clearly has more people concerned about it, more input, more output than most of us have been willing to admit to or have wanted to admit to. We have tended to focus on commuters. We've tended to think about the people that are the obvious users of our system and the ones that vote most vocally with either their votes or their voices. A few of us have talked about motor carriers and the different classes of motor carriers. A few others, too few, have talked about the shippers that are concerned with just-in-time delivery and a whole lot of other things. And, very few of us have considered that the transportation system has to deal with our unintended customers. We are now faced in very stark terms with our impact on air quality and with our impact on water quality. These are externalities, but they really aren't all that external to what we do at all.

In Washington they have faced up to the question of land values and how to manage growth, if you can at all. Clearly, what we do in the transportation system is land use. We've talked about that, but by and large, we've

done very little about it. There is a pool of money and a very, very restricted pool of money, that's available for all public investments. There are many competing investment opportunities in schools, sewers, water systems, research, and other things. Consequently, we have to be concerned about all these things. Many states really like to think about traditional customers and too many of them stop right there. That just isn't good enough. It just isn't good enough for the world ahead of us.

I believe that there is a change in perspective that is required. The good news is that much of the country knows this and is operating under this new perspective, but there are still a few places that have not adopted it. I believe that they have simply got to make this shift. You can classify it as end product, customer criteria needs, public input and then you can talk about old and new. Let me say that the end product has too often been viewed as a highway facility in contrast to a service. There is a difference. The facility may not in fact provide the kind of service that is needed. The customer, we have tended in all of our standardized processes to think about is vehicles, whether 18 wheelers or passenger cars or whatever. We have tended to write our processes to focus on vehicles as being the customer. But, the vehicles aren't customers at all. It's the people and the people that use the systems, whether users or non-users, that really have to be considered.

The old paradigm, the old thinking, focused on an assessment of a limited set of alternatives. We tried very deliberately to constrain the agenda because we were afraid that if it got too big we wouldn't be able to deal with it. We also know that if you open up the process, it's going to be very difficult and very messy. We'll get a lot of ideas that we are not very comfortable with. That, however, is what we have to do. In Washington, Duane has set in motion urban and rural advisory groups that bring inputs to him from all sources. This is clearly the new perspective that we must adopt.

I can't leave you tonight without referring to one of my favorite authors, Kenneth Boulding. He says that the principal problem with our planning process has been very limited agendas. We have brought to decision makers a set of options that are so narrow that there's nothing really attractive. When you do that of course, you come up with bad decisions. If you have a narrow agenda that does not include something innovative that appeals to more people, then you've failed as planners. That's been one of our problems.

It seems to me that if you wanted to say it as concisely as you can, what people want is better mobility and—and the and is always kind of an open ended thing—they want mobility. If you read the San Francisco

Chronicle in their periodic surveys, congestion reduction is always right up at the top. People want congestion relief. Make no mistake about that. They would like to have a seamless transportation service, whatever that means to individuals. They would like to have minimized freight costs. But the "and" they also want is clean air. They have voted for that. We have the Clean Air Act Amendments. They want jobs. Wherever you pick up a paper, you find that jobs is a critical issue. "And" they want historic preservation, wetlands preserved and whatever. This list is about as long as you have room to write it. But as transportation people, it seems to me what we have to realize is that there is an expectation for improved mobility "and" and if we're going to be successful, we've got to define that "and" and work with a whole lot of people to make it clear.

That's a tough job and an awful lot of people that I talk to in the transportation world don't want to face up to it. I have had meetings with people who say that's not our job. We don't want to deal with those "ands". What we want to do is deal with what we are comfortable with. We don't like all this process. We want to build roads, that's what we're hired to do. We want to provide a transit system, that's what we're hired to do. Well, I'm telling you that's not good enough and if there's any group that can help go beyond the mobility and deal with those "ands", it's the group right here in this room. I can't really tell you what the balance is. The legislation, the ISTEA, raises the question of balance. And you as transportation planners, you're going to have to decide because there is no perfect answer. The world with nice neat answers is a world that was yesterday and it's not a world that we have available to us now.

Well, so much for the challenge. I think the challenge lays in being willing to accept the notion that transportation is more than just dealing with the mobility crisis that we have. It's much more than that and we have to be players in this broader arena.

My second focus is the progress in the ISTEA legislation. I believe that there has never been a time in my professional life when I've seen the kind of energy that we see now. This audience speaks to it. Here are people from all walks of transportation. There are chief executives, there are operational planners, a cross section of folks that would not have come together unless there had been new energy provided in the transportation world. Well that's happened. We have an awful lot of energy that has been unleashed by the ISTEA legislation.

Let me give you a few statistics and point out with these statistics some of the things that you face as transportation decisionmakers and planners. First of all, total obligations as of right now are about 71 percent of the \$11.4 billion that's available. That's better than we

did last year, even though this year we didn't really get started until December 18th. We have done very well. Some states are up in the 90 percent plus range in terms of obligating available funds. So that's sort of the good news. We have also done very well with carryover funds from the traditional programs. The percentages are very, very high, 84, 76 and so forth.

The legislation has created some new categories. You're aware of some of these. The Surface Transportation Program, Transportation Enhancement Program, and Congestion Integration and Air Quality Program. In these new categories we're doing relatively less well. For example, in the congestion clean air category, we're at 11 percent. In the enhancements category under STP, the Surface Transportation Program, we're at 12 percent. What that says to me is that there's a high level of uncertainty out there and people are waiting for direction and for guidance to decide how they ought to move forward.

Explaining the delays is very difficult to do. I think the delay is partly in EPA and DOT coming to agreement on the question of what metropolitan areas are going to have to do to be in compliance with the Clean Air Act. Some of the flexibility provisions have also delayed obligations. Flexibility can easily turn into frustration, and I think that's an adequate and a good way of characterizing it. But we have seen some progress there. Among highway categories \$730 million has been involved in transfers, about \$300 million of which has been moved to the Surface Transportation Program, the program with the most flexibility. Clearly this suggests that people want to use this flexibility. Regarding the temporary match waiver, there are eight states that have used the provisions of the temporary waiver for 472 projects involving \$463 million. So this waiver opportunity has been used significantly. Just recently the credit for the non-federal share, the so-called soft match, has been requested. New Jersey has come in with a request for using soft match to do some of their projects.

The ISTEA legislation with its flexibility is starting to have an impact. Duane made the point in one of his writings, that several things are required for ISTEA to work. One is that the states and the MPOs have to get off the dime, and start working hard. He's doing that here. Another one of his specifications was that the federal government should not put unduly burdensome requirements on the states and MPOs. We're trying hard not to do that. We are writing guidance, we're not writing hard regulations. His third observation was that we had to have full funding but that is very much in question right now. If you've been following the dispute in the Congress, the House has come in with a number

that is substantially lower than we would like to see (lower than the President requested). There is now a dispute over whether or not to take that out of foreign aid. The Senate has yet to weigh in on this. I firmly believe that Duane is right on the mark. You can't underfund a new program and have it succeed. You have to buy winners. You have to have more money in order for people to feel that they're winning. If we don't see that in this Congress in the appropriations process, then a lot of what we have talked about in ISTEA as opportunity will in fact turn to frustration. We are at a decision point right at this very moment.

At this point I want to shift to something that I feel passionately about, the National Highway System. There are two ways to talk about the National Highway System. One is in terms of the social dimensions of our country, unity really, and the other is economics. One of my favorite readings of the last few months is Merrill Peterson's book on Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation. I think it's useful to go back and review some of the people that were here when this country got started. Peterson references Mr. Jefferson's speech to the 9th U.S. Congress in 1806 when he had pretty well started on a track of balancing the budget and the Louisiana Purchase. He also focused on a public works program, that he had worked on with Albert Galatin, the Secretary of the Treasury, \$20 million for the entire United States. Jefferson said "roads and canals would knit the union together, facilitate defense, furnish avenues of trade, break down local prejudices and consolidate that union of sentiment so essential to the national politics". Well, I would suggest that if it was important back in 1806, it's doubly important today. We really ought to look at our transportation programs and at the National Highway System in particular as having this kind of a function, the knitting together of the union.

You could say we've had a union that's worked pretty well for a couple hundred years, so why do we need this. Well, let me insert a bit of a reality check here. There are 186 countries on this globe, in this global village, and of those 186, probably 20 have a natural unity. Sweden would be one, France would be another, Japan, where there's a unified ethnicity that keeps the country glued together. All the rest of those 186 are in fact in danger of flying apart and creating what the economists call flyspeck states—isn't that a neat word? These are a bunch of flyspeck states. And the whole world is going through a lot of turmoil as we're watching this happen.

Now I don't argue that transportation is the only force that keeps us together, but it's clearly communication, the 737 airplane that I flew out on, the National Highway System, these are things that do in fact create bonds. And as Mr. Jefferson said, they do in

a very significant way affect the national polity in favor of union. We know the countries, it isn't only Yugoslavia that's dividing. We can look at our neighbor to the north, Canada, struggling with whether or not Quebec is going to stay in or not. In Spain, the Catalanes are always debating whether they're going to stay in the Spanish union. I could go on. The Soviet Union, disunion is the most evident force. It seems to me that we ought to talk about the National Highway System very seriously as a force for union. I think that if we don't do that, we're not really looking at this thing as realistically as we should.

Let me switch to the economic side. The Interstate System is something that the Federal Highway Administration certainly feels very proud. It is a system that to a unique degree unites these United States of America. We know that this system is old. It was devised back in the 30's. The original map dates back to Franklin Roosevelt. The legislation was signed by President Eisenhower. One of its major defects is that it does not address the north south corridors that we know are going to be part of the North American Free Trade Agreement. We have to look towards a more complete system, the National Highway System, as President Bush presented it before the people that were in attendance when he announced the Administration's Bill in March 1991. The Interstate System as you know is pretty well complete, except for Boston. So what we need to do is develop a modern system that has more north-south identification, that relates better to ports, to border crossings, to airports, to a whole lot of things that were not really considered when the Interstate Highway System was laid out. So let me suggest that you have a very major role. We've made that part of our advanced guidance that was mailed out not too many weeks ago, to say that we expect as part of the statewide transportation planning process that you will identify those highways that are ultimately going to be part of this system. That system will ultimately carry about 70 percent of all commercial traffic and perhaps as much as 45 percent or thereabouts of all traffic. That system is absolutely central to the economic wellbeing of this country and to the social union of this country. It is important that you make it a central interest.

This is the time table for designation. The states and the MPOs will complete a functional reclassification by December 31 of this year. The states and MPOs will submit proposed NHS by April 30, 1993. FHWA will submit a report to Congress in December, 1993 and Congress will approve it by 1995. Let me say that there's an awful lot of time for mischief to happen here. This was a system that was not well regarded by some. We argued vigorously, the Administration, the President,

Sam Skinner at the time, for this to be included because it is in fact the glue that ties us together. It is the essential component that makes us different than a conglomeration of flyspeck castans. We have got to have this system and we've got to pay for it. We've got to pay attention to it. It's in the legislation, but again, keep your eye on this and make sure that we do have a system that is approved in September of 1995.

Well, let me switch to my third topic which was what next, where are we going. I hope that I've communicated the notion that we have a new kind of landscape. We have an awful lot of things that have been turned on their head, and the only way that I know that we can succeed in the face of all the difficulties we face is by forming a very, very close set of working partnerships. The elements of a working partnership are hard to define. We know, however, that it depends on trust. It's a feeling that we can depend on each other in the kind of unusual circumstances that will come up as we go forward.

If I had to say what I would like to leave with you, that would probably be very close to the heart of my message. We have got to be willing to talk to each other openly and to form agreements and partnerships that will in fact get us through some of the difficult times that are ahead of us.

There's no use in my trying to kid you. There are some difficult times ahead. You all know that. One of my favorite cartoon strips, and I have to take a little bit of a shot at planning here, is this one from Calvin and Hobbes. "Cleaning my room will go a lot faster if we both work, right? So I will sit here and do all the tedious agonizing planning and organizing, you know making the tough calls and hard decisions, and you won't have to do any of that. All you do then is pick up what I tell you to okay? Hey, did I say to pick up me? No, as a matter of fact, I didn't. Get away from that trash can. I'm the organizer, hey!" Well, it seems to me that the world that we face is a pretty sophisticated world. We have sophisticated citizens. If we're not careful, we as a transportation planning group could find ourselves picked up and carried to a trash can and dropped. That's the challenge that we face. We have to be relevant. We have to understand this business of partnerships. We have to bring people in and really put our heart and soul into it. What I would like to see is, a group of people, (I don't know who they are, I haven't put names on them,) but I would like to see people coming together in the spirit of cooperation and true partnerships. People who know that we have legislation, a new mandate. People who know that transportation is important in our society, and are serious about the business of making sure that transportation planning works.

Well, the good news is that there are some states that jumped right out of the box and have done some very exciting things. I talked to Larry Dahms a while ago. Larry says that in San Francisco, the partnership that brings together a whole host of actors in the Bay Area that care about transportation is gaining momentum. They are facing tough decisions about how to use some of these new program monies and making them work. Here in Washington, as I've said, Duane and his people have provided leadership in the transportation land use connection. They have clearly put in place most of the legislation that is needed to take advantage of all the flexibility provisions in ISTEA. They have inputs from local and urban people that are allowing them to, rather than sitting around and wringing their hands, move forward very aggressively. In Maryland, they have a program for using enhancement money that is clearly an "out of the box" kind of a program. So, if you're feeling frustrated, let me suggest that you contact some of these leaders, some of these "out of the box folks". Or see Tony Kane and Kevin Heanue at FHWA. We try to keep track of what is going on and we can point you to success stories. There are a lot of success stories that are out there even at this time.

Well, let me close, even though my hour is not quite up, with a couple of things that I would like to leave with you as images. In almost every area that I know of, there are five-point interchanges. In Pennsylvania there are a bunch of them and they are always political hot spots because it's very difficult to know what to do with a five-point interchange. The Brits solved the problem by having rotaries. They kind of run around until something happens and that's how they deal with it. But in this country we have typically put a red light at this point. If you know much about traffic engineering, the typical cycle time doesn't give you any green time at all. You wind up with everybody basically sitting waiting for their two seconds worth of green time and you don't make a whole lot of progress. Traffic backs up.

We try, and I think the answer is to do something upstream. If you try to fix it at the five-point interchange it's impossible. You can't really deal with it. So what you try to do is move upstream and do something. You can divert the traffic upstream by putting some other roads in here, approximating a rotary actually. But you've got to do something because if you don't, the system will breakdown.

That's where we are I think with ISTEA. We have all these people, local government, transit operators, state MPOs and probably a few others, you could probably make a seven-point interchange out of this if we really wanted to. But I think that we have to work ourselves back upstream and find solutions so that we don't in fact

come to a gridlocked circumstance. So think about the ways in which, as you look at the statewide planning process, we get these potential gridlock components and don't let them come to gridlock. Focus on process, a process that allows partners to get involved, to find solutions before they come to a point of gridlock.

My last thought could be called the ISTE A elephant. Some of you may remember this poem, *The Blind Man and the Elephant*, from someplace back in your childhood. I will read just a little bit of it. "It was six men of Indostan, to learning much inclined, who went to see the elephant though all of them were blind, that each by observation might satisfy his mind. The first approached the elephant and happened to fall against his broad and sturdy side and at once began to bawl, God Bless me, but the elephant is very much like a wall." Well, it goes on but the last two verses of this rather long doggerel I think are useful. "And so these men of Indostan disputed loud and long, each in his own opinion exceedingly stiff and strong, though each was partly in the right and all were in the wrong. So often theologic wars or disputants utter ignorance of what each other

means and prayed about an elephant not one of them has seen."

It seems to me that ISTE A is in fact kind of an elephant and we are struggling as partially blind men and women to define this thing. I would like us not to jump to conclusions. Just because you feel this tail, don't conclude that ISTE A is a rope. ISTE A is a very complex thing and it has to be defined with care and attention over some number of months. It's happening. The good news is that again people like Duane Berentson here in Washington, people like Hal Kasoff back in Maryland and Larry Dahms in San Francisco, and others are finding creative ways to define what this legislation can do to advance things in which you're interested. ISTE A has that potential. Don't settle on an ISTE A that is nothing more than a rope, when in fact it has so much potential.

If we use it creatively, you can help us move America into the next century and that's what it's all about. We want to be able to move America to jobs, to homes, to market, etc. That's the intention of the Surface Transportation Legislation.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING: A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

James Street, Seattle City Council

In addition to being a member of the City Council, I'm President of the Puget Sound Regional Council which is the planning agency, the MPO, for the four counties that circle Seattle. And I'm a member of the King County Growth Management Planning Council which is a group that's been brought together to develop for the first time in the history of the State of Washington county-wide policies that have to be consistent with all of the local comprehensive plans.

You've arrived in our city in what I consider, and I think most of the people who live in the State of Washington consider, to be revolutionary times. Revolutionary in terms of transportation planning, and certainly what's happened at the federal level has contributed in a major way, and also revolutionary, and perhaps even more revolutionary, in terms of growth management. We've had in the last several years legislation that has dramatically transformed the way we plan, the way we work together in this state, and I think it really does fit into sort of the revolutionary category.

I've had in my household in the last month several visitors from Russia who were here as part of an

exchange program. And as I thought about preparing these remarks for this morning, I couldn't help comparing what they described in terms of the revolution and/or counter revolution going on in Russia and what may or may not evolve as we look at the revolutions going on in transportation planning, decision making, and growth management in Seattle and in the United States. After all, if you look at some of the things that happened there, you had perestroika and glasnost which had at the beginning a tremendous stimulus to creative spirit, thinking, hope, a belief that things would be different and would be approached differently. But you also had what I would call a half-baked revolution, one in which the leadership was tentative and not sure how far to go, one in which the institutional changes that occurred only went part of the way, one in which many of the old guard remain in power and share power with those that would aspire for major change, and therefore a bitter battle continues over who controls the decisions and on what direction funding will go. In other words, you did not sweep away with that revolution either the institutions or all the people that had made decisions in the past. And then you have forces pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet, and finally you have forces in terms of counter revolution and economic depression that tends to undercut the spirit and the optimism and the direction of that revolution.