

INTRODUCTION

This document reports on a conference held in Irvine, California in May of 1992 called "Transportation Data Needs: Programs for a New Era—Implications for State DOTs and MPOs." This conference was sponsored by the TRB Committee on Transportation Data and Information Systems, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration.

The last major conference related to transportation data needs was held in October 1989. The challenges envisioned for the 1990s at that time included highway safety, congestion, and mobility planning. Institutional forms for meeting the planning needs was of major interest. Three workshops--urban, statewide, and national--provided recommendations related to data.

For urban areas, the recommendations included: reinstituting previously mandated continuing processes for monitoring and reporting trends; supporting the production of the special census journey-to-work package; encouraging collateral collection activities to complement the census; development of a congestion-monitoring data set; and a condition and performance monitoring capability for transit, akin to Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS).

For statewide planning, conclusions and recommendations included: greater coordination between data bases (e.g., pavement management, HPMS); better truck related data collection procedures; better data for intermodal planning; inclusion of performance and level of service (LOS) data in HPMS; a set-aside of at least two percent of federal transportation funds for transportation planning and research; and a review of management strategies for data collection.

For national data, conclusions and recommendations were: development of uniform measures of congestion; several improvements to HPMS (trip length, functional classification, sub-area geography; expansion of the Section 15 transit data base to obtain condition data on fixed plant; development of aggregate measures of local road needs; need for collection of data on longer trips; and collection of commodity O/D data.

The 1989 conference recognized many of the needs and issues related to data which were considered when developing the new highway legislation. Since that time, there has been a major refocusing on planning requirements and the data needed to support planning resulting from the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990 and the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. The requirements of

this legislation demand a rethinking of the traditional approaches to planning and the required supporting data. The traditional models and forecasting procedures may no longer be accurate enough, and may not provide the appropriate feedback between land use and travel demand forecasts. New data are required to support the new emphasis on intermodal planning and the ISTEA requirements the development and maintenance of management systems related to highway pavement, bridges, safety, congestion, public transportation facilities and equipment, and intermodal facilities and systems.

The new requirements have resulted in data collection management challenges in the areas of quality control, effective use of limited resources, use of technology, effective use of sampling and statistical analysis, and staffing issues.

Because of the importance of the data issues and the need of the profession for guidance, this national conference was organized to bring together transportation professionals from federal, state, and local planning groups, as well as academicians, consultants, and researchers to generate and present ideas that would help develop positive and productive data programs which are cost effective and will support the new demands of decision makers.

The anticipated result of the conference was guidance to states and MPOs in developing their work programs for upcoming years. Such programs will take into account the new requirements of the ISTEA of 1991 and the CAAA.

There were four panels with presentations and discussion on the first day. The panels were on issues and implications for data and collection procedures in the following four areas: the environment; management systems; transportation policy, finance, and evaluation; and land use, economic development, and growth management. On the second day there were four concurrent workshops organized in the four areas described.

About one hundred professionals participated in the conference and applied considerable energy and knowledge in the development of recommendations related to the data needed for this new era in transportation.

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