

## KEYNOTE LUNCHEON ADDRESS

Sarah C. Campbell, TransManagement, Inc.—Presiding

### The Delaware Experience

*Anne Canby, Secretary, Delaware Department of Transportation*



It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak to you today. I would like to focus my remarks on the evolving relationship between the Delaware Department of Transportation (DELDOT) and MPOs in the state. I think it has been a very positive relationship that continues to improve. In 1991, I was working as a consultant to the Wilmington Metropolitan Area Planning Coordinating Council (WILMAPCO), which is the MPO in Wilmington, Delaware. Part of my responsibilities were to assist the MPO in addressing the requirements of the ISTEA. Little did I know at that time that I would soon be appointed the Secretary of DELDOT and that I would be dealing with MPOs from the state side.

Through the ISTEA, MPOs have the opportunity to provide a forum to bring all the diverse agencies and groups interested in the transportation system together. In Delaware, these groups include the transit agencies, the counties, the state economic development agency, environmental agencies, the public, and other groups. All of these groups have important roles to play in addressing transportation issues. It is especially critical to involve the agencies and groups responsible for land use and development activities in the transportation planning process.

The population of Delaware is approximately 700,000 and there are only three counties and two MPOs in the state. This makes the development of plans and other activities very manageable. Many MPOs in the country are bigger than our whole state. Our small size also

provides a manageable set of institutional relationships.

We recently initiated our long-range planning activities by focusing on what we want Delaware to look like in 25 or 30 years. Clearly, the decisions we make today and in the next few years will be critical in shaping the future growth of the state. There are many special things about Delaware and we want to make sure these are not lost as the state continues to develop. We also want to ensure that the transportation system helps support future growth.

The first phase of the long-range planning effort has been completed with the development of state guidelines that will be used by state agencies, the counties, and the MPOs during the next phase. The State Transportation Plan will be completed by the end of this year. The counties will then use this plan to update their comprehensive land use plans. This effort will be initiated next year. There is a good deal of interaction among the state, the counties, and the MPOs on the development of these plans to ensure coordination.

Because of our small size, bringing the key decision makers together is probably easier than in larger, more populated states. We also have a strong tradition of working together, which makes developing and implementing plans easier. Even with this tradition of working together, we are facing many of the same issues as other metropolitan areas and difficult decisions will have to be made concerning future developments and the transportation system.

One somewhat unique feature in Delaware is that the state is responsible for most of the transportation infrastructure in the state. For example, DELDOT is responsible for the I-95 Freeway and for subdivision cul-de-sacs. There are only approximately 1,000 miles of roadways in the state that are not under the jurisdiction of DELDOT. The state also plays a major role in funding other infrastructure elements, including water and wastewater treatment facilities, schools, and parks.

As part of our planning efforts, we have realized the need to better understand the financial and quality of life issues associated with various land use and development scenarios. We want to ensure that there is close coordination between land use and transportation to help ensure that future development patterns maintain a high quality of life for area residents.

Another advantage in Delaware is that our institutional relations may be simpler than other areas. DELDOT and the MPOs have established a strong partnership and a good ongoing working relationship. The Planning Division in DELDOT is not very large, so it is to our

advantage to work closely with the MPOs, the counties, and other groups in the state to maximize resources.

For example, the development of the state TIP and the MPO TIPs were closely coordinated and joint hearings were held on both plans. Projects in the MPO TIPs will be included in the state multi-year capital improvement program. By working with the MPOs, DELDOT can help ensure that the projects in the TIP are compatible with the state plan.

We are also focusing on developing a realistic plan that will build in both accountability and certainty. We have made enormous progress in this regard over the last couple of years. For example, by April of this year about 85 percent of the 1995 Capital Program had been initiated. Thus, we want to ensure that we are developing realistic plans and that we are delivering projects on schedule and within budget.

We are in the process now of developing a joint project prioritization process with the MPOs. It is unrealistic to have multiple prioritization processes in a state of our size. With the help of outside consultants, DELDOT is working with the MPOs and other groups to develop an ongoing process for rating and selecting projects.

DELDOT and the MPOs are also working cooperatively on the development and use of the management systems required by the ISTEA. This includes the development of common goals and performance measures, as well as the sharing of data. DELDOT provides assistance to the MPOs in the areas of transportation modeling and analysis.

DELDOT is currently working with the Northern Delaware MPO on a major investment study (MIS) in a key travel corridor. This study, which has just been initiated, will consider alternative transportation improvements in the corridor to meet the anticipated demand. It will also consider land use and development issues and the relationships of these to the transportation system.

I think it is important that transportation plans be fiscally constrained and present a realistic program of projects matched to available resources. This is not an easy process, however. It means that difficult decisions will have to be made on which projects are given priority. We want to focus on a realistic program because we want to ensure that we can actually deliver the priority projects.

Even with our small size, there are significant differences between northern and southern Delaware. This means that the transportation issues in the two areas are also very different. Maintaining an awareness of

the needs of both areas is important so that the appropriate projects are developed and implemented.

Public involvement is a critical element of both the state and the MPO planning process. DELDOT has a philosophy that early involvement of all groups is critical to ensuring a good transportation system. Thus, investing in a good public participation program is an important part of our approach. Like other departments of transportation, we have had bad experiences when we have not adequately involved the public. We want to ensure that the full range of interests—including environmentalists, shippers, developers, community groups, and private individuals—all have input into the planning process. In general, I think our experiences with public involvement have been very positive.

We have also had success using the flexibility offered in the ISTEA to ensure that the priority projects are funded. I think the flexible funding provisions of the ISTEA have helped to promote further cooperation and coordination among all groups in the state.

Overall, I would say that DELDOT and the two MPOs are working well together. Clearly, there is still a good deal of work to do to meet all of the ISTEA requirements and to develop plans and programs that will meet the future transportation needs of the state.

I hope this conference will help identify ways we can continue to improve the metropolitan transportation planning process. I would suggest that the ISTEA has helped advance realistic planning and programming efforts in metropolitan areas through the country. I hope the budget and programming changes currently considered by Congress do not distract from these gains. Now is the time to build partnerships to continue bringing together the groups responsible for the transportation system, land use, development, and environmental issues. The ISTEA provides the framework and the opportunity to do this.

In conclusion, I hope that transportation will continue to be a national priority. The experience in Delaware with the ISTEA has been positive. The ongoing cooperation between the states, MPOs, and other groups will be critical to ensuring a transportation system that supports a vibrant economy and a high quality of life. I hope you will have a productive conference and I challenge you to continue to work toward the goals of developing a metropolitan planning process that involves all groups and develops the partnerships needed to maintain a viable transportation system in metropolitan areas throughout the country.