

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH CIRCULAR
Number 450, December 1995

Institutional Aspects of Metropolitan Transportation Planning



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Conference on Institutional Aspects of Metropolitan Transportation Planning

May 21-24, 1995
Williamsburg Hospitality House
Williamsburg, Virginia

Presented by
Transportation Research Board
National Research Council

In cooperation with the
Federal Transit Administration
Federal Highway Administration

Conference Proceedings

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The preparation of these proceedings was funded in part through grants from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, United States Department of Transportation.

FOREWORD

These proceedings summarize the highlights from the *Conference on Institutional Aspects of Metropolitan Transportation Planning*. The Conference was held on May 21 through May 24, 1995, at the Williamsburg Hospitality House in Williamsburg, Virginia. The Conference brought together 150 individuals from throughout the country to discuss the status of metropolitan transportation planning in light of the new roles and responsibilities associated with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991.

The Conference was sponsored by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) of the National Research Council in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The objectives of the Conference were to assess the responses of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to the requirements of the ISTEA, to examine the resources and capabilities of MPOs to assume these new responsibilities, to assess the relationships between MPOs and state and local agencies, and to identify additional research and technical assistance needs to help meet the ISTEA mandates.

To accomplish these objectives, the Conference included keynote speeches and workshop sessions. The Conference opened with presentations on the metropolitan transportation planning process from the perspective of representatives from the federal government, state departments of transportation, transit agencies, MPOs, local units of government, and special interest groups. A second general session summarized the results of recent studies focusing on various aspects of the metropolitan transportation planning process and MPOs. Other keynote speakers addressed the issues associated with environmental justice and the metropolitan transportation planning process in Delaware.

The Conference participants then spent a day and a half in workshop sessions discussing the critical issues and opportunities associated with the metropolitan transportation planning process. The six workshops focused on roles and relationships, public participation in the planning process, fiscal reality in the planning process, technical linkages in the planning process, decision making, and integrating related decisions and planning activities. The key issues, strategies, and immediate action steps identified in each of the workshops were presented in the final Conference sessions, which also featured comments from Jane Garvey, the FHWA Deputy Administrator.

The results from the workshops, as presented in these proceedings, will be of use to TRB, FHWA, FTA, national transportation organizations, state departments of transportation, MPOs, transit agencies, and other groups in identifying key research and technical assistance needs, potential enhancements to the metropolitan transportation planning process, and further studies to advance the state-of-the-practice. These proceedings should help facilitate the ongoing improvement of the metropolitan transportation planning process.

A number of people contributed to the success of the Conference and deserve recognition. First, we would like to thank the other members of the Conference Planning Committee for the time and effort they put into organizing the Conference and leading the workshop sessions. Second, the speakers did an excellent job of summarizing the key issues and opportunities associated with the metropolitan transportation planning process. Third, the moderators and recorders provided valuable assistance in facilitating the workshop sessions. Fourth, the TRB staff—especially James Scott, Freda Morgan, Angelia Summons, Anita Brown, and Reggie Gillum—did an outstanding job handling the logistics for the Conference. Finally, all of the participants deserve thanks for sharing their concerns, ideas, and visions for the metropolitan transportation planning process.

These proceedings are intended to help facilitate the continued improvement of all aspects of the metropolitan transportation planning process. We hope they will be of use to all agencies and groups involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. Involvement in future activities will be critical to ensuring that the metropolitan planning process continues to meet the needs of all elements of society, and provides an efficient, effective, and sustainable transportation system.

Leslie R. White
Conference Co-Chair

Brigid Hynes-Cherin
Conference Co-Chair

CONTENTS

CONFERENCE SUMMARY—Katherine F. Turnbull	5
PLENARY SESSION—Opening Forum: Panel Discussion on Conference Theme	
Federal Perspective—John Horsley	7
State Perspective—Francis B. Francois	8
Transit Perspective—Richard J. Simonetta	12
Environmental Perspective—David Burwell	15
MPO Perspective—Stephen J. Del Giudice	16
KEYNOTE DINNER ADDRESS	
Social Justice and Ecological Sustainability: Issues and Opportunities for Metropolitan Transportation Planning—Henry Holmes	19
PRESENTATIONS OF KEY STUDIES ON THE INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT	
Procedures MPOs Use to Consider the 15 Factors in Developing Plans and Programs Under the ISTEA—Thomas F. Humphrey	23
States' Adaptation to the ISTEA Requirements—Ann Mladinov and Thomas Larson	28
Institutional Barriers to Intermodal Transportation Policies and Planning in Metropolitan Areas—Alan B. Winn	30
Case Study Findings on Metropolitan Planning Organizations—Bruce D. McDowell	33
Innovative Practices for Multimodal Transportation Planning for Freight and Passengers—Matthew Coogan	34
KEYNOTE LUNCHEON ADDRESS	
The Delaware Experience—Anne Canby	35
WORKSHOP REPORTS	
Workshop 1—Roles and Responsibilities	37
Workshop 2—Public Participation in the Planning Process	40
Workshop 3—Fiscal Reality in the Planning Process	44
Workshop 4—Technical Linkages in the Planning Process	46
Workshop 5—Decision Making	50
Workshop 6—Integrating Related Decisions and Planning Activities	52
CLOSING SESSION	
Federal Response—Jane Garvey	55
Closing Remarks—Brigid Hynes-Cherin	55
APPENDIX—Participants	57

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Katherine F. Turnbull, Texas Transportation Institute

Improving the metropolitan transportation planning process has been a major focus of federal, state, and local agencies for over 30 years. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 created a federal mandate for transportation planning in metropolitan areas throughout the country. The creation of councils of governments (COGs) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) helped bring additional focus to urban transportation planning. Subsequent Acts and federal and state regulations expanded and enhanced the urban transportation planning and project selection process.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 increased the roles and responsibilities of MPOs. The new responsibilities provide increased challenges and opportunities to MPOs throughout the country. Meeting these challenges is an ongoing concern of federal, state, and local agencies.

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) has provided a continuing forum for the discussion of the issues associated with metropolitan transportation planning. The first TRB conference on metropolitan transportation planning was held in 1965. Conferences have been held on a regular basis since then. The most recent of these conferences, which was cosponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), was held in Williamsburg, Virginia on May 21-24, 1995.

The objectives of the *Conference on Institutional Aspects of Metropolitan Transportation Planning* were to assess the responses of MPOs to the requirements of the ISTEA, to assess the resources and capabilities of MPOs to assume the new roles and responsibilities, to examine the relationships among MPOs and state and local governments, to assess the success of new partnerships, and to identify additional technical support, studies, and research needs.

To accomplish these objectives, approximately 150 representatives from MPOs, state departments of transportation, transit agencies, FHWA, FTA, consulting firms, university research organizations, and other groups

met for three days in Williamsburg. The Conference started with presentations on the status of metropolitan transportation planning activities and updates on current federal legislation. Participants then discussed the issues and opportunities associated with the metropolitan transportation planning process in workshop sessions focusing on the following topics.

Workshop 1—Roles and Responsibilities

Workshop 2—Public Participation in the Planning Process

Workshop 3—Fiscal Reality in the Planning Process

Workshop 4—Technical Linkages in the Planning Process

Workshop 5—Decision Making

Workshop 6—Integrating Related Decisions and Planning Activities

Participants in each of the workshops spent a day and a half discussing the issues and opportunities associated with their topic and possible strategies, short-term actions, and additional research to address the identified concerns. The results from the six workshops were presented and discussed at the final session of the Conference.

The major issues and opportunities, strategies, immediate actions, and research needs identified by each of the six workshop groups are presented in these proceedings. The general consensus among Conference participants was that the ISTEA has provided numerous opportunities to enhance the metropolitan transportation planning process. Although areas of concern were noted, along with items that needed further research and possible changes, the overall sentiment of the groups supported the basic concepts of the ISTEA.

These proceedings document the keynote speeches, the general session presentations, and workshop summaries. The issues, strategies, and immediate actions and research needs identified by each workshop are presented. These results should be of benefit to FHWA, FTA, TRB, MPOs, states and other groups interested in enhancing the metropolitan transportation planning process.

PLENARY SESSION—Opening Forum: Panel Discussion on Conference Theme

Brigid Hynes-Cherin, San Francisco County Transportation Authority, and Leslie White, Clark County Public Transportation Benefit Authority—Presiding

Federal Perspective

John Horsley, U.S. Department of Transportation



It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to participate in this Conference. I bring greetings from Rodney Slater, the FHWA Administrator, and Gordon Linton, the FTA Administrator, as well as Federico Peña, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The Department considers this Conference to be very important, and I am glad that a number of Department staff are participating. I think this Conference is even more important given the budget discussions currently underway in Congress. As you are aware, drastic cuts are being proposed in many critical transportation programs. The outcome of these discussions and the final budget appropriations will significantly impact the recommendations and outcome of this Conference, as well as the future transportation system.

There are four basic points or observations I would like to touch on related to the theme of this Conference. The first observation is that policy direction and leadership from the federal government is both important and helpful. A subset of this observation is that the policy prescriptions that came out of the ISTEA were correct and were passed at the right time. Some of the changes resulting from the ISTEA include the ability to flex funding from highway to transit projects and broadening the array of eligible projects. Further, the enhancement program has brought new groups into the transportation planning process and has resulted in some very innovative and exciting projects.

The ISTEA has also shifted greater responsibility in the decision-making process from formula-based allocations at the federal level to priority and need-based decisions at the state and local levels. The ISTEA has also helped open up the metropolitan transportation planning process by requiring the involvement of all groups. Transit agencies, environmental groups, freight interests, private sector groups, and others are now more extensively involved in the planning process in metropolitan areas throughout the country.

The ISTEA also addressed the overlapping components of the transportation system. These include concerns related to transportation air quality, the environment, the economy, social and economic factors. These all overlap, and the ISTEA requires that they all be considered in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The ISTEA also recognizes the fiscal realities facing all levels of government today. It places equal priority on the movement of both people and goods, and emphasizes the importance of connections between modes.

A second observation is that the outreach the Department has done has shown a broad support throughout the country for the institutional changes mandated by the ISTEA. Although many areas are still working through these changes, most areas have indicated positive responses to the evolving institutional arrangements as far as the multimodal focus of the ISTEA.

A third observation is that community-based transportation planning is going to be needed to build community consensus around the transportation solutions needed to address the major issues being faced by metropolitan areas throughout the country. One of the critical issues is how to pay for needed improvements and the ongoing operation and maintenance of the system. Consensus will need to be developed around a new range of solutions that communities can afford and that they will support.

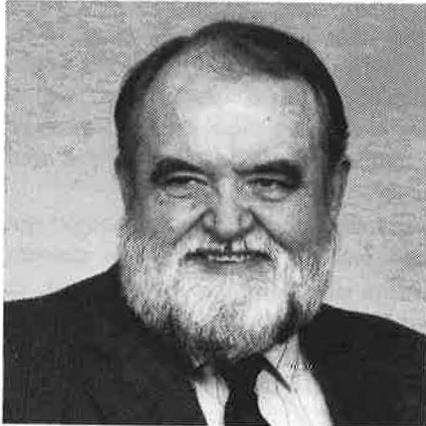
A final observation is that fiscal pressure is evident at all governmental levels today. This situation is not expected to change dramatically over the next few years. Thus, we must all look at ways to better manage existing transportation resources and streamline regulations and policies.

We realize that some of the regulations developed in response to the ISTEA may be overly burdensome. We are reexamining many requirements, and we are exploring ways to streamline the various processes. We would

welcome your comments and suggestions on improvements we could make.

State Perspective

Francis B. Francois, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials



I am pleased to be here and to have the opportunity to talk about the institutional aspects of metropolitan transportation planning. The Conference theme focuses on the three questions of where are we, where do we want to be, and how do we get there. I would like to begin by discussing a fourth question—that is how did we get to our present position? Providing a historical perspective on the evolution of metropolitan transportation planning and MPOs may help in charting a course for the future.

As a starting point, it is important to remember that there are three layers of government in the United States. At the top is the federal government, which is empowered to tax, to impose regulations, and to carry out specific programs. The state governments represent the second level. Local governments, which are created under state governments, are the third level. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) represents state government transportation agencies.

There are many programs that cut across these three governmental levels. The Federal-Aid Highway Program, which was created in 1916, provides one example of a cross-cutting effort. The Federal-Aid Highway Program provides federal funding to states, and to local governments through the states, for highway projects.

Urban problems and issues have historically been addressed by counties and municipalities. In many areas, the initial growth of suburban areas was controlled by central cities through annexation. After World War II, however, stronger separate suburban communities

emerged that were able to resist annexation from the older central cities. As a result, most metropolitan areas today contain a central city and numerous suburban jurisdictions, all of which provide a variety of governmental services.

Controlling growth and coordinating services and programs among these different jurisdictions emerged as a concern during the 1950s and 1960s. One of the first responses to these issues was the formation of voluntary organizations of local governments. A number of different approaches were used, including Councils of Governments (COGs) and regional councils. One such group was formed in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to bring together the two states of Virginia and Maryland, the District of Columbia, and local jurisdictions in the two states. I was first elected to County office in 1966, and I became a member of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (WASHCOG) Board of Directors that same year. I served on the Board for 14 years.

In the 1960s, COGs depended on programs from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a large share of their funding and on the A-95 review mandate from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for their authority. The A-95 process required that certain federal funding requests from local governments be reviewed by COGs and compared against regional plans to ensure that duplication did not exist and that requests were coordinated at the regional level.

In most cases, COGs were voluntary organizations formed by the local governments outside of the federal and the state governmental structures. Further, most COG boards were comprised of local elected officials. Many COGs developed regional transportation and land use plans. The actual implementation of these plans was left to cities, counties, and states, however, since COGs lacked any specific governing authority.

In the 1960s and 1970s, additional federal legislation established metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and charged them with specific transportation planning responsibilities. In most cases, the MPO requirements were simply added to existing COGs or regional councils. To some extent MPOs suffered from some of the same weaknesses as the COG structure. These weaknesses included volunteer boards comprised of local officials who often focused on local concerns rather than regional issues, and no real taxing power to provide funding for project implementation. A good deal was accomplished by MPOs during this time period, however, even with these limitations.

I think it is important to remember that even after the first TRB Conference on MPOs here in Williamsburg in 1965, the reaction of many states toward the MPO process

was negative. At that point, most state transportation agencies were still highway departments. Further, AASHTO had not yet gained its "T." Rather, we were the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO), and the organization was primarily governed by the chief highway engineer from every state. In many states, the traditional rural legacy of the Federal-Aid Highway Program was still in place. At that time, many state highway agencies were having a difficult time addressing urban and metropolitan issues, let alone dealing with new regional organizations.

In the 1970s, as AASHO became AASHTO, as state highway departments became state departments of transportation, and as the problems associated with urban development became more important, the thinking about metropolitan planning began to change. As a result, the need for metropolitan transportation planning was recognized as a necessity in most areas.

In 1981, meetings were held between representatives from AASHTO and from the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), in response to efforts by the Reagan Administration to reconsider the urban transportation planning process. A number of principles relating to urban transportation planning were agreed to at these meetings. These were adopted as an AASHTO policy statement (T17-Role in Urban Transportation Planning), which is still in effect today. A number of the basic principles from this statement are relevant for the discussions at this Conference.

First, there was agreement that urban transportation planning should be focused on metropolitan areas with populations of 200,000 or more. In fact, the document stated that transportation planning should be mandatory in these areas. The agreement also noted that transportation planning was appropriate for areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000 if there was support from the state and local governments.

Second, the agreement stated that the governor, in consultation with local governments, should establish the composition of the MPO unless otherwise provided by law. You are probably all well aware that some states have legislated MPOs and regional organizations. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in the San Francisco-Oakland area is one example of this approach. The MTC was established by the California State Legislature in 1970.

The agreement also discussed both the purpose of the planning process and the key elements that should be included in the process. The major roles identified for MPOs were to provide a framework for state and local government communication and cooperation, to provide a forum for resolving areawide issues, to provide a clearinghouse for regional information and proposals, and

to provide a mechanism for local governments to work with the state, transit agencies, and other groups to address critical transportation needs. Involving transit agencies and operators was somewhat novel at that time, as they usually had not been actively involved in the transportation planning process.

The AASHTO-NARC agreement expressed in the AASHTO statement also supported a periodic certification process by the states to ensure that the MPOs were meeting federal rules and regulations. The documents to be developed by MPOs outlined in the agreement included the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and a transportation plan. It was further suggested that the TIP should be consistent with expected funding levels.

In 1987, AASHTO initiated an effort involving many organizations to seek consensus on reauthorizing the federal programs. This effort was started in recognition that construction of the Interstate system was nearing completion and that a future vision of the transportation system was needed. As part of this effort, a new organization—the Transportation Alternatives Group—was formed. This organization involved the American Public Works Association, the American Automobile Association, the Highway Users Federation, AASHTO, and other groups, twelve in all. The Transportation Alternatives Group spent a good deal of time over a three to four year period developing a set of general principles related to metropolitan transportation planning that all groups could agree to.

One of these principles stated that the new federal surface transportation program should permit state, regional, and local governmental units to more effectively meet urban, suburban, and rural transportation needs by providing greater state and local flexibility in planning and programming decisions. Another of the principles supported enhancing the role of local governments in an effective intergovernmental multimodal process in metropolitan and rural areas. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) included many of these principles. The ISTEA also reflected ideas and concepts that had been discussed by numerous groups, including AASHTO, for many years.

The ISTEA was therefore not as revolutionary as some people may think. Rather, many aspects of the ISTEA were evolutionary in nature. The ISTEA empowers MPOs in many new ways, and it requires MPOs to take on new roles and responsibilities. The ISTEA assumes that MPOs are capable of responding to these new assignments. There is also an assumption in the ISTEA that MPOs are the same across the country. Both of these assumptions can be questioned.

Following the passage of the ISTEA, AASHTO's role

was to assist in the implementation of many of the new requirements. The federal government is obviously a key partner in this implementation process. As you are aware, however, most of the highways in this country are designed, owned, and operated by the states. Thus, many of the responsibilities under the ISTEA and previous Acts fall to the states. Further, the matching share for federal funding comes primarily from the states and from local governments. In total, state and local funding sources account for approximately 75 percent of all transportation funding. The federal share is smaller than either the state or the local share.

The state departments of transportation and AASHTO have done a number of things to implement the mandates of the ISTEA. For example, a number of training programs were conducted through the cooperative efforts of AASHTO, the various states, TRB, and MPOs.

Currently, there are 260 recognized MPOs in the country. Of these, 206 are in smaller urban areas and 54 are in the larger metropolitan areas with populations over 200,000. Approximately half of the staff members at MPOs come from the old regional councils, to which many MPOs are still attached, 28 percent are from local governments, 22 percent have independent staff, and in 2 percent the state provides the staffing. This is a major change from the 1970s, when some 75 percent of the MPO staff were part of the COG or regional council.

AASHTO conducted surveys in 1992 and 1993 through a cooperative effort with NARC and the American Public Transit Association. The purpose of these surveys was to identify the status of implementation activities, problem areas or issues, and best practice case studies. An additional survey was conducted focusing on the status of multimodal data collection activities. Throughout this process, efforts were underway in each state to help ensure that the MPO process was working as intended.

In general, I think good working relationships have been established between the states and MPOs throughout the country. There are issues in some states, however, including one state where the governor has initiated an effort to do away with an MPO. In addition, there are still questions about the technical capabilities of some MPOs and other issues that need to be addressed.

One concern appears to be the ability of MPOs to focus on a regional perspective. This is not surprising given the origins of MPOs and the composition of their boards, which are still comprised primarily of locally elected officials. The primary responsibility of these individuals is to their county, city, or township. I can assure you from my 14 year's participation on an MPO board that it is very difficult to take a regional viewpoint on an issue that may hurt your own city or county.

A second problem concerns how to ensure that all of the

stakeholders are involved in the MPO planning process in a meaningful way. This goal is not easy to accomplish. Improvements are being made in many areas, however, and there are a number of good examples throughout the country of the involvement of all key groups in the MPO process.

A third issue in many areas relates to the incorporation of freight and goods movement into the transportation planning process. MPOs have historically been concerned with the movement of people, not goods. Incorporating freight and intermodal planning into the process represented a new responsibility for most MPOs.

The final, and probably most important, issue relates to the requirement for plans and programs to be fiscally constrained. From my experience, many MPOs used to just take the projects from each jurisdiction, make sure they did not conflict, and add up the total cost. This approach obviously resulted in unrealistic plans. This approach is no longer acceptable under the ISTEA. The new requirements mean that difficult decisions have to be made concerning which projects will and will not be included in the MPO plans and programs. This process can be very difficult for both the MPO policy boards and the technical staff.

An appropriate focus for this Conference is to discuss the future vision for MPOs and the metropolitan transportation planning processes. AASHTO is currently examining this question. An AASHTO Reauthorization Steering Committee has been established to review technical documents and to develop a report and recommendations for consideration by the AASHTO Board of Directors. This Steering Committee will be completing three key documents within the next few weeks. These documents will be circulated to other organizations for review and comments, and meetings will be scheduled as appropriate.

An AASHTO task force addressing planning issues has developed one of these documents. One of their preliminary findings is that the federal planning regulations issued as a result of the ISTEA established "significant and costly" procedures to conduct transportation planning in urban areas. It further suggests that the regulations are too prescriptive, and observes that regardless of the size and location of the geographic area, the procedures are identical. For example, the 15 factors that must be addressed in the metropolitan planning process are not appropriate for all areas. In addition, some of the factors, like the alternative transit analysis, are simply not practical in smaller urban areas. The management systems are noted as containing data collection requirements beyond the capabilities of MPOs and states.

The preliminary findings also address land use planning

which has always been the responsibility of local jurisdictions. It is very unlikely that the general public and local and state officials will relinquish this control to a regional entity like an MPO. Further, MPOs and the states do not have the technical nor the financial resources to address the planning factors related to land use, social, economic, energy, and environmental impacts on a regional basis, especially within the time frame outlined in the ISTEA.

The preliminary report from the AASHTO task force on federalism and reauthorization provides a perspective of the AASHTO position on the roles of MPOs. This report addresses three main points regarding the MPO role. First, it points out the important role MPOs should play in providing a forum for cooperative state and local decision making in metropolitan areas. This means that MPOs should be responsible for developing a long-range transportation plan for the area in cooperation with the state and local governments. The report states that the MPO should also provide a program of projects based upon its analysis of planning activities and its view of the transportation needs of the region. The MPO role in project selection should be developed through a cooperative process involving the state and the affected MPO member jurisdictions. Further, MPOs should help bring metropolitan issues and players together. The MPO is where state and local government responsibilities are blended into a cohesive statement of policy for a metropolitan area. The MPO has responsibility for regional transportation planning which is coordinated with regional land use planning.

The second point of the task force report focuses on the MPOs role of providing technical expertise on transportation matters within the metropolitan area. This means that MPOs should develop and provide member jurisdictions with technical expertise that these jurisdictions do not have. The MPO should act as a liaison between the state and member jurisdictions on planning matters and issues. The MPO should be the primary source of metropolitan information and forecasts.

The third point of the report addresses the fact that MPOs are different and need to be tailored to the specific characteristics of the individual areas. This means that states and local governments should have the flexibility to organize MPOs to meet the needs of their area. MPOs should be expected to have a level of expertise and a level of activity and involvement that are appropriate for the interests and size of the metropolitan area. Further, MPOs should coordinate planning activities that produce plans and programs that are implemented by the states and by the affected local governments.

These points represent some current thinking at AASHTO. This is not AASHTO policy, however, and

will not be policy until it has been adopted by our Board of Directors.

I think there are a number of other important points to keep in mind as we move forward with this Conference and with future activities. First, we need to recognize the diversity that exists within this nation. There are 50 states that are all different in size, population composition, and economic base, as well as in the age of their cities, their development patterns, and transportation system. There are slightly over 3,000 counties, and 30,000 municipalities in the country. All of these entities are also different. Thus, it is obvious with metropolitan transportation planning that one approach does not fit all areas.

Second, there is a need to allow greater freedom for states, local governments, and MPOs to design a metropolitan transportation process for their area. Less federal prescription and more federal assistance is needed. This assistance should take the form of best practice case studies, manuals, syntheses, and other information that identifies alternatives rather than prescribing only one approach.

Third, there is a need to consider institutional alternatives. Approaches should be matched to the governmental structures of the various states and local governments. This can be difficult in the approximately 40 metropolitan areas that cover more than one state. In these cases, the various states must work together to develop an approach within which all groups can work.

Fourth, I think there is agreement that the federal transportation program should be reauthorized. I will discuss this more in a minute as I think it a very important topic for consideration.

Fifth, there is a need to develop additional professional capabilities in many areas. Collecting and publishing information on best practices should be a priority, and research should be pursued on priority topics. A good education and training program should be developed and offered focusing on the needs of state agencies, local jurisdictions, MPOs, and the general public.

Sixth, there is need to continue to reach out to private sector groups. The ISTEA requirement that MPOs examine freight issues quickly activated the American Trucking Associations (ATA). This resulted in a number of good conferences coordinated by MPOs and various freight interests, as well as other efforts. Similar discussions are needed with other transportation user groups, such as the railroads and the airlines.

Seventh, there is a need to work toward obtaining the understanding and support of state and local elected officials. Although the involvement of the federal government is critical, it is the states and local governments that actually own and operate the transportation system. Working closely with state and

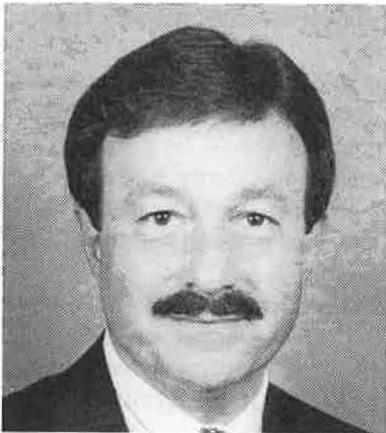
local governments, which are responsible for raising taxes and making the project selection decisions, will be critical to successful ongoing planning efforts.

This is especially true given the current situation at the federal level. The current congressional budget proposals pose some very serious problems for anyone interested in transportation. The discussion concerning possible reorganization of the U.S. Department of Transportation is also of interest. The current proposal includes major cuts and the elimination of many programs including the Congestion Pricing Pilot projects, applied research activities, the National Highway Institute, international programs, on-the-job training, transit planning and research, phasing out Amtrak subsidies, eliminating many air related programs, and reducing many other projects.

These are serious threats to maintaining the transportation system. It is appropriate to question if a realistic reauthorization bill can be developed and passed in this environment. I would like to close by noting a maxim of governments that suggests just as you get the ends to meet, someone moves the ends. This seems to be the approach the House and Senate Budget Committees are currently taking.

Transit Perspective

Richard J. Simonetta, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority



Thank you for inviting me to speak on behalf of the American Public Transit Association (APTA). The topic of this Conference—the institutional aspects of metropolitan transportation planning—is very important to transit agencies. All levels of government look to local transit agencies to meet the needs of a diverse group of transit-dependent individuals. We are also expected to attract customers away from congested urban roadways. We must achieve both of these goals while complying with

a variety of federal and state mandates designed to accomplish social, environmental, and economic goals. We are expected, with every new fiscal year, to do more with less. The better we prepare our MPOs to deal with these challenges in their approach to regional transportation matters, the healthier our metropolitan areas will be.

From the transit operator's perspective, the ISTEA created a set of new relationships with federal, state, and local governments, transit riders, and with shippers and drivers who benefit when transit affords travelers an alternative to driving. The ISTEA addressed many of the challenges facing transit because its authors recognized that our economy and society could not sustain the projected steady growth in vehicle miles traveled. In response, the ISTEA injected balance into the transportation planning process.

For example, comprehensive transportation planning requirements, linked to land use, growth management, air quality, and other issues were established for metropolitan areas and states. MPOs not only took on additional responsibility for planning, but were offered some decision making authority over the use of federal funds. Federal highway programs were dramatically reconfigured and funds were made flexible so they could be used for transit and other innovative purposes such as intermodal projects. Finally, as the Act's title suggests, the concept of intermodalism as a means of linking modes and improving efficiency was given a high priority.

Now that the ISTEA has passed the halfway mark, we have some sense of how to build on the balance that is fundamental to the ISTEA. I am not so sure we should be pessimistic as the poll in the May/June 1995 issue of *Metro Magazine* in which transit systems gave the ISTEA a barely passing grade of D. While the ISTEA was instrumental in changing 35 year old behavior patterns, it still takes time to change long standing behavior.

When I talk to my colleagues from different states and regions, I find that generalizations on the implementation of the ISTEA are difficult to make. There is one exception to this—that is we are all frustrated by the appropriations shortfall from ISTEA's authorized program levels which have limited MPO resources and their ability to function under ISTEA.

Some MPOs have made great strides in establishing criteria for developing and prioritizing projects that use flexible funds, with positive results for transit. Two examples of MPOs who have used flexible funding for transit projects are the MTC in Oakland, California, and the MPO in Albany, New York.

As transportation decisions become more intricate and expensive in the years ahead, we need to make sure that all MPOs have sound criteria for setting priorities. We

must also ensure that the staff and the MPO board members have sufficient expertise to make those decisions. One difficult problem is the constant turnover on the MPO boards. I have heard that the average term for an MPO member is 21 months, which is not enough time to grasp the intricacies of major transportation decisions.

APTA supports the full funding of MPOs as authorized by the ISTEA. To this end, and because training for MPO board members and staff is essential, APTA and the Government Finance Officers Association, under a cooperative agreement with the FTA, have conducted six workshops on flexible funding and the planning provisions of the ISTEA. These workshops have attracted a diverse range of state and local officials from government entities.

MPO members and staff need additional training focusing on what transportation is and why it is critical to the region. The FHWA and MARAD-produced on video, *Goods for You*, which explains why efficient movement of goods is necessary. A similar video on the importance of high-occupancy passenger movement is needed. In addition, information in some easily understandable format such as a video is needed to explain passenger and freight interactions.

Based on transit operators' diverse experiences with their MPOs and the ISTEA's planning requirements, APTA supports some changes in federal policy toward MPOs. For example, we think that transit systems should be full voting members of MPO governing boards. While we do not believe that the federal government should impose a rigid requirement on all MPOs governing boards, we do prefer a "one person, one vote" arrangement so that all citizens in a metropolitan area are equitably represented on their region's MPO. We understand, however, that some MPOs work well with a consensus procedure so that each county in an area signs off on policy decisions.

Some APTA members have serious concerns about the way their MPOs are structured. PATransit in Pittsburgh is a strong advocate of the one person one vote concept. Allegheny County has more than half of the population of the multi-county MPO area, but the surrounding counties can outvote it on the MPO Board. One county with 70,000 people has the same vote as Allegheny County which has more than 1.3 million people.

APTA believes that when a minority can outvote the majority, there is a federal interest in ensuring that the structure is changed. The enhanced planning and certification reviews are opportunities for the federal government to set minimum standards to achieve that result. The bottom line is that transit agencies want to participate in the MPO process so we can get things done.

The ISTEA requires states and MPOs to consider 15 planning factors. Interestingly, there is no specific

mention of revitalizing urban core areas by creating jobs and housing in these factors. This omission ought to be rectified. A healthy center city is a critical factor in preserving the economic health and quality of life of the whole area. So we think the federal law should explicitly incorporate the goal of urban core revitalization into the planning process. While the factors focus on maintenance of existing systems, MPOs must consider improvements in transit ridership and service. I am not sure this has been adequately considered by all MPOs.

MPOs can serve as forums for educating governmental agencies and the private sector on the ways transit can benefit private enterprise—by providing alternatives to congestion that threatens interstate commerce and by protecting the quality of life that employees value in their communities. MPOs can also help educate the public about transit's role in providing services, such as accessible transportation for the elderly and people with special needs, that can only be funded with greater public investments. Transit riders should not bear an unfair share of these costs, as is now the case.

We are now watching as the ISTEA re-authorization process begins to unfold. APTA will continue to monitor both the Congressional activities and the proposals from the Administration.

Transit systems have long involved the public through public hearings to discuss service and fare changes. Through the ISTEA, this public involvement has been expanded, and this has been a learning process for many MPOs. Public involvement is an underlying premise of the ISTEA. APTA strongly supports public participation in all aspects of the ISTEA's planning programs—including metropolitan planning, statewide planning, major investment studies, and the management systems.

Public involvement in the planning process can generate numerous benefits that include improved planning, facilitated decision-making, increased implementation prospects, and enhanced legitimacy. In addition, public involvement leads to a more cost-effective planning process and reduces the waste of resources spent in responding to challenges and lawsuits.

Currently, transit agencies do not have to prepare long-range ISTEA plans or transportation improvement plans (TIPs), but they are strongly encouraged to participate in the MPO and the state plans. In addition, transit agencies are finding value in the enhanced public involvement activities associated with major investment studies.

The debate over the re-authorization of the ISTEA must be about maintaining a balance in funding and in planning. I think the ISTEA was right to emphasize moving people over moving vehicles. We should rule out a return to the Interstate's era's emphasis on vehicle movement which

would result from the adoption of proposed language to eliminate the sub-allocation for areas of over 200,000 or repeal federal oversight of the public involvement process. Such concepts would guarantee unending sprawl and traffic gridlock in the next century.

It is important to remember some of the major demographic changes we will encounter in the not so distant future. Currently, 80 percent of our population live in metropolitan areas. By the year 2020, over 40 metropolitan areas will each have more than one million residents. By 2020, if we follow through on the elimination of the suballocation, we would willingly limit the regional governments in these areas from a voice in transportation decisions that will have a powerful impact on citizens in their areas.

It is also important that the re-authorization debate consider how to ensure that elderly and low-income individuals, and others who are more transit-dependent than the population as a whole, benefit from transportation policies that make transit more available and affordable. The re-authorization should support further research to analyze the social and environmental costs and benefits of different modes of transportation, including pollution reduction, congestion reduction, accessibility, and environmental justice impacts. APTA is firmly convinced that a full cost-benefit analysis will provide strong additional justification for transit investments.

Consideration also needs to be given to equal analysis of modes. The same criteria and measures—both qualitative and quantitative—should be applied to all modes. The MIS process for comparing transit and highway investments is a step in the right direction. This process should provide a balanced transportation system for the 21st century that coordinates passenger and freight demands to ensure the timely movement of people and goods.

In the future, metropolitan areas will be home to 80 percent of our nation's population. These areas will need to include a range of high-occupancy transit options to free up precious roadway space to move goods. Transit friendly areas are also commerce friendly areas.

Atlanta provides an example of this approach. One of the reasons Atlanta was chosen to host the 1996 Summer Olympics was because we will be able to move the 500,000 people expected at the Games on a daily basis by bus and rail. One reason is because Atlanta's MARTA is

barrier free, moving passengers from one mode to another without barriers. MARTA also provides a connection between the airport and downtown.

Because it offers an alternative to single-occupant vehicle (SOV) travel, transit is a crucial part of the answer to urban congestion. To facilitate interstate commerce and to ensure the wise use of tax dollars, the U.S. Department of Transportation should encourage transportation investments that move people rather than vehicles, and that create more opportunities for travelers to choose transit. For the nation's urban areas, higher transit ridership means more efficient use of the transportation system.

APTA's initial response is that the planning provisions of the ISTEA, while not perfect, are essential if we are to have a balanced intermodal transportation system for our metropolitan areas. Current public involvement provisions, for example, are not overly prescriptive as some have charged, but, rather are loosely-defined performance criteria that gives states, MPOs and transit operators great leeway in designing programs to fit their local circumstances. Similarly, the MIS process has enormous inherent flexibility and experience already indicates these studies are leading to better planning that will result in more cost-effective, publicly-acceptable projects.

It is in our collective best interest to spend the next few months in reasoned dialogue over these and other planning provisions so that we may approach the Administration and Congress with a unified position on the key issues such as adequate funding to build and maintain all of our nation's transportation infrastructure. The Transportation Alternatives Group (TAG) effort prior to the 1991 authorization is an example of how diverse interests can work together. All groups need to work together to give planning a chance and to build on the considerable progress that has been made.

In conclusion, I believe that this Conference can play a very constructive role in ensuring that the re-authorization of the ISTEA is crafted in a way that addresses these issues and promotes greater balance in the many challenges that confront transportation planning at all levels of government. I strongly encourage you to search for policies that incorporate the needs of all Americans, including the millions who depend on transit or desire the opportunity to choose from a menu that includes transit.

Environmental Perspective

David Burwell, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy



I am pleased to be here as a representative of the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP). For those of you who are not familiar with STPP, the mission of the organization is to promote liveable communities. Further, STPP emphasizes the needs of people, rather than the movement of vehicles in assuring access to jobs, services, and recreational opportunities.

I want to start off by stressing the importance of the Enhancement Program contained in the ISTEA. The STPP put a good deal of effort into this program, which has developed a new constituency for transportation. The MPOs have a key role to play in the Enhancement Program and the professional transportation community benefits from the participation of these new groups.

There are over 4,000 enhancement projects underway throughout the country. This is a significant number of projects given the fact that less than 10 percent of the authorized funds have actually been obligated. There are a number of ways that this program could be streamlined to increase the number of projects funded.

I think we need to take a new approach if we are going to address the transportation issues facing metropolitan areas throughout the country and MPOs have a very important role to play in this process. The ISTEA helps to outline the concept of a metropolitan transportation system that includes all modes. The ISTEA indicates that long-range plans should include major roadways, transit, and multimodal and intermodal facilities functioning as an integrated transportation system. This concept of a metropolitan transportation system should form the basis for planning at the regional level.

To achieve these goals, MPOs will need four elements. The first element is a mandate to undertake the necessary changes. The ISTEA provides this mandate by giving MPOs new roles and responsibilities. Second, MPOs will need adequate funding to carry through with needed

projects and programs. The ISTEA provides the basis for funding key components of the transportation system. Third, MPOs need management authority. The management plans required by the ISTEA and other elements provide MPOs with this authority. Fourth, MPOs must have the muscle, or the authority, to program projects. The ISTEA again provides this authority to MPOs.

With these four elements, I think MPOs are in an excellent position to coordinate viable metropolitan transportation systems. There are three key characteristics that should be included in these systems. First, the metropolitan transportation system should have a multimodal focus. Second, the integration between modes to accommodate all parts of the trip should be a major consideration. Third, there is a need to focus on the five primary functions of the metropolitan transportation system. These are to promote access to major activity centers, to facilitate modal and intermodal connections, to provide modal options, to accommodate high volume demand, and to provide essential services. If all three of these characteristics are promoted, a new paradigm of the metropolitan transportation system will emerge.

As other speakers have noted, developing this new system will not be easy. Implementing the mandates of the ISTEA provide a number of challenges, especially those related to establishing new inter-governmental relationships. I would like to offer three ideas to help promote the opportunities of the ISTEA.

The first is to improve the models used in transportation planning to focus more on transportation and land use relationships. Also, modeling should assist in the analysis process rather than driving the planning process as has sometimes occurred in the past. Enhancements are needed in the modeling process. These might include the use of risk assessment, and enhancing existing models to focus on accessibility issues, and locational analyses.

The second is to democratize the transportation planning process through meaningful public involvement. Additional public participants throughout the planning process will be needed to fully realize the goals of the ISTEA. There has been significant improvements in public involvement programs in many metropolitan areas, but these efforts will need to be sustained and enhanced. This is an issue that was rated highly in the survey of participants at this Conference. Possible ways to enhance public involvement include the use of visioning processes, visual preference surveys, resource assessments of alternative transportation improvements, and goal setting.

A third idea, which may be a bit controversial, is to experiment with new roles and responsibilities for MPOs. These might even include giving some MPO responsibility for some project development and a greater role in

systems operations. For example, MPOs could take a larger role in the Enhancement Program, transportation management systems, ITS, and other projects.

Examining the interaction of land use and transportation will be critical to the future development of more liveable communities. A recent study in Portland illustrates the importance of improving the coordination between land use planning and transportation planning. The study examined alternative approaches to reducing the vehicle miles of travel (VMT) per capita. The two measures that had the largest impact on accomplishing this goal were to reduce household incomes by \$17,000 annually and to take away 1.5 automobiles per household. Obviously, neither of these are realistic alternatives. The approach with the next largest impact was to increase the quality of the pedestrian environment in the Portland area from average to high. This option may be more realistic. MPOs can play an important role in encouraging greater interaction between land use and transportation.

In conclusion, the elements I have outlined are ambitious for MPOs. Accomplishing these goals would require MPOs to take on more responsibilities. I think this approach is appropriate, however, to address the issues facing urban areas today. The ISTEA provides the opportunity for MPOs to begin assuming these responsibilities.

I am reminded of a sign my father had on his desk. It said "I am a very responsible person—no matter what goes wrong, I am responsible." I think MPOs are in this same situation today. Although MPOs do not always have the authority, they are being held responsible for many projects and programs. I hope this Conference will help identify ways that MPOs can enhance their ability to assume their increasing roles and responsibilities.

MPO Perspective

Stephen J. Del Giudice, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments



It is a pleasure to be here to offer my perspective on MPOs and the requirements of the ISTEA. I have the distinction of being the Chairman of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board of Directors when we implemented our first long-range transportation plan under the ISTEA. Developing this plan became even more challenging when the Disney Company announced its plans to build a major amusement park in Prince William County, Virginia. This project became the major focus of the long-range planning discussion, which in some respects was too bad because many other important issues were given less attention.

I think this example illustrates the difficult position many MPOs are in. In many cases, MPOs are in between the state agencies that pass funding through from the federal government for transportation projects and the local governments that control land use. MPOs are often in the difficult position of trying to mediate between local land use decisions and state transportation decisions.

I might suggest a change in the order of the questions included in the title of this Conference. I would suggest that where we want to be is at a windmill on a hill. We are currently approaching the hill, and I am not sure I have the answer to how we get to the top of the hill and the windmill. There is a little bit of a Don Quixote theme to this example, but I think it is appropriate for the current situation many MPOs are in.

I think the way we approach these three questions depends on our individual philosophical and political biases concerning governmental institutions and intergovernmental roles and responsibilities. Our perspective is also influenced by our personal experiences. Discussing these perspectives will be an important part of this Conference.

The historical perspective provided earlier by Frank Francois should also be an important part of the workshop discussions. I do not think that we can solve our problems without considering this historical perspective on MPOs and our own personal perspective on governmental roles and responsibilities. Nor do I think that we should expect all of our problems to have been addressed in the short period of time since the ISTEA was passed.

It is important to remember that states have had the preeminent role in the development and operation of the transportation system, while local governments have had a preeminent role in land use decisions. How MPOs fit into this mix is both an interesting and a challenging question. A related issue concerns the future roles of all three groups in promoting the development of regional economies, especially when those regions cross state boundaries.

For example, the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area

(SMSA) for the Baltimore Washington, D.C. area now stretches from the Delaware state line to West Virginia. If Northern Virginia continues to develop at its present rate, it will soon be the Baltimore-Washington-Richmond Statistical Metropolitan Area. How states and local governments address the needs of areas like this is an important issue. This is especially critical at a time when both states and local governments are increasingly under attack on issues related to transportation and land use for what they have done or what they have failed to do. This seems to be part of a movement that is questioning the role of our fundamental institutions.

MPOs provide one of the best models we have for bridging the gap between local governments and the states in the planning and development of regional economies that can be competitive in the national and international market place. I would not suggest that we have solved all the problems associated with MPOs. It is important to remember in this regard that most MPOs are relatively young, whereas states and local governments have been in existence for centuries. Creating new organizations—like MPOs—that require states and local governments to give up some of their authority or to work together is a relatively revolutionary notion. Although MPOs have not been in existence for a lengthy period, this approach seems to make sense when you look at the issues facing metropolitan areas.

I would like to present a few ideas related to the myths and realities of the ISTEA. The first myth I would suggest is that we currently have enough available information to suggest that the MPOs process and the new ISTEA roles for MPOs are a failure and should be changed. I think the reality is that we do not have evidence to suggest that this is the case, and in fact, I think there is strong evidence to show that the MPO process has worked well in many areas.

The Disney project provides a good example of the important role MPOs play in the discussion of land use and transportation issues. In this case, WASHCOG provided the forum for all groups to come together to discuss this proposed project.

I think MPOs have made progress in many areas. For example, freight issues are being given more consideration now, and representatives from shipping and freight companies are being involved in the planning process. Public participation programs are being broadened to include groups with interests in all modes. I think there is also a greater emphasis on intermodal and multimodal planning today.

The MIS process has resulted in innovative ways to get the public involved in transportation planning. For

example, the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Study in Washington, D.C. has numerous public citizen involvement groups that are working with the professional staff groups to examine a wide range of issues. I think this public involvement has been very positive.

Perhaps the key question we should be focusing on is if we are moving along the right course and if we are making progress. If the answer to this question is yes, then we can deal with the unresolved issues, while continuing to make progress toward reaching that windmill I mentioned earlier.

I think the ISTEA has opened up the transportation planning and decision making process. It has provided access to more groups and interests, and while this may make the process more complex, it should also improve the ultimate decisions.

I also think it is a myth that central cities are not adequately represented on MPO boards. In most cases, the central cities do have representatives on MPO boards and do participate in the transportation planning process. To the extent that this is an issue, however, it may reflect a larger concern about central city representation in the political process in general.

Another myth is that the ISTEA has negatively impacted the working relationships between states and MPOs. In reality, while the ISTEA has made this relationship more complicated, it has had more of a positive than a negative effect. The ISTEA has brought state and local officials together through the MPOs in a much more constructive manner than in the past. Establishing stronger working relationships among the states and local governments will be especially critical in the future given potential reductions in federal funding.

The suggestion that the fiscal constraint requirements of the ISTEA has made the planning process more inflexible is also a myth. Although these requirements may have made the development of plans somewhat less flexible, I think it has made the planning process much more realistic. Further, these requirements have added importance to the process, since plans can no longer just be wish lists containing all projects. We now have to match projects to a realistic level of funding, rather than over promising. This is forcing us to make priority decisions that we never had to make in the past.

In terms of realities, I think the ISTEA contains a realistic vision for the future. It forces states and local governments to work together in new ways that will be positive for all groups. Although there may be areas where we can do a better job of working together, the ISTEA provides the environment within which these continued improvements and enhancements can be made.

KEYNOTE DINNER ADDRESS

Brigid Hynes-Cherin, San Francisco County Transportation Authority—Presiding

Social Justice and Ecological Sustainability: Issues and Opportunities for Metropolitan Transportation Planning

Henry Holmes, Earth Island Institute



I would like to thank the Transportation Research Board and the Conference Steering Committee for inviting me to speak to you this evening. I hope that my comments will help stimulate the discussion in the workshop sessions later in the conference. The metropolitan transportation planning process includes a variety of complex issues and challenges. I would like to acknowledge the important role all groups play in ensuring the success of this planning process.

The Earth Island Institute is an international environmental organization that was founded about 10 years ago by David Brower, then the Executive Director of the Sierra Club. It is an umbrella organization for over 30 different autonomous projects addressing environmental issues around the world. The projects undertaken by the Institute range from species protection to maintaining the integrity of sacred lands to eco-system protection. I am the Associate Director of the Urban Habitat Program (UHP) which was founded by Carl Anthony, an architect, urban planner and long-time social and environmental justice activist. This program focuses on urban environmental issues and includes developing and nurturing multi-cultural environmental leadership and creating socially just and ecologically sustainable communities in the San Francisco Bay Area.

One project I am currently working on deals with social and ecological justice related to transportation improvements. This project includes working with the African-American and Asian communities in the San Francisco area to plan and implement public transportation

improvements. We have been facilitating a community based planning process. This process has included working to foster a collaborative partnership with local organizations and individuals in looking at light rail transit (LRT) improvements in the Bayshore corridor. San Francisco has an extensive LRT system, and the community feels that it has been woefully under served for a number of years. The UHP is examining the opportunities to link transportation planning to economic development, which is a very high priority in this community. We are also assessing how public transportation can be used to address and to deal with land use conflicts, energy efficiency, and environmental protection, as well as improving air quality and the overall social, economic, and environmental quality of life.

At the regional level, the UHP is pursuing a number of initiatives. One is monitoring, evaluating, and critiquing the Oakland Bay Bridge Congestion Pricing Demonstration Project from a social and environmental justice perspective. This project represents one of the first national congestion pricing demonstration projects. As part of this effort, we are developing a framework and a methodology for addressing social, economic, and environmental impacts of various market-based transportation control measures.

Over the last year, the UHP has also been exploring the opportunity to develop a region-wide effort to articulate a vision for the Bay Area. This process would include community groups, transit workers, environmentalists, and individuals in a broad based effort to assess the role transportation, including public transit, can play in meeting the social, economic, and environmental needs of the Bay Area's population. We have been working with numerous groups to ensure that this process would include both the urban core communities and the less densely populated suburban areas.

The UHP is also engaged in a number of national activities. We often work with other groups and coalitions, such as the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP) and the Energy and Equity Roundtable, in these efforts. Further, the UHP has actively participated in a number of recent national transportation conferences.

I will address a number of points this evening. First, I will discuss some of the issues related to the roles and responsibilities of MPOs and the institutional aspects of the metropolitan transportation planning process. Second, I will identify some key concerns and opportunities facing the transportation planning process and the consideration of environmental justice transportation issues. Finally, I

will conclude with a few suggestions on how we can work together to address these challenges.

As you are well aware, transportation is a critical element to healthy, livable, and sustainable urban and rural communities. Transportation is also directly related to other social, environmental, and economic issues. The transportation system influences economic development, land use patterns, real estate investment decisions, and energy efficiency and conservation. Transportation influences our energy consumption levels. The current reliance on the automobile as our major mode of transportation does not help support sustainable communities. Transportation objectives need to be tied closer to social, environmental, and economic objectives. The transportation system does not exist in a vacuum. Rather, it is intertwined with other policy issues.

Although most of my comments will focus on the issues, challenges, and opportunities related to the urban transportation system, it is also important to examine the needs of rural communities and rural transportation issues. In addition, the relationship of urban, suburban, and rural communities, including Native American tribal communities which have their own set of unique transportation issues, should be assessed. It is also important to examine the capacity of MPOs to develop plans which adequately address metropolitan mobility needs and to consider the institutional relationships needed to advance solutions that are socially just and ecologically sustainable.

Over the last few months there have been two national conferences on environmental justice and transportation. One of these was held last week in Atlanta, Georgia. It was sponsored by the FHWA, the FTA, and the Federal Railroad Administration. The conference was hosted by the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University. This conference brought together representatives from states, MPOs, and local governments, along with community groups and environmentalists, academics, and consultants to listen to the perspectives of people who often do not have a voice in the transportation decision-making process, but who are affected by these decisions. Part of the context for both conferences grew out of an Executive Order signed by President Clinton on environmental justice. This order included a mandate to federal agencies, such as the Department of Transportation, to develop strategies to address environmental justice issues. The Department is currently formulating a response to this directive.

In November of 1994, a conference was held in Chicago on transportation, environmental justice, and social equity. This conference was sponsored by the FHWA, the FTA, and the STPP. These two conferences helped to identify the key issues and approaches that could

be used to address concerns related to social and environmental justice.

One historical focus of environmental justice issues is public health. Concerns over air pollution, especially in communities of color and poorer communities is a major issue. These community health problems are also environmental health issues that relate to how we use, consume, and waste environmental resources. For example, air pollution caused by congestion on freeways cutting through inner city neighborhoods negatively impact those residents.

The transportation system influences other environmental factors. One of the major sources of water pollution in the San Francisco Bay Area is runoff from motor vehicles on the freeway and road networks. The reliance on the automobile also means a reliance on fossil fuels, which is an unrenovable, unsustainable energy source. Automobiles are also the largest contributing factor to ground level ozone, which contributes to global warming. Some people will take issue with the seriousness of the erosion of the ozone layer. I think there is compelling evidence that indicates that this is a major and an increasingly threatening problem to the earth, and to all things that live, breath, and sustain life on earth, including human beings.

Other environmental dimensions that are influenced by transportation policy include the degradation of open space and agricultural land, and continued urban sprawl. Economic and social justice transportation issues include the mismatch between jobs and economic opportunities, housing, medical services, educational facilities, and other human service needs. The transportation system influences where people live and where they work. The continuing movement of jobs to suburban and exurban areas has had a negative impact on people who do not have access to an automobile.

Many metropolitan areas are comprised of the urban core, a first ring of older suburbs, and an ever expanding outer ring of developing suburbs and edge cities. A number of the speakers this afternoon talked about the challenges presented by these development patterns. These include the debt servicing on infrastructure elements, the erosion of the central city tax base, the decaying and abandonment of the urban inner core, and the attendant resource needs and consumption to duplicate that infrastructure further and further out. I would propose that this approach is not sustainable over the long term.

Some people have suggested that the community disruption caused by the construction of the freeway system has, in some cases, resulted in transportation apartheid. At the conference last week in Georgia, one man spoke about how people who are transit dependant

and live in the central part of a small community are literally segregated by the transportation system. They are cut off from access to suburban job centers, to suburban health care, and to suburban recreational opportunities. As a result, the transportation investment decisions contribute to segregation. There is an increasing race and class stratification in many urban areas because of real estate investment and land use patterns that create and encourage urban sprawl. The disproportionate emphasis on the automobile, roads, freeways, and parking facilities has resulted in real injustices and inequities in transportation investments and in the transportation infrastructure.

Transit is often considered a second class citizen compared to the single occupant vehicle. It is the step-child of the automobile and the road network in most places. The current automobile oriented system is inadequate to meet the transportation needs of nearly 50 percent of the population who are either too old, too young, too poor, disabled, or who choose not to drive. People like myself, who choose not to drive, make up a significant portion of Americans. When you consider the fact that 75 percent of the population lives in major metropolitan regions, and that anywhere from 30 to 50 percent of these people are not able to drive for one reason or another, it tells you something about our current priorities. There appears to be a disconnection between meeting the transportation needs of all the segments of the population and the infrastructure investments that are currently being made.

This disconnection has tremendous impacts on urban and rural communities in terms of access and mobility, and in terms of the social and economic fabric of our society. The negative impacts include isolation, lack of job opportunities and access to employment, and the ability for individual development and growth. Although these are difficult issues to discuss, they must be addressed if we are to meet the goal of sustainable communities. In many respects, the current transportation system does not serve the needs of a substantial portion of Americans.

Because these needs are not being met for a substantial portion of the population, I would suggest that the current system is ultimately not sustainable. The discussion this afternoon about the existing political climate and the Congressional budget process lends even greater importance to these issues. We need to examine how we improve the existing system to ensure that it serves everyone. In this regard, the transportation system should provide a range of options for single occupant vehicles, transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Our challenge is to make the system socially just and ecologically sustainable.

I think we have an opportunity to meet this challenge. The ISTEA represents an important part of the approach that will be needed to accomplish our goals. As acknowledged by the speakers this afternoon, the ISTEA is not perfect, but it provides an opportunity to begin to address many critical issues facing our metropolitan areas. One area for possible improvement is the development of a process that is principled, that provides a shared language, and that provides a framework that considers cultural values and the principles of social justice and ecological sustainability.

I would like to define social justice and ecological sustainability. First, there are seventeen principles of environmental justice, which were adopted at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. This Summit took place in October of 1991, in Washington, D.C. I will not go over all of these principles, but they provide a basis for the development of a shared language, a common framework, and a cultural value system that can be used in the transportation planning process.

Social justice, which I distinguish from social equity, focuses on meeting basic needs of individuals in a fair and equitable way. Social justice also demands that institutions be accessible, responsible, and accountable to all people and groups regardless of social or economic standing.

Ecological sustainability is based on the principles of ecology, which recognize the interrelationship of all living things. Ecosystems are living systems. They are a complex web of relationships among species and habitats, the natural world and human world, and the diversity that exists within the human community. That diversity is the strength of any ecosystem. The long-term survivability of any species in an ecosystem depends on a limited resource base. A sustainable society is one that is able to satisfy its needs while maintaining its natural resources and life support systems. The more diverse the system, the more alternative relationships are available when the other parts break down.

America is a very diverse society. This is true not only in places like San Francisco, which is an international crossroads, but in communities throughout the country. Increasingly, the fabric of society is changing. If we deny this change or if we let it become a barrier to communicating and understanding one another, we will have serious problems. The issues of diversity are important to public policies, including transportation, and to how priorities are established. When social justice is put together with ecological sustainability, we have a definition of socially just and ecologically sustainable communities.

This kind of principle should be at the heart of

transportation planning. The work the UHP is doing in the Bay Shore Corridor in San Francisco provides one example of how this can be accomplished in the context of transportation policy and planning. A community partnership was established to develop a very extensive transportation plan. With the assistance of professional transportation planners, a set of transportation planning principles was established. These principles were that transportation is a social investment affecting the social, economic, and environmental quality of life in urban communities; that transportation projects should be used to reshape rather than reinforce inefficient urban land use and reduce rather than exacerbate adverse environmental impacts and wasted resources; that transportation planning should be conducted in full partnership with community groups using a bottom-up approach; and that transportation investment decisions should result from an integrated transportation land use, economic development, and environmental planning process. The ISTEA helps provide the context for the inclusion of these factors in the transportation planning process. It also provides the opportunity to develop real collaborative processes and partnerships.

Although public participation programs have been enhanced in many areas as the result of the ISTEA, improvements are still needed. It is important to realize that there are many diverse groups and individuals that need to be involved in the transportation planning process. Ensuring that the public is defined for each project is critical.

It is important to remember that transportation decisions are ultimately political decisions. We need to address both the short-term political issues, such as the current Congressional budget debate, and the longer-term political issues. It is important to keep a long term perspective, even when dealing with immediate problems.

We also tend to focus on the symptoms of an unsustainable transportation system, rather than on the underlying causes of the disease and the disfunction. It is important to address the causes of the present problems if we hope to really overcome them. There is also a

tendency to focus more on social equity than on social justice. To ensure social justice we must make sure that all groups and individuals have access to institutions, and that these institutions are accountable and responsible.

I would like to suggest a standard of sustainability for the transportation system. If we meet the transportation needs of those most vulnerable in our society—the young, the old, the poor, the disabled, and the transportation disadvantaged—we meet the basic needs of everyone. I do not think our current system meets the basic needs of these individuals. Creating this baseline threshold should be given a high priority as the way to develop an truly sustainable transportation system. The development of a system wide performance standard to measure the baseline conditions will be needed to help ensure these needs are met.

I would also suggest that we need to embrace the public participation process and make it work to ensure that the best decisions are being made for all groups in society. A good public participation program can help enhance the credibility of public agencies. MPOs can serve an important function to help improve the public participation process and the transportation planning process. Providing opportunities for the interaction of broad based public sector groups and decision makers is one way this can happen.

In summary, working in a true partnership, a public participation program based on the principles of environmental justice will help ensure a sustainable transportation system. As we move forward in this effort it is important to remember the interrelationship of the transportation system with the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of our communities. We also need to understand how all issues, challenges, and opportunities effect different groups of people in various communities.

I hope I have provided a few ideas for you to think about in your discussion over the next few days. I look forward to participating in the workshops and to discussing important issues and opportunities with you.

PRESENTATIONS OF KEY STUDIES ON THE INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT

Brigid Hynes-Cherin, San Francisco County Transportation Authority, and Leslie White, Clark County Public Transportation Benefit Authority—Presiding

Procedures MPOs Use to Consider the 15 Factors in Developing Plans and Programs Under the ISTEA

*Thomas F. Humphrey, Massachusetts Institute of
Technology*



Good morning. It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to present the results of a recently completed research project. I will begin by describing the background and purpose of the study. This will be followed by a summary of the experiences from a limited sample of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and some of my own observations. Finally, as a good university researcher, I will conclude with some recommendations for additional research.

In the fall of 1993, the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) established a panel to formulate and direct the preparation of a Synthesis on the topic *Procedures MPOs Use to Consider the 15 Factors in Developing Plans and Programs Under the ISTEA*. I was asked to develop the Synthesis on this project, *Consideration of the 15 ISTEA Factors in the Metropolitan Planning Process*, which will be available soon.

The objective of the Synthesis was to provide a snapshot of the activities underway in selected metropolitan areas throughout the country. In the summer and fall of 1994, MPOs were in the process of meeting the requirements of the ISTEA and the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. As you know, it is essential that the MPOs meet the requirements of these Acts in order to avoid possible

financial penalties and other potential sanctions. In 1994, it appeared that many MPOs were using previous studies and existing analytical tools, as well as existing institutional and organization arrangements, to meet these requirements.

Working with the TRB Synthesis panel, sixteen MPOs were identified for possible inclusion in the study. The intent of this element of the Synthesis was to obtain information from a representative, although not a scientifically selected, sample of MPOs. All of the sixteen MPOs were contacted by telephone and by mail. A standard interview guide was used to obtain the desired information. In the final analysis, we were able to obtain specific data and information from only eight of the sixteen MPOs.

In-depth information was obtained from the four MPOs. These were the MPOs in Albany, New York; Boston, Massachusetts; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In four other areas, more limited information on the responses to the 15 ISTEA factors was obtained from the MPOs. These four areas were Chicago, Illinois; Houston, Texas; Portland, Oregon; and San Francisco/Oakland, California.

It is important to understand why the sample was so limited. Since the passage of ISTEA and the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments, MPOs throughout the country have been subjected to intense study and surveys by numerous organizations. Some of the key MPO personnel contacted for the Synthesis indicated that they had been studied to death. In jest, but with some truth, they asked simply to be left alone to do their work. As a result, the Synthesis panel decided to limit this initial work to the eight MPOs mentioned. Further, it was decided not to use a survey questionnaire for this study. Rather, given the very limited time and resources available for the project, individual interviews were conducted by telephone and in person, and available written documentation was obtained and utilized.

Other, more in-depth studies were also underway at this time. Some of these will be described during this conference. The Synthesis was designed to be compatible with these efforts and not to duplicate other studies.

It is safe to assume that by this time all MPOs have responded to the request by FHWA and FTA to address the 15 factors included in the ISTEA. The Synthesis includes the exact responses provided to FHWA and FTA

by the eight MPOs included as case studies. I will highlight a few observations based upon the analysis of an extensive set of materials and information that go beyond that obtained solely from the eight case studies. The analysis of the personal interviews and reviews of available literature from a number of sources provide much information that is both interesting and instructive at this stage in the development of the new ISTEA planning process.

My comments will focus on the five general categories of process issues, institutional and organizational issues, technical issues, summary of concerns at this stage, and the difference made by the ISTEA. An overall observation, at the time of the completion of the research for this project in the fall of 1994, it appears that most MPOs were addressing the 15 factors in different ways. Most of the approaches utilized focused on qualitative information. More advanced quantitative and comprehensive studies were still under development in most areas.

I would like to briefly summarize a few observations on the approaches being utilized by MPOs on each of the five general categories. More detailed information is provided in the paper prepared for this conference and in the Synthesis. It is important to keep in mind that these comments represent the perspective from the staff in a limited number of MPOs. Further, they do not represent the results of a scientific sample, and they reflect conditions in the summer and early fall of 1994. Because this topic is so dynamic in nature, the shelf life of these observations may be limited.

Process Issues

- The federal requirements for submitting plans and programs are being met in most metropolitan areas. The few exceptions to this are areas where unusual circumstances may have existed and where FHWA and FTA have agreed to time extensions.

- Many MPOs are still in the process of marshaling the resources needed to deal with the ISTEA and the Clean Air Act Amendments. Most agencies have had to re-focus their efforts to meet the deadlines that have been established by these two Acts.

- In many cases, expectations have been raised beyond reasonable levels of what can realistically be accomplished at this time, concerning how the ISTEA would affect the planning process and funding re-distribution.

- There appears to be more concern with meeting the requirements related to the 15 factors MPOs must address

in the planning process, and the 23 statewide factors, than in meeting the spirit of the ISTEA legislation. This may be caused by the deadlines imposed for addressing the requirements and the potential impacts of loss of funding and other sanctions if they are not met.

- There appears to be continued concern among transit and local officials that their expectations for increased funding will not be met due to the strong highway influence in the planning process.

- Some MPOs have expressed the concern that the schedules outlined in the two Acts are unrealistic. For example, MPOs are being asked to conduct analyses with tools that may go beyond their intended uses and these studies must fit into a local political process that often pays little or no attention to the federal planning requirements of the ISTEA.

- Although many MPOs are investing substantial efforts towards providing enhanced access to citizens to participate in the planning process, it appears that there continues to be a need to establish more extensive and inclusive citizen participation programs in many areas. The exception to this concern are areas that have traditionally and successfully engaged in these activities.

- The MPO is viewed as providing the best forum that brings together all groups to discuss and analyze options for major investment studies, as well as for project environmental analyses. Many MPOs are still struggling with how these objectives can be accomplished most effectively, however.

Institutional Issues

- To a large extent the culture of MPOs has not changed appreciably, as a result of the ISTEA. Many Councils of Government and MPOs have been in existence since the 1960s. Most MPOs created comprehensive and cooperative programs that met the spirit and the intent of earlier laws, and have been able to address many of the new requirements of the ISTEA. Some MPOs appear to be experiencing difficulties in the mid 1990s, however, adjusting to the new requirements.

- Concerns exist on the part of some MPOs that the ISTEA establishes too much federal control over the local planning process. The federal agencies have attempted to minimize such influence, but what is frequently viewed as an overwhelming amount of federal paperwork does provide a continuing concern to the MPOs.

- In the 17 metropolitan areas classified by EPA as extreme, severe, and serious air quality non-attainment areas, there is concern that more extensive political cooperation is needed to develop plans and programs that will effectively address air quality issues.

- It appears that local officials in some metropolitan areas are not involved as extensively as desired in the MPO process. Local officials must be willing to deal with difficult investment trade-offs, including the desire for systems' expansion by suburban communities versus the need for systems' preservation within center city areas.

- Because the highway project pipeline often has so many highway priorities to be addressed, it appears that many MPOs must provide significant assistance to transit agencies in identifying and providing opportunities to use the funding flexibility of the ISTEA to ensure that transit projects are adequately considered.

- One of the major problems being experienced by many MPOs is the great difficulty in coordinating and communicating with the many federal, state, and regional agencies dealing with transportation and air quality planning. For example, several MPOs are concerned that meeting the conformity requirements is viewed as an afterthought rather than an important action that must be taken in advance of establishing plans and programs.

- Some MPO staff indicated that they have to deal with three public groups, each of whom have different needs. These groups are the average citizen, special interest groups, and technical staff in other agencies and the community. MPOs must develop different methods for communicating with and obtaining input from each of these groups. Limited resources and limited authority to take action makes this process even more difficult.

- The 20 statewide planning elements required by the ISTEA contains many of the same elements as the 15 MPO planning factors. This establishes another complication for MPOs to address, because of more extensive needs for coordination with state departments of transportation.

- The requirement for developing Major Investment Studies (MIS) will provide an opportunity to establish a more rational approach for creating long-range plans and will require the cooperation of all groups in the process. Highway agencies, local elected officials, transit agencies, federal agencies, and the public must all be part of the MIS process. Given the complexity of the process, however, there is concern that staff assistance from just

one agency will not be adequate to deal with the issues.

Technical Issues

- It appears that with the exception of some isolated cases there is relatively little comprehensive planning underway that takes a top-down approach. This is because there is still a great deal of short-term project planning that must be undertaken to deal with long-standing problems. This short-term focus often comes at the expense of long-range planning.

- The plans being developed in many areas are still dealing with the numerous projects and problems that have been in the pipeline—sometimes for a decade or more—rather than focusing on new issues and opportunities.

- The requirement to update plans every three years will be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve in many air quality non-attainment areas due to the time and data needed to conduct the required analyses.

- Many of the technical planning models being used were originally developed decades before the ISTEA. The requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments have stretched the ability to apply existing models to measure transportation changes required to reduce transportation generated emissions. MPOs are aware of these concerns and a number of MPOs are spending considerable funds in efforts to update data and models.

- Some MPOs indicated concern that advocacy groups often focus on the technical modeling results as the primary method for judging the adequacy of plans and programs.

- Many federal, state, and local participants in the MPO planning process have expressed the need for developing expanded technical training programs. Both FHWA and FTA are currently developing a variety of courses to meet these needs.

- Consideration should be given to establishing different technical guidelines for smaller MPOs than those used with the larger MPOs—one size does not fit all.

- It appears that limited resources will make it difficult for many MPOs to develop, analyze, and integrate the management systems.

- Although some MPOs have had the resources to obtain good data and to analyze that data, many do not have such resources.

- As a result of the ISTEA, more serious attention is being given to freight transportation issues and to land use planning as an integral part of transportation planning.

- Some MPOs have developed effective technical procedures for incorporating project planning, corridor planning, sub-regional, and regional planning into the development of comprehensive plans and programs.

Summary of Concerns Expressed at This Stage

- Some MPOs expressed concerns about the need for better coordination with state departments of transportation responsible for developing the statewide plans to meet the requirements of the ISTEA. There is a need to provide more substantive input by MPOs into the statewide decision making process.

- Concerns were raised that policy and political leaders need to be made aware of the inherent limitations of available analytical tools.

- State and local officials in many areas are concerned about the ability of MPOs to meet the conformity requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments, and about the potential financial penalties that will be imposed if these requirements are not met.

- Concerns were expressed that the expectation of increased funding for non-highway projects, such as transit and enhancements, cannot be met under existing circumstances. A major reason is that the Congress has not fully funded the ISTEA. Appropriations for most programs have been significantly less than the original authorizations contained in the ISTEA. As a result, available funds for all programs are less than desired, and all projects suffer. More innovative and secure sources of federal, state, and local funds need to be established. If they are not, continuing battles over shrinking revenues for all transportation programs will become increasingly counter-productive.

- It appears that there are relatively few visionary plans being developed. This is because there are so many immediate concerns in many areas, especially to ensure that requirements are met and funding eligibility is maintained.

- The ISTEA has raised the expectations of citizen groups and local activists beyond reasonable levels of possible results.

- A movement to establish or earmark dedicated funds for specific activities could effectively destroy many of the innovative features of the ISTEA, including the intent of flexibility in funding transportation needs.

- Incentives and methods must be established for long range, visionary, comprehensive planning that includes land use, quality of life, and financial considerations, as well as the other innovations identified by the ISTEA.

- Serious considerations and increased resources must be given to developing more effective analytical tools that deal with today's problems and issues.

The Differences Made by the ISTEA

- The requirements to develop fiscally constrained plans and programs represent one of the most positive and powerful tools in the MPO battery of requirements. If highway and transit agencies take these requirements seriously, more effective planning will be possible.

- The need to deal with the preservation of the existing highway and transit systems is a significant requirement having potentially positive impacts. This has the potential for focusing energy and resources on immediate needs rather than the typical actions to deal with old problems and projects currently in the programming process.

- More effective methods for the consideration of citizen input are emerging in many areas. Citizen input must be integrated with political realities, however.

- In the past, many MPO activities have been dominated by state and federal funding availability. Many MPOs are now experiencing more cooperative input from those agencies because of the more specific requirements for MPO approval of plans and programs and the more active participation by MPO staffs in state planning activities.

- The MIS requirements provide the motivation for all participants to establish a new and innovative planning process that could eventually meet many of the expectations created by the ISTEA.

- The ISTEA and the Clean Air Act Amendments require that more serious attention be given to the urban transportation planning process in all metropolitan areas throughout the nation. In particular, the requirements and deadlines imposed by both Acts have resulted in a renewed and reinvigorated planning process in all areas.

The Synthesis is one of a series of recent research projects focusing on developing a better understanding of the manner in which MPOs are meeting the requirements for metropolitan planning as defined by the ISTEA. It provides one perspective—from the vantage point of a limited unscientifically selected number of MPO staff members—on how these requirements are being met.

In spite of the limited number of observations contained in the Synthesis, a number of conclusions can be drawn. First, the two Acts have required that renewed and serious attention be given to the urban transportation planning process in all metropolitan areas throughout the nation. All of the MPOs contacted during this study are doing everything possible to meet those requirements.

Second, a concerted effort is underway at the MPO level to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the ISTEA to develop more effective multimodal metropolitan transportation plans and programs in full cooperation with other public agencies, the private sector, and the public. These efforts are enhancing the previous processes used in many areas.

Third, the ISTEA has placed more emphasis on planning elements that due to limited resources have often been given a lower priority in the past. These elements include freight planning, land use planning, and intermodal considerations.

Fourth, the requirements to develop fiscally constrained plans and programs represent one of the most powerful tools in the MPO battery. The use of this approach by highway and transit agencies will result in more effective planning and project programming.

Fifth, the need to deal with the preservation of existing highway and transit systems has the potential for focusing energy and resources on immediate needs rather than on actions to deal predominantly with old problems and adding new projects to the selection process.

Sixth, whereas in the past many MPO activities have been dominated by simply meeting the planning requirements established for state and federal programs, now many MPOs are experiencing more extensive input by state, regional, and local agencies. This is due to more specific requirements for MPO approval of plans and programs, and the more active participation by MPO staffs in those activities.

Seventh, the MIS requirements provide the motivation for all participants to establish new and innovative planning processes that could eventually help to meet many of the expectations created by the ISTEA.

The results of the MPO interviews also identified a number of concerns. For example, many MPOs noted that the ISTEA has raised the expectations of citizen groups and local officials beyond reasonable levels, at least within the short term. In addition, some MPOs have

expressed concerns about the need for more extensive coordination with state departments of transportation responsible for developing statewide plans. One goal of many MPOs is to provide more substantive input to the statewide decision making process.

Another concern raised by many MPOs related to the need to improve technical models and tools. Policy and political leaders should be made aware of the limitations of existing models and adequate resources should be programmed to develop more effective analytical tools that deal with today's problems and issues. Finally, many MPO staff members noted the need for technical assistance from state and federal sources to enable them to meet their objectives more effectively.

The significance of this Synthesis is that it summarizes some of the early struggles and successes experienced by several MPOs in meeting the new federal requirements imposed by the ISTEA. Its contribution is to document some of those evolving experiences provided by thoughtful MPO staff members in transforming the urban transportation planning process to meet the new challenges of the 21st century. Since the completion of this study, significant progress has no doubt been made on many of the issues raised in the interviews. The interview results also highlight several recommendations that might be considered to help advance the work of MPOs throughout the nation.

First, there is great value in providing opportunities for MPO directors and staff members to meet regularly to discuss issues, successes, failures, and innovations that have helped to advance the state-of-the-practice. This form of technology transfer could reap benefits relatively quickly. In addition, there is a need for a series of ongoing technical assistance programs to provide the help needed by MPOs to deal with the issues addressed and identified in the Synthesis. The FHWA and FTA are probably in the best position to develop and initiate this help.

Further, more extensive research is needed to improve existing data and analytical procedures. It may also be appropriate to develop a continuing series of issue papers dealing with technical, process, and institutional case studies. These would be very helpful to MPO staff members and would provide for a continuous dialogue among all the groups involved in the metropolitan planning process. In addition, the private sector transportation participants, including shippers and carriers, as well as other non-traditional participants such as port authorities, need to be included more extensively in the planning process.

A number of recommendations for longer-range research also emerged from the Synthesis. These include the need for a comprehensive analysis of transportation

finance innovations for multimodal planning and programming, examining methods for effective transportation system performance monitoring, and assessing the land use and transportation interface. Examining the institutional constraints that inhibit multimodal planning and programming, and assessing the role of freight transportation as an integral part of multimodal planning should also be considered. Finally, the need to develop new analytical tools for planning and programming and to develop new data collection methods and data items should be explored.

These topics may be included in research projects and programs currently being funded by federal, state, and local agencies, and other groups. A more concerted effort should be considered in addressing the comprehensive requirements that have been motivated by the ISTEA and the Clean Air Act Amendments, however.

States' Adaptation to the ISTEA Requirements

Ann Mladinov, National Academy of Public Administration and Thomas Larson, Consultant



I am very happy to have the opportunity to present the results of the NCHRP project on *State Departments of Transportations' Strategy for Change* with Tom Larson. We were very lucky with the timing of this Conference, in that the report on this project was just published this week.

I would like to start by providing a brief description of the work conducted for the project. Tom will then summarize one of the case studies—The Bay Area Partnership in San Francisco.

The title of this conference, "Institutional Aspects of Metropolitan Transportation Planning" reflects a key focus of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA). The Academy is concerned with issues associated with institutions, processes, and the

performance capacity of institutions—not policy or all the technical aspects of issues.

The Academy is set up like the National Academy of Sciences, with Fellows located throughout the country who can be brought together to address institutional and management issues and opportunities. There are several reasons why the topic for the conference is of particular interest to NAPA. First, the Academy has also identified the region as a key level for understanding and addressing domestic challenges. In addition, many of my colleagues at the Academy view the ISTEA as an important example and really a test case for other major programs. Unlike a lot of other areas, the transportation area has established institutions and processes for working across levels of government, including MPOs. Now ISTEA gives responsibilities to MPOs in transportation planning and project selection. Similar types of agencies and responsibilities do not exist to deal with housing, welfare, and other needs.

One of the key changes that state departments of transportation have had to deal with as a result of the ISTEA relate to the increased responsibilities given to MPOs. Our study was undertaken to help identify the changes in the roles and responsibilities of the different parties involved in transportation, including the metropolitan transportation planning process and the strategies state departments of transportation could use to better respond to these new roles.

To accomplish this objective, interviews were conducted with key representatives in 13 states. Representatives from the state departments of transportation, MPOs, transit agencies, other federal, state, and local agencies, citizens groups, special interest groups, and private sector groups were interviewed in each state. The interview questionnaire was also sent to other individuals throughout the country. A total of 420 completed questionnaires were returned and analyzed.

The interview questionnaire focused on the key issues forcing changes for state DOTs. For example, the first question in the interviews addressed the key factors driving change. You will probably not be surprised at the response to this question. The factors identified most often were finances, the ISTEA, and environmental concerns.

Information was also obtained on the impacts of these changes on the state departments of transportation, how states and other agencies were dealing with these changes, and the strengths and weaknesses of the DOTs in dealing with these challenges. The responses to these questions were often very similar. For example, many respondents identified the people of the DOTs as their main strength but also identified people as the major impediment to the DOTs' ability to respond effectively to forces driving

change. Leaders and employees of the DOTs were identified as intelligent and committed, but in some cases they were not ready to change in ways the process was demanding.

The research was heavily focused on field interviews. In addition to summarizing the common themes from these interviews, we tried to capture the energy of the various individuals by including a number of direct quotes in the report. I hope you will take the time to read this part of the report, as it provides the perspective of representatives from different agencies.

Creativity can be thought of in a number of different ways. Tom has often suggested that creativity includes not just coming up with new ideas, but is also in pulling together what people are saying, combining it in a new way, and presenting it back to the same groups. This is the challenge that MPOs face. MPOs act as the forum for the presentation of ideas, issues, and concerns. To be successful, however, MPOs must act as more than just a forum for the presentation of ideas. MPOs must also bring the diverse ideas and the needs of various groups together and help reach a consensus on the future elements of the transportation system.

Sam Zimmerman from the FTA mentioned yesterday that the key to a successful metropolitan planning process is communication. To help communicate the results of this research study to the top officials within the state departments of transportation, we developed a short executive summary and a set of presentation materials especially designed for busy officials. We package them in a portfolio that was sent to each director. In addition to highlighting the main findings from the study, the executive summary contains a series of self-assessment questionnaires. These questionnaires will allow each director or key staff person to conduct a self-assessment of their agency and area.

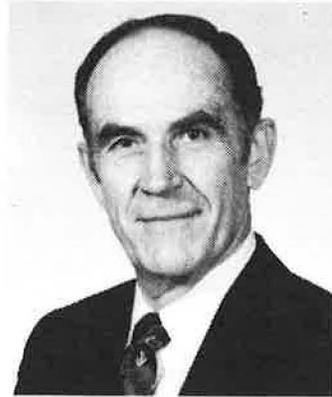
The questions in the self-assessment focus on the key challenges, the capacity to respond, these challenges, potential action steps, and possible measures for monitoring success. A series of matrices are provided, leading the individual through a consideration of each of these issues. These can be used to develop action plans for the organization.

More specific matrices were also developed for the five specific functional areas of planning, highway administration and engineering, human resources, finance and administration, and multimodal and transit. These are intended for use by the managers responsible for these functional areas. The matrices are provided in hard copies and on computer diskettes.

I would like to close with a story that was used at a community-building seminar in Chicago last year. The story involves a community that was wracked with conflict

and natural disasters. The town leaders asked a wise woman from the adjacent community to give them advice on what to do. After talking with everyone in the area she told the leaders that she could not give them any advice. Rather, she told them they needed to listen to each other and the solutions to their problems would emerge. "Everything you need to know you know already?" This was not an easy answer for the community to hear, but it was the right answer. That's what we found in our state DOTs project, and it also applies to the MPO process. MPOs have to listen to all the parties interested in transportation and regional and local development plans, identify what they know and what they care about, and develop from those parties and their observations the solutions they need.

Thomas Larson, Consultant



I am pleased to be here and to have the opportunity to participate. It is appropriate that this conference is in Williamsburg. Some 30 years ago a conference was held here to discuss the creation of an entity that could help coordinate transportation planning in metropolitan areas. The roles and responsibilities of MPOs have evolved over time. The ISTEA represents the most recent, and the most far reaching, enhancement to the responsibilities of MPOs. Questions being discussed at this conference focus on how MPOs are responding to their new roles and to the opportunities generated by the ISTEA.

The case study I would like to discuss this morning—The Bay Area Partnership—provides an example of an innovative approach being used in the San Francisco-Oakland metropolitan area. The Partnership included representatives from the MPO, other regional agencies, local governments, state and federal agencies, and other groups. Currently, there are some 32 active members. The purpose of the Partnership, established in

1991, is to improve mobility, accessibility, and air quality in the nine county metropolitan area.

Although California is a unique in many respects, there are a number of features of the Partnership that can serve as a model for other areas. California has been a national leader in many transportation components including the development of an extensive freeway system, the anti-freeway movement, high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, and air quality concerns. California also influenced the ISTEA, in that a number of influential congressmen were from the state.

The Joint Urban Mobility Program (JUMP) represents one of the initial efforts of the Partnership. This program included a number of "doable" projects focused on improving mobility in the area.

In addition to Jump Start, the Partnership has accomplished a number of important objectives. First, it provides a forum for the dissemination of issues among the various agencies and groups involved. This has greatly enhanced the flow of information among agencies and has helped facilitate innovative approaches to addressing critical transportation problems. Second, the Partnership continues to be instrumental in developing and implementing specific projects and programs aimed at improving mobility in the area.

The benefits from the Partnership did not come immediately, however. One of the lessons from this case study is that building strong working relationships among diverse agencies does not happen overnight. It takes time to build a level of trust and to establish open communication links. It is also important to remember that the Partnership is a voluntary organization and that it has not diminished the responsibilities of the individual agencies and groups.

Funding for transportation in the Bay area has also helped support the Partnership. Local governments are now providing over half of the funding for the transportation system, with the state accounting for only 12 percent. This is a significant change from the historic approach to transportation funding which relied more heavily on federal and state funds.

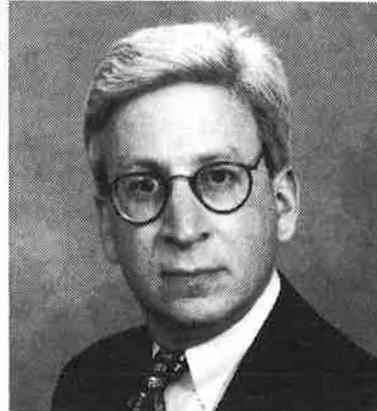
An interesting approach is also being taken in California to enhance coordination between land use and transportation planning. As more funds are provided by local governments, which are responsible for land use controls, they become more accountable for land use and transportation decisions as they will have been to live with the results.

As noted by the title of this presentation, now is the time for MPOs and state departments of transportation to learn to manage new roles. The ISTEA provides the opportunity to boldly move forward to advance metropolitan transportation planning and operations. I

hope each of you will accept this challenge and help manage change in metropolitan areas throughout the country.

Institutional Barriers to Intermodal Transportation Policies and Planning in Metropolitan Areas

Alan B. Winn, Crain and Associates



It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to discuss TCRP Project H-4C, which focuses on the institutional issues related to the intermodal transportation policies and planning activities associated with the ISTEA. Having spent 16 years of my career working at a transit agency, I think I bring an interesting perspective to the project. Although the problem statement for this project is to examine the institutional barriers to intermodal planning and policy making, the study design expands this focus. The project is also considering how intermodal projects can be advanced given existing institutional arrangements, identifying what improvements are needed and what changes will make the biggest difference, developing strategies to overcome the identified barriers, and identifying projects to field test these strategies. An interim report, documenting the barriers, potential improvements to the planning process, and specific strategies has been completed. The final stage of the project will be to field test these strategies at selected MPOs throughout the country.

A number of different activities have been completed as part of the study. First, 33 in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders from MPOs, state departments of transportation, and transit agencies throughout the country. A typology of barriers was developed based on the results of these interviews. A nationwide survey was then conducted of the same three organizations—MPOs, state departments of transportation, and transit agencies—using an analytical tool called Net

Impressions®. This technique identifies critical areas for improvements and assigns a leverage score to these areas.

The interviews and surveys provided an excellent overview of the current status of activities around the country and the perspective of participants on the intermodal planning and decision-making process. The interviews and surveys were used to help identify some of the challenges and the opportunities being faced by all groups in adjusting to the changes resulting from the ISTEA. The results of both the interviews and the surveys point to the need to be aware of the model environment, to have a good understanding of the ISTEA, and to be cognizant of organizational behavior and agents of change.

I would like to summarize a few of the results from the interviews with the 33 key stakeholders from throughout the country. These were senior level officials at MPOs, state departments of transportation, and transit agencies. The interviews focused on the five major areas of organizational capabilities, organization structure and culture, institutional and legal framework, financial resources, and overall support of intermodalism.

There were a number of objectives to the interviews. First, the results were used to identify the nationwide receptivity toward intermodalism, as well as the current planning practices. Second, the interviews helped to identify the barriers to intermodalism noted by the different stakeholder groups. As part of this element, we wanted to examine opportunities to help promote intermodalism, as well as the approaches used by different groups to address issues and barriers. The interviews were also used to define Net Impression® arenas, which I will explain in more detail later in my presentation.

A number of common themes emerged from the interviews. First, many respondents indicated that one of the measures of success related to the ISTEA used in their areas was the ability to secure flexible funding. Thus, it appears that less emphasis may be given to ensuring a good planning process in some areas, with more focus on simply gaining additional funding for the various modes. In addition, modal oriented planning—rather than planning focused on mobility needs—seemed to be the common approach in most metropolitan areas. Finally, there still seems to be a good deal of modal bias on the part of representatives from the different agencies.

As other speakers have noted, the interviews also highlighted the lack of coordination between land use and transportation planning in most metropolitan areas. The results further indicate that there is not yet agreement between many MPOs and state departments of transportation on the process and criteria to be used to evaluate different types of transportation projects. Although there are a number of good examples of

coordination at the staff level on the project selection process, problems were noted in explaining these processes and procedures to the agency policy boards. The interview results also seem to highlight that transit agencies in many areas are still not fully involved in the transportation planning and decision making process.

The results from the interviews were used to develop a typology of barriers to intermodalism. Three general categories of barriers focusing on organizational issues, resources, and institutional forces emerged from the interviews. I would like to briefly describe a few potential barriers within each of these categories.

Issues associated with different agency cultures was one of the relevant organizational barriers. It is not surprising that the culture of different agencies tends to reflect their mission and history. The mission statements of most agencies still focus on a single mode or a group of modes. For example, transit authorities are operating agencies and are mainly concerned with ensuring that service is being operated effectively and efficiently. This is a much different perspective than an MPO or a state department of transportation. Few agencies reflect an intermodal perspective or a focus on mobility rather than a specific mode. As a result, the ISTEA, which contains strong emphasis on intermodalism, may be viewed as a threat to some groups.

The lack of adequate funding was noted by representatives from all agencies as a major barrier to intermodalism. All groups were in agreement that the full funding of the ISTEA was needed. This lack of funding and concerns over adequate funding appears to further reinforce the modal bias of each group.

A variety of institutional issues were discussed in the interviews. Concerns were raised by many respondents over the involvement of special interest groups in the transportation planning process. It is interesting to note that only a few areas viewed special interest groups as an opportunity to help advanced intermodal goals and objectives.

The interviews and the other research activities conducted in the study highlighted the importance of a project champion in successful intermodal projects. Interview respondents noted that the project champion helped focus the energy of all groups on achieving a particular goal. Further, the project champion was able to overcome many of the identified barriers by redirecting group energies towards achieving the project objectives.

We also used a technique called Force Field Analysis in the study. This technique addresses the factors that contribute to change in a given situation. It examines both the forces that work against change, which are called restraining forces, as well as the factors that contribute to change, which are called driving forces. When the

appropriate driving forces are put into action, they overcome or eliminate the barriers that are restricting change. At this point, change can begin.

We used this technique, and Net Impression[®] Analysis, to identify the driving forces that could be used to advance intermodal planning and decision making. Net impression analysis is a complicated process that uses several algorithms to identify potential areas for improvement given certain situations.

A major component in the process is the identification of arenas, which are major areas of change. In this study areas were elements such as leadership, full funding, and better planning processes. Within each arena a series of intermodal planning factors were identified. The outcome of this process was used to develop a net impression survey that was completed by the stakeholders. All of this information was used in the final step called leverage analysis. This process helps identify the factors that will have the largest impact or leverage on achieving the desired results.

I will use the arena of the transportation planning process to highlight a few of the study findings. Some of the planning factors within this arena include giving equal consideration to transportation alternatives and adopting effective project selection criteria. It was found that these transportation planning factors had the highest satisfaction rating with all the stakeholder groups. Using the net impression analysis, however, we were able to determine that the transportation planning process does not have much leverage on affecting change. It can compliment change, but it is not a driving factor. The results also indicate that governmental coordination is not a driving force.

Gaining internal support for intermodalism emerged as one of the driving forces, along with implementation capabilities and leadership support for intermodalism. Funding support was also important, but did not rate as high as these three driving forces.

A comparison of the responses among the three stakeholder groups identified some interesting results. For example, state departments of transportation appear to have a clear vision of the key factors to enhance intermodalism, as do MPOs. On the other hand, transit agencies did not appear to have as clear a focus of what

would make the biggest improvement toward intermodalism.

The study results indicate that the institutional barriers to intermodal planning can be overcome by the driving forces of leadership support and gaining external support. Organizational barriers can be overcome by government coordination and the planning process. Resource barriers can be overcome with ISTEA funding and enhanced planning and implementation capabilities. These categories are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they overlap in many respects.

A number of findings are outlined in the interim report. First, it appears that external support will have the greatest positive effect on intermodalism. Second, leadership support is critical to achieving intermodal planning and implementation. The full funding of the ISTEA is also important, but it does not appear to be the highest priority.

A few other observations can be made based on the preliminary results. For example, the interview and survey responses indicated that state departments of transportation are still viewed as being primarily highway oriented. The U. S. Department of Transportation was also not viewed as being supportive of intermodalism.

All of the three stakeholder groups were also asked in the survey to identify the top improvements or changes they felt would contribute to intermodalism. Representatives from state departments of transportation indicated that enhancing the intermodal planning process was their first priority. This was followed closely by supporting this planning effort with funding for intermodal projects. The major improvement noted by transit agency representatives was a dedicated source of funding for transit. Finally, MPO representatives identified the need for federal agencies to take more of a facilitator role, rather than a regulator role, as the key improvement.

The next steps in the study are to conduct a two day Implementation Forum in four metropolitan areas. Additional surveys will be conducted before these sessions. A follow up meeting will be scheduled approximately ninety days later to review progress on agreed upon action steps. Additional interviews will also be scheduled with representatives from federal agencies and national organizations.

Case Study Findings on Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Bruce D. McDowell, U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations



It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to discuss the case study findings on MPOs. I would like to briefly describe the key elements of the study, a few of the major findings and our recommendations. I hope the study results will help to stimulate your thinking as you start the workshop session this afternoon.

The study conducted by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) was initiated to coincide with this conference. The purpose of the study was to identify the type of help MPOs and others involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process needed to respond in a more effective and more timely manner to the requirement of the ISTEA. The results are intended to be used to assist in the development of a capacity building program focused on the identified needs.

The study started by examining a number of assumptions related to the metropolitan transportation planning process. One of the basic assumptions of the study was that the roles and responsibilities of MPOs continue to increase. Another related assumption was that the ISTEA has been a driving force in enhancing the roles of MPOs. The major changes resulting from the ISTEA were also noted. First, as a result of the ISTEA, MPOs must be more inclusive and must provide more opportunities for all groups to participate in the transportation planning process. Second, MPOs must develop stronger working relationships with the other groups involved in the planning process. Third, improvements are needed in the technical tools used in the planning process to meet the requirements of the ISTEA. Finally, the ISTEA envisions that MPOs will become more effective political bodies.

The study also started with the realization that all of the

339 MPOs are not alike. Rather, we started with the hypothesis that one size does not fit all. The ISTEA recognizes four different types of MPOs. These are large metropolitan areas that meet the EPA air quality regulations, large metropolitan areas that do not meet the air quality standards, small metropolitan areas in air quality attainment, and small metropolitan air quality non-attainment areas. Thus, the study recognized that MPOs would require different types of help to meet the ISTEA requirements.

The study further started with a realization that there were many other studies focusing on the changing roles of MPOs and that MPO staff were being asked to respond to numerous questionnaires and surveys. We were able to utilize these other studies, and the final report provides a summary of them.

The two key objectives of the study were to review the existing literature and the status of other studies and to conduct additional interviews with representatives from selected MPOs. Interviews were conducted with representatives from 18 MPOs. The MPOs were selected to provide a mix of sizes, air quality attainment status, age, and geographical locations. In each case, approximately a dozen interviews were conducted with MPO staff and board members, state department of transportation officials, federal agency representatives, transit agency personnel, and citizen group members.

The interviews focused on three general questions—what changes have been made since the ISTEA was enacted, what difficulties have been encountered in trying to make these changes, and what kind of assistance is needed to help meet the new requirements. The questions were asked in an open-ended fashion.

The results from the interviews provide an interesting perspective on the status of activities at the various MPOs and the type of assistance identified as needed. A number of changes were identified as a result of the ISTEA. Increased public participation was the most frequently noted change. Improved air quality analysis procedures were also noted in many areas. The ISTEA requirements had further enhanced intergovernmental coordination in over half the MPOs contacted. Improved relationships between the MPO and the state department of transportation were noted by just under half of the respondents. The consideration of intermodal issues in the planning process was also noted, along with increased attention to long-range planning. Thus, progress is being made in many metropolitan areas.

Conversely, almost all of the respondents indicated that increased regulatory burdens and workload levels led the difficulties in responding to the ISTEA requirements. Other problems noted included unachievable expectations, uncoordinated deadlines, disrupted relationships within the

MPO, and strained relationships with the state departments of transportation.

A number of responses were provided to the question on what type of assistance is needed to better respond to the requirements of ISTEA. For example, many of the respondents noted that help was needed in determining ways to address the freight planning requirements of the ISTEA. Conducting transportation impact analysis of the various social, economic, and environmental justice issues represents another area noted for assistance.

The third question focused on the type of help MPOs would find of benefit. The top ten most frequently made suggestions were clearer federal regulations, educational efforts for citizens and elected officials on the ISTEA provisions, increased funding for projects, flexibility to coordinate the ISTEA deadlines with local requirements, training in public participation programs and techniques, enhanced coordination among federal agencies, facilitation of flexible funding, research and information concerning the required management systems, development of a best practices clearinghouse, and more training opportunities for staff.

A total of 58 suggestions for additional assistance were provided by the respondents. These results were used to identify six different potential approaches for providing help. These included research, information, training, regulatory change, technical assistance, and additional resources. Regardless of the delivery method, eight common themes related to additional assistance were identified. These were intergovernmental cooperation, data and quantitative analysis, planning strategies and methods, the funding process, the public involvement process, requirements for financially constrained plans, implementation techniques, and prioritizing projects within the TIP.

The study concluded with six recommendations to help build the capacity of MPOs to meet the requirements of the ISTEA. The first suggests that the U.S. Department of Transportation develop a comprehensive capacity building program. The second and third recommendations build on this theme by suggesting a more supportive U.S. Department of Transportation restructuring and regulatory relief. The fourth recommendation was for the development of an ISTEA mediation, conciliation, and peer review service. The last two suggestions focused on including state departments of transportation and MPOs in the capacity building process.

In conclusion, a common theme emerging from the study was that MPOs and other agencies want help and assistance in meeting the ISTEA requirements, not further regulations. I hope the results of this study will stimulate discussion in the workshop session. Further, I hope the findings and recommendations will assist in the ongoing

discussion of the roles and responsibilities of MPOs and the other agencies and groups involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

This discussion has taken on new urgency because of the prospects for the shrinking federal role and the shrinking federal dollar that we heard described at the beginning of this conference.

Innovative Practices for Multimodal Transportation Planning for Freight and Passengers

Matthew Coogan, Transportation Consultant

I am pleased to be participating in this conference. I would like to briefly describe a study that is just getting started and to ask for your help with the project. The study is part of NCHRP Project 8-32. There are five major components to this project. The element I will be discussing is examining innovative practices in multimodal planning. Other parts of the project include the development of a performance based planning process, the examination of integrating land use into the multimodal planning process, guidance on the development of multimodal partnerships, and the assessment of data needs in multimodal planning.

The NCHRP panel defined seven major focus areas for this study. These include statewide planning and the reorganization of statewide units for more effective multimodal planning, regional programming for multimodalism, multimodal planning consideration for compliance with the Clean Air Act Amendments, management systems and performance measurements, innovative methods of public involvement, rural applications of multimodal planning, and the financial constraints of multimodal planning.

A number of activities have been initiated on the project. First, we have started by reviewing current literature, studies, and presentations. We are developing a database with the results of this review to document current practices in multimodal planning. This information has been combined with the TRIS database to provide a comprehensive source of information on multimodal planning. The current database includes approximately 700 references. Separate bibliographies have been developed for each of the seven focus areas.

This database should provide a valuable resource for anyone interested in advancing multimodal planning and project development. Further, it should help facilitate the ongoing sharing information on best practices and project experience. We would welcome any ideas and suggestions you might have on good examples to include in the database.

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.

WORKSHOP REPORTS

Brigid Hynes-Cherin, San Francisco County Transportation Authority—Presiding

Workshop 1—Roles and Responsibilities

Alan Wulkan, Parsons Brinckerhoff, Chair

Susan Mortel, Michigan Department of Transportation, Recorder

The workshop started with a discussion of the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies and groups involved in the metropolitan transportation planning and decision making process. Thirty-five issues were identified during the initial discussion. These were consolidated into six major issue areas. Strategies and immediate action items were then identified to help address each of the major issues.

Issue 1—Establish MPO partnerships and relationships.

The major topics discussed concerned the need to form new partnerships with numerous diverse agencies and groups, and ensuring the development of projects that address the major transportation needs in a metropolitan area.

Strategies:

- Sponsor the development of guidelines, not just regulations, to assist MPOs in enhancing public participation programs. These should include case studies of best practices, examples of techniques for use in different situations, and information on how to deal with especially controversial situations.

- MPOs should focus on the key transportation plans and programs to be delivered in a metropolitan area.

Immediate Action Steps:

- A manual should be developed containing a tool box approach to public participation. The manual should outline the different public participation techniques that can be used, provide suggestions on the strategies most appropriate for use in various situations, and identify case study examples of the successful application of these approaches. The manual should also provide strategies for different sizes of MPOs, as well as for organizations with various staff and financial resources. The use of electronic bulletin boards should be considered to provide some of this information.

- There is a need at all levels to clarify the goals and

responsibilities of MPOs.

- There is a need to identify the key partners in the MPO planning and project selection process and the desired relationships among these groups. The appropriate relationships should be determined within each metropolitan area—they should not be legislated. Different relationships will exist in various areas reflecting the characteristics, issues, and opportunities in each region.

- An increased awareness is needed among the public on the roles and responsibilities of MPOs and on increased public participation in the MPO process.

- The issues and opportunities in each metropolitan area should be identified by the MPO, and partnerships and coalitions should be developed to respond to these.

- The minimum standards and expectations for agencies and groups participating in the MPO process should be identified and communicated to these groups. This will help ensure that all groups know the procedures and what is expected of them.

- Ensure that the MPO process is open and that it involves all of the key stakeholders. Enhanced outreach activities are needed to ensure that state and local governments and agencies are involved.

- Improve the education of MPO board members to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities.

- Improve access to technical training and technical tools for MPO staff members.

- Explore new funding partnerships for MPOs.

- Ensure that the public is informed of all meetings and that they feel welcome to attend and participate.

- Sponsor the development of an MPO Peer Assistance Program. This would establish and fund a program for MPOs with expertise in specific areas to share their experience with other MPOs. On-site visits could be arranged, electronic bulletin boards could be used, ongoing meetings could be held, and numerous other approaches could be used to share information.

- Identify the best examples of MPO involvement in regional visioning and share this with other MPOs, state and local governments, transit agencies, and other groups. A Synthesis could be developed on this topic.

- Produce a Synthesis on MPO state-enabling legislation. Many states have given MPOs additional responsibilities and authority. A Synthesis outlining the approaches used in different states and the experience with various techniques would benefit all groups.

- Identify mechanisms for involving the new public and private partners needed to make MPOs successful. Develop a Synthesis identifying good examples of innovative approaches.

- Establish a training program for all groups—federal, state, and local—involved in the MPO process on team building, negotiation techniques, listening skills, and facilitation strategies.

Issue 2—Examine the MPO role in the new political environment. Major changes are occurring in the federal, state, and local political environments. An examination of the potential impacts of these changes on MPOs and how MPOs will fit into the evolving political landscape is needed.

Strategies:

- Identify new stakeholders in the political process, determine their interest in the MPO process, and develop approaches to involve them early to ensure they understand the importance and benefits of MPOs.

- Ensure that MPOs are performing functions that are relevant to the needs and demands of metropolitan areas today. MPOs should provide information to decision makers at all levels and should provide a forum for the involvement of all groups and individuals in the transportation planning and project selection process.

- Reexamine who the customers of MPOs are and the ways in which they can best be served. This should include an assessment of the key stakeholders and customers of the MPO process and techniques MPOs can use to measure if they are meeting the needs of these groups.

- Explore new and innovative funding mechanisms. This should include both public and private sector financing techniques. Potential public/private sector funding arrangements and partnerships should also be

examined.

- Explore land use and transportation linkages and identify how local governments and agencies responsible for land use decisions can be involved in the MPO process. Many of these groups have not historically been active participants in the MPO process. Their involvement will be critical to developing livable and sustainable communities.

- Assess the impacts of different types of developments on the transportation system and other infrastructure elements. This examination should consider the need for economic growth and development, while ensuring a high quality of life for area residents.

- A goal of public participation programs should be to focus on early involvement by all groups. One strategy to help accomplish this goal may be the use of visioning. This technique focuses on developing a common future vision for the metropolitan area through the involvement of all groups.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor the development of a communications and informational tool box explaining the benefits of MPOs and the value they bring to the metropolitan planning process. This tool box should outline the benefits of MPOs to the diverse agencies and groups in urban areas throughout the country. It should provide information in a way that is easily understandable to the new partners and players in the MPO process. Including a market research component in this study will be critical to identifying the new partners and the types of information these groups need. A variety of materials should be developed that can be used by MPOs to communicate with these groups to help ensure they become active participants in the process.

- Sponsor the development of a Synthesis on the best practices for involving private sector groups, public organizations, and the general public in the MPO process. This Synthesis should identify the types of information on plans, projects, land use, population, and other elements these groups find of value and the best ways to provide the desired information.

Issue 3—Ensure stability and consistency in federal rules and regulations. There is a need to maintain stability in the rules and regulations governing MPOs and the transportation planning process.

Strategies:

- Strive for consistency in the federal interpretation of rules and regulations.
- Strive for federal, state, and MPO reaffirmation of the need for good transportation and land use planning practices. Promote common sense, locally derived planning approaches rather than top down rules and requirements.
- Memorandums of understanding among the various groups involved in the MPO process should be utilized to a greater extent. Once these have been established, they should form the basis of the ongoing working relationships among the federal, state, and local agencies and groups.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Reestablish the Intermodal Planning Group (IPG), possibly following the approach used in Region IX. Disseminate information to all groups on the use of the approaches used in Region IX and other good examples.
- Enhance the level of understanding among FHWA and FTA field staff on the current policies, regulations, and requirements through an ongoing comprehensive education program. This should include the development of a partnership approach among FHWA and FTA and the state and local agencies involved in MPOs.
- Use the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to tailor the approach, the planning and programming process, and the public involvement program to individual MPOs.
- Establish new lines of communications between federal agencies and MPOs, and among MPOs. Consideration should be given to all forms of communication, including the use of video conferencing, electronic bulletin boards, as well as enhanced one-on-one interaction.
- Develop a pilot program to test the use of memorandums of understanding rather than regulations, to monitor MPO activities, and progress in meeting agreed upon goals and objectives.

Issue 4—Assess the relationships between land use and transportation and identify how the MPO can help facilitate better land use/transportation decisions.

Strategies:

- Identify appropriate roles for MPO involvement in the land use decision making process and assess including the potential benefits of more active MPO involvement.
- Identify the impacts of different land uses on the transportation system, as well as the influence transportation decisions have on land uses.
- Enhance the role of MPOs as the forum for the discussion of land use and development issues.
- Promote access to corridor and congestion management techniques that can demonstrate the impacts of land use and transportation decisions.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor a study to identify the approaches MPOs can use to become a more effective partner in the land use decision making process. This study should include examples of techniques being used by MPOs to influence good land use practices, as well as the identification of new and innovative approaches. In addition, consideration should be given to utilizing land use criteria in the transportation project selection process. Criteria related to this should be developed and provided to MPOs, local jurisdictions, developers, and other groups. It should also identify how MPOs can enhance their role of providing a forum for the discussion and resolution of land use issues.
- Sponsor the development of a manual and training program on access management and corridor management techniques. Make this training available to MPOs, federal, state, and local agencies, developers, and other groups on a continuing basis.
- Analyze the use and impact of congestion management systems. This research should include the examination of the costs and benefits of different strategies, as well as the relationships with other management systems and land uses. This research project is a long-term effort, rather than an immediate action step.

Issue 5—Assess the MPO role in central cities, including strengthening the involvement of central city residents and decision makers in the MPO process.

Strategies:

- Ensure that central cities are adequately represented in the MPO and are treated equitably in the planning and project selection process.

- Ensure that the potential impacts of transportation projects in central cities are fully explored and assessed.

- Identify transportation improvements needed in the central cities to enhance the quality of life and the economic development potential of these areas.

- Foster local partnerships to address critical central city issues, including the mix of suburban and urban employment opportunities, the jobs/housing balance, social service needs, and other issues beyond the scope of traditional transportation elements.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor the development of a Synthesis on central city transportation issues and projects. This Synthesis should focus on the best examples from around the country related to approaches and techniques being used to enhance central cities and the role MPOs play in these efforts.

- Sponsor a conference or symposium on inner city transportation needs. This conference should include both general sessions highlighting good examples from around the country and workshop sessions to discuss issues and to identify solutions.

Issue 6—Identify approaches to improving the project management process.

Strategies:

- Identify ways to ensure that the MPO process fosters the identification and implementation of innovative projects.

- Identify the agencies responsible for implementing the various transportation projects and ensure that they have the authority and accountability to successfully develop and operate the locally selected projects.

- Ensure that the responsibility for the project identification and project selection process resides at the local level, rather than the federal level.

- Examine the need for training programs on addressing federal requirements targeted to local agencies and develop appropriate courses and training materials.

- Examine the effective maximization of financial resources from all sources, including how local funds can be used to leverage funding from other public and private

groups.

- Examine the differences between the FHWA and the FTA project management processes and develop a common approach that streamlines the project development and project delivery process.

- Public participation should be a continuing process. All groups and individuals should be involved early and throughout the MPO process. A critical element that is often overlooked is providing a feedback mechanisms which gives updated information and communicates to the public how their comments and input was used. It should also include communicating the final decision to all groups involved and indicating how their input was used in reaching this decision.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop a unified approach that streamlines all aspects of the project development, selection, and management processes.

- Once these new procedures have been established, develop appropriate training courses and materials and hold training sessions for all groups throughout the country.

Workshop 2—Public Participation in the Planning Process

*Barry Barker, Transit Authority of River City—Chair
John Horsley, U.S. Department of Transportation, and
Nora Lake, Miami Valley Regional Planning
Commission—Recorders*

This workshop addressed a wide range of issues associated with the MPO public participation process. The group agreed that improvements were needed in the existing approaches being used in most metropolitan areas relating to public involvement in the transportation planning and decision making process. Although it was noted that most areas are striving for active participation by the public and by different groups throughout the MPO process, improvements and enhancements were still needed.

The workshop participants identified 10 basic issues relating to public involvement in the metropolitan transportation planning process. A total of 12 strategies were outlined to address these concerns. Finally, six immediate action steps and areas for further research were identified.

Issue 1—In developing strategies and approaches for public involvement, consider the timing of public participation, the resources available to accomplish meaningful participation, and the scope of participation. Timing issues identified included determining the appropriate and key decision points in the process for public involvement and the duration of the involvement. The availability of resources, and the scale of these resources, also need to be examined as they will influence the public involvement strategies that can be used. Scope issues to be examined relate to the types of projects, plans, and activities the public should be involved in.

Strategies:

- Ensure that public participation programs provide adequate opportunities for public involvement throughout the transportation planning process, including prior to key decision points.
- Ensure that the timing and scope of public participation programs are appropriate for the type of planning process or project.
- Ensure that adequate resources are allocated to the public participation process.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor the development of guidelines, not just regulations, to assist MPOs in enhancing public participation programs. These should include case studies of best practices, examples of techniques for use in different situations, and information on how to deal with especially controversial situations.
- Sponsor the development of a cookbook or tool box manual containing step-by-step guidance for the development of different types of public participation programs. This manual should include the design of a public participation process and the ongoing operation of a program including a feedback loop.
- Sponsor the ongoing dissemination of information on the experience with different public participation programs. Approaches that could be used to accomplish this objective include the preparation of case studies, electronic bulletin boards, symposiums, and teleconferences.
- Sponsor the development of best practice case studies of MPOs that have addressed these issues. These case

studies should focus on how MPOs have developed new partnerships, the experience with different public participation techniques, examples of enhancing the involvement of state and local governments, and innovative funding partnerships and alliances.

Issue 2—Build communication, visioning, and facilitating skills within MPOs. These skills are needed to implement and maintain good public involvement programs. These skills may be lacking in some MPOs, state and local governments, and other agencies. Developing these skills will be critical to ensuring enhanced public participation programs.

Strategies:

- A goal of public participation programs should be to focus on early involvement by all groups. One strategy to help accomplish this goal may be the use of visioning. This technique focuses on developing a common future vision for the metropolitan area through the involvement of all groups.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor the development of a Synthesis describing communication, visioning, and facilitating techniques used by MPOs and other agencies. The Synthesis should include best practice case studies and guidelines for the use of these techniques by MPOs and other agencies.
- Sponsor the development and conduct of training sessions focusing on communication, visioning, and facilitating skills and techniques for staff from MPOs, state departments of transportation, transit agencies, and other groups.

Issue 3—Establish a strong commitment to public participation among all MPOs. For public involvement programs to be effective, there must be a strong commitment on the part of MPOs and other agencies. Ensuring that all groups support the public participation process will be critical to the success of these efforts.

Strategies:

- MPOs should provide the forum for all diverse groups to discuss transportation issues, concerns, and projects. The public participation process should be broadened and should include an ongoing mechanism for the involvement of all groups. Ensuring that elected officials, public agency staff, neighborhood groups, advocacy groups, freight operators, truckers, and citizens

all have access to the process should be the goal of all programs.

- The transportation planning process is filled with the use of complex terms, jargon, and acronyms. The general public often does not understand all of these terms. Making sure that the public participation process includes the use of information targeted to a wide audience and is kept simple and jargon free, will help enhance these efforts.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor a research study examining potential resources that could be used to fund public participation programs, including regional visioning efforts. This study should focus on the availability of funding from non-traditional sources—such as foundations, private businesses, and civic groups—to support enhanced public participation programs.

Issue 4—Provide flexibility. There is a need to maintain a balance between the level of prescription required in the regulations and encouraging flexibility to develop and implement public participation programs that meet the needs of individual areas.

Strategies:

- Continue the discussion of flexible public participation programs at other conferences, with national organizations, and with legislative and regulatory groups.
- Examine possible approaches to providing greater flexibility in the current regulations, while at the same time meeting the legislative intent of public participation programs.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor the development of a Synthesis and research projects examining flexible and innovative approaches to public participation. These efforts should include an examination of the public participation programs used by other public agencies, the approaches used by private groups, and other related techniques.

Issue 5—Determine how to measure success. There is a need to determine how to measure the success of a public participation process. This should include identifying how MPOs can determine if a program and process has been successful and the product or outcome of a good process.

Strategies:

- Encourage MPOs to develop approaches and mechanisms for measuring the success of public participation programs and level of understanding based upon comments received.

- Encourage MPOs to use the information and results from these efforts to improve public participation and education programs.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Information should be developed on how customer satisfaction can be measured by MPOs in the public participation process. A Synthesis or other report should be developed examining how total quality management (TQM) can be brought into the metropolitan transportation public participation process and what benchmarks should be used to determine success.

- Conduct research on how TQM and other customer satisfaction measures can be incorporated into the metropolitan transportation planning public participation process. Document these results in a Synthesis or report.

- Sponsor the development of guidelines for monitoring and evaluating public participation programs. This study should examine appropriate objectives, measures of effectiveness, data collection techniques, and monitoring activities for public participation programs. It should develop a set of guidelines for use by MPOs and other groups to monitor and evaluate their public participation programs. The guidelines can be used by MPOs to conduct self-assessments and can help establish a national database on the benefits of different approaches.

Issue 6—Measure the results of public participation. There is a need to examine the consequences of public participation versus non-participation and to provide case study examples of transportation decisions that have been enhanced through public participation.

Strategies:

- Encourage MPOs to monitor and assess the impacts of public involvement in the transportation planning process.

- Encourage MPOs to share the results of this monitoring process and to use the resulting information to improve the overall public participation process.

Immediate Action Steps:

- A Synthesis should be developed documenting case studies and best practice examples of good public participation programs, which involve all groups, provide feedback, and monitor ongoing activities.

- Establish an ongoing research study to monitor public participation programs at MPOs throughout the country. This study would monitor and evaluate new public participation programs on an ongoing basis and would establish a national database on the effectiveness of different efforts.

Issue 7—Broaden the definition of public participation. Consideration should be given to broadening and expanding the definition of public participation to encompass a larger forum and more diverse groups.

Strategies:

- There is a need to better integrate area-wide and neighborhood public participation programs. Both are critical, but closer ties are needed between neighborhood concerns and metropolitan issues.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor a research study that examines how to identify the appropriate groups to include in a public participation program. This research should focus on how to broaden public participation on a project specific basis, as well as part of the ongoing transportation planning process.

- Sponsor the development of a Synthesis that outlines best practice examples of broad based public participation programs and provides guidelines for MPOs and other groups to use in developing expanded public participation efforts.

Issue 8—Incorporate new public participation programs.

There is a need to identify how transitions can be made between current public participation programs and new processes. This should include an assessment of evolutionary changes versus dramatic changes.

Strategies:

- Encourage MPOs to document changes in their public participation programs and the results of these changes.

- Encourage MPOs and other agencies to make a transition to new expanded and enhanced public participation programs.

Immediate Action Step:

- Sponsor the development of procedures to monitor changes in public participation programs and the results of the new approaches. Information on changes in public involvement programs, and the results of new efforts, will be critical to communicate with decision makers at all levels. To ensure this information is documented, a process should be established to monitor changes and to conduct ongoing studies of the benefits of enhanced public participation programs at MPOs throughout the country.

Issue 9—Expand the scope of public participation programs. The public participation process should be broadened from just a project-by-project approach to an all encompassing focus. This new focus should include public involvement in long-term planning activities, operating policies, service planning, and policy and strategy development in addition to capital projects. Guidance is needed on how this new approach can be accomplished.

Strategies:

- The involvement of groups and individuals in the design and development of public participation programs can help ensure the success of these efforts. These groups can help identify what they feel is meaningful participation. Also important is the involvement of the media and other public information outlets. Guidance is needed by many MPOs on how to accomplish this, however.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor the development of a Synthesis that outlines this broader focus for public participation programs and includes best practice case studies.

Issue 10—Determine how to use public input. Although public participation is desired, uncertainty remains on how public input should be used. The key question is who makes the ultimate decision and how public comments are considered. Direction is needed on the appropriate weight to give public input, as well as input from other groups and technical staff.

Strategies:

- There is a need to better integrate area-wide and neighborhood public participation programs. Both are critical, but closer ties are needed between neighborhood concerns and metropolitan issues.
- The involvement of groups and individuals in the design and development of public participation programs can help ensure the success of these efforts. These groups can help identify what they feel is meaningful participation. Guidance is needed by many MPOs on how to accomplish this, however.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor the development of a Synthesis and a video on best practices in public participation programs. The case studies should encompass approaches that can be used in different situations and with various levels of staff and financial resources.

Workshop 3—Fiscal Reality in the Planning Process

Thomas F. Humphrey, Massachusetts Institute of Technology—Chair
Felicia Young, Surface Transportation Policy Project—Recorder

This workshop examined the issues associated with the financial requirements contained in the ISTEA and the new fiscal restraints placed on the transportation project selection and decision making process. The interaction of the financial requirements and the political decision making process were also discussed. Five general categories of financial issues were identified. These were resource availability, resource allocation, augmenting the existing resource base, costs, and the institutional framework. Strategies and immediate action steps were then developed to address these five main issue areas.

Issue 1—Resource availability. A wide range of issues were discussed relating to the availability of financial resources. These included the variability of federal funding, the lack of good forecasting methods, differences in federal funding eligibility categories for capital and operations, how federal discretionary funds are handled, and how other potential funding sources can be identified.

Strategies:

- Sponsor the development of public education programs on the financial planning process. This should

explain the different funding sources, how funds are spent, the cost of different alternatives, the consequences of deferred investments, and other information. All groups and stakeholders should be involved in this discussion, which should include additional analyses of equity issues. There should also be an ongoing communication mechanism documenting the progress of projects and the current status of funding.

- Consideration should be given to packaging multimodal financing options to satisfy all constituencies on region-wide basis.
- Consideration should be given to ensuring that financing and facility and service planning are part of the same process at all levels of government.
- There is a need to coordinate the financial requirements of all transportation modes and to develop a joint strategy for obtaining federal funding.

- Partnerships should be established to develop consensus positions on funding requirements, e.g., full funding of the ISTEA.

- Market research should be conducted on funding issues. This research should include a survey of stakeholders to help determine what people are willing to pay for and how they are willing to pay for it.

- The statewide plan and TIP should be used to establish common assumption on the availability and allocation of resources.

- Consideration should be given to setting aside necessary resources for maintenance, preservation, and operation of the existing transportation system.

- There is a need to enhance the sharing of information on the complexities of the federal funding process among states and MPOs.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor a Synthesis examining best practices for strategies addressing financial planning and fiscal matters.
- Develop and hold training seminars and workshops on financial planning for MPOs and other groups.
- Conduct a study to determine the trends in the source and levels of funding over past 30 years and the likely future possibilities for funding.

- Determine the potential benefits of moving the Highway Trust Funds off budget and spending down the balances for all transportation categories.

- Develop a best practices series of papers on fiscal planning and programming techniques.

Issue 2—Resource allocation. A number of concerns were identified related to the allocation of resources in the metropolitan transportation planning process. The need to examine equity issues associated with transportation investments was discussed. These included concerns between the transit and highway funding programs and how funds are being spent within metropolitan areas. There was agreement that fair and equitable formulas are needed for the allocation of transportation funds. Planning for incremental project financing was discussed, along with the need to better manage the development process based on available resources.

Strategies:

- Greater emphasis should be placed on the use of management system strategies to allocate resources.

- One approach for consideration is to reward good citizen participation programs by incorporating input from the citizen participation process into the allocation of resources.

- There is a need to develop better analytical methods and databases, especially cost models and consideration of contingency factors.

- Equitable representation on MPOs is needed to ensure the equitable allocation of resources.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop and implement strategies to obtain feedback from the public on perceptions and realities regarding financial fiscal issues.

Issue 3—Resource base augmentation. Concerns discussed in this category included the need to examine alternative sources of funding for transportation projects, such as toll roads, and the need to consider operating and maintenance costs in recapitalization. The need for better analysis of revenues generated from projects was noted, as was the need to update cost estimates and revenue forecasts on a regular basis. The need for consistency between state and MPO assumptions on revenue sources and levels was also noted. Comments were raised on

whether financial forecasts should be added to long-range plans. Examining the long-term ability to finance existing projects was identified as important. Also noted as critical was conducting an analysis of operating and maintenance costs to help determine appropriate funding sources. It was also pointed out that transportation decisions should be made with full knowledge of operating and maintenance costs. Finally, the need for better planning prior to the development of funding proposals was noted.

Strategies:

- There is a need to make the case for transportation improvements as a critical element in the larger public financing context and to stress the impacts on social, economic, and environmental goals.

- There is a need to articulate a clear vision of the consequences if funding for projects is not available.

- There is a need to evaluate alternative sources of public funding, including non-traditional funding sources.

- In addition, alternative sources of private funding should be examined.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop more effective strategies for educating the public on financial planning and obtaining feedback, including the use of traditional and technology based methods.

Issue 4—Costs. A number of issues were discussed in this category. First, the need to estimate the costs associated with projects in the long-range plan versus the TIP was noted. Determining the level of accuracy that is reasonable and acceptable for cost estimates, and determining how to address the uncertainty of estimating costs in long-range transportation plans were noted as important. Communicating the risks and uncertainties associated with these cost estimates to local officials and citizens was also identified as a critical concern. Too often, decision makers do not realize that there may be changes in the preliminary cost estimates contained in many plans.

The need to better analyze the economic benefits associated with cost estimates and with possible economic spinoffs was discussed, along with the need for consistency in the degree of accuracy between cost estimates and resource forecasts. The use of full cost accounting methods in the transportation planning and

project selection processes was discussed. Some participants cautioned that MPOs must guard against the tendency of some groups to lower cost estimates to gain political approval for projects. The need to examine the cost impacts of regulatory and administrative requirements, the use of life cycle costing, and methods for dealing with cost overruns on projects were also identified as important. Finally, it was noted that political courage often needs to be part of the financial equation.

Strategies:

- There is a need to utilize full cost accounting as early as possible in the planning and project selection process.
- There is a need to update cost estimates on a regular basis—either every six months or annually.
- MPOs would benefit from the development of unit costs for typical projects to inform the public and to provide consistency in estimating costs.
- There is a need to apply risk analysis on both costs and revenues.
- Consideration should be given to the feasibility of phasing projects.
- There is a need to differentiate between planning estimates and engineering estimates to inform the public on the range of uncertainty.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor a study to examine the differences between planning and engineering cost estimates.
- Develop methods to account for risk and uncertainty in financial planning and programming for costs and revenues.

Issue 5—Institutional framework. The major issues discussed in this category focused on coordinating the financial plans and projections of all the groups involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. The difficulty of developing long-term transit financing plans was noted, along with the difficulty of getting local government commitments for local matching funds beyond 5 years. Participants noted that since MPOs do not finance transportation projects, it is often hard for them to do financial planning. Further, problems arise in trying to integrate private transportation initiatives into the local planning process. There was agreement that this should

be a goal of the process, however. Concerns were raised that some Major Investment Studies may be utilizing the old funding mechanisms and programs. Other difficulties identified included forecasting gas tax revenues, developing fiscally constrained long-range plans, obtaining public support for new revenue sources, the variability of external factors, and insufficient funding from all sources. Finally, the important role political influences play in financial planning was noted.

Strategies:

- There is a need to integrate private transportation initiatives into the local planning process.
- There is a need to provide MPOs with more responsibility for obtaining consistency for the methodologies and the assumptions concerning financial analysis costing for operation maintenance, preservation, construction, and other activities.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop guidelines on programming techniques for resource allocation for individual modes and for tradeoffs between modes reflecting the full range of factors in the ISTEA.
- Examine resource allocation implications from equity and other perspectives of alternative institutional arrangements for transportation investment decision making.

Workshop 4—Technical Linkages in the Planning Process

Bob Kochanowski, Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission—Chair

Ashby Johnson, Federal Highway Administration—Recorder

The overriding theme discussed in this workshop was that the ISTEA is truly an experiment in democracy. There was agreement that the ISTEA provides opportunities to MPOs and other groups to accomplish a number of objectives, but it does not guarantee that these objectives will be realized. The ISTEA has provided a tremendous opportunity to change and to create new partnerships and coalitions to accomplish many important goals. Not all areas will be successful in accomplishing these goals to the same degree, however. The workshop participants agreed that their role was to help facilitate the distribution of information on success stories, while at the same time

helping those areas experiencing difficulties. The participants were also in agreement that realizing the benefits of ISTEA takes time. Building new coalitions and partnerships does not happen immediately, nor does developing new plans and programs. Most metropolitan areas are making significant progress in realizing the vision of the ISTEA, however.

Issue 1—Transportation and land use linkages. This issue was identified as paramount to good transportation planning. Transportation planning cannot be divorced from land use planning. Transportation is a means and a catalyst to life styles, economic development, and improving the quality of life in metropolitan areas. The transportation and land use planning processes need to be better coordinated, and the MPO should provide the forum for this.

Strategies:

- Enhance the transportation and land use planning processes through a regional or metropolitan visioning process. A broad comprehensive planning approach will be needed to accomplish this goal. This process should include an extensive public participation component that reaches out to all groups.

- Enhance the understanding and use of available tools and techniques for improving linkages between land uses and the transportation system. Techniques that may be appropriate for use in different situations include growth management legislation, public facilities ordinances, tax-based sharing and fiscal disparities laws, zoning, access management, and coordinating local and regional strategies.

- Improving the coordination of the land use and the transportation planning processes will not happen immediately. Incremental steps will be needed to advance the coordination of these two elements. Additional federal funding may be needed to support these activities, which should be at the center of a regional comprehensive plan or visioning strategy.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor research on the reaction of land use and development markets to different transportation improvements.

- Develop informational brochures and videos that can be used with decision makers, developers, and public groups on the implication of land use and transportation

decisions. Both good and bad land use/transportation interactions should be highlighted.

- Develop enhanced tools for MPO and local staff for estimating the transportation impacts of different land use decisions.

- Develop guidelines and a training manual for conducting a regional visioning process. Hold workshops and other training sessions for MPO and state and local government staff using this material.

Issue 2—The air quality and transportation linkage. There is still a great deal of research needed to examine the air quality impacts of different elements of the transportation system and alternative improvements. This is a complex issue that needs more research. The development of better tools for estimating the air quality impacts of alternative transportation strategies is also needed. A concern was raised that the tie between the ISTEA and the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 may be too strong for good transportation planning and decision making. This is a controversial subject. Improvements have been made in air quality levels in many metropolitan areas, mostly through tail pipe emission strategies.

Strategies:

- A better understanding is needed of the air quality impacts of alternative transportation improvements. Additional research should be sponsored in this area.

- Enhanced public education programs are needed to ensure that all groups understand the air quality problems and the impacts of different strategies.

- Consideration should be given to the regional nature of the air quality problem. As a result, regulations may need to address broader geographical regions.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Document case studies that show how the ISTEA has been used to enhance air quality and develop a Synthesis highlighting these.

- Develop public information material (brochures and videos) explaining the linkages between the transportation system and air quality, and the air quality impacts of alternative transportation improvements.

- Develop enhanced modeling tools for estimating the

air quality impacts of alternative transportation improvements.

Issue 3—Financial planning. An appropriate balance needs to be found between the historical approach to financial planning—which tended to over promise—and the strict financial constraints of the ISTEA.

Strategies:

- Provide enhanced guidelines on financial forecasting. These should include a step-by-step guide to developing good financial forecasts and best practice examples of approaches used by MPOs throughout the country.

- Develop better tools and techniques to estimate the operating and maintenance costs of transportation system components. Historically, financial plans have focused primarily on capital cost. As a result, few MPOs have experience with developing financial plans for the operations and maintenance of different elements of the transportation system.

- Ensure that a discussion of financial requirements and funding alternatives is included in any regional visioning process. A future vision or plan must be based on realistic financial expectations.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop improved financial forecasting tools—for capital, operations, and maintenance—for use by MPOs and other groups. These should be included in a manual and training courses should be developed and held to educate MPO staff and others in the use of these new techniques.

- Document best practice case studies and highlight these in a report or Synthesis.

Issue 4—Management systems. Although the general concept of management systems was identified as positive, there was a good deal of concern over the way they are being developed and implemented. Reexamining the goals for these systems was suggested as a worthwhile exercise.

Strategies:

- Reexamine the goals and objectives of the management systems and the approaches being used to implement them. Consideration should be given to how the management systems can be incorporated into long-range planning activities to ensure that they are used to

manage the transportation system and do not just become data collection efforts. This is especially true of the congestion management system and the intermodal management system.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Hold workshops and forums to discuss the approaches being used in different areas to develop and implement the management systems.

Issue 5—Major investment studies (MIS). The MIS process was identified as one of the most beneficial provisions of the ISTEA. The MIS process provides the opportunity to take a comprehensive assessment of transportation decisions in major corridors.

Strategies:

- Document the approaches being used in different areas to conduct MIS and the experiences to date.

- Improve the interface between the MIS process and the NEPA process.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor a study of the approaches being used to conduct MIS in different areas. This study should include best practice case studies and the experiences to date in different areas.

- Hold a workshop or meetings to discuss how the MIS and NEPA processes can be better coordinated.

Issue 6—Modeling. The existing transportation models are useful tools when used for their intended purposes. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that these models are not being used beyond their capabilities, especially in the air quality area. Further, new models may be needed to adequately address the demands being placed on MPOs and other agencies

Strategies:

- Continue to support the development of new modeling tools and techniques to advance all aspects of transportation modeling capabilities. This includes the FHWA Transportation Model Improvement Program (TMIP). This effort should include extensive training opportunities for MPO staff as well as ongoing technical assistance.

- Conduct research on intermodal and freight modeling needs and applications.
- Promote a balanced perspective on the precision of different models and how the results will be used.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Conduct training programs and ongoing technical assistance to educate MPO staff and others on the state-of-the-practice with current transportation models.
- Support ongoing efforts to enhance modeling capabilities, especially in the air quality area.
- Assess the current state-of-the-art in intermodal and freight models and develop a comprehensive research project to develop enhanced models as needed.
- Develop brochures and other basic information that can be used to explain the modeling process to local decision makers and the public.

Issue 7—Freight planning. Freight planning may be one of the greatest opportunities in the ISTEA. To realize these opportunities, however, MPOs will have to reach out and build new partnerships with freight operators and commercial vehicle operators. Freight planning is a local, regional, state, and national interest that includes both public sector and private sector groups.

Strategies:

- Promote the sharing of information on the approaches being used in metropolitan areas throughout the country in freight planning and the development of new partnerships among public and private sector groups.
- Examine the potential of providing more flexibility in the use of ISTEA funding for intermodal freight projects.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop best practice case studies on intermodal and freight planning activities and projects. Document these in a Synthesis or other report.
- Continue to hold conferences on intermodal planning and freight planning.

Issue 8—Enhancement projects. The enhancement projects in many areas have resulted in some of the ISTEA's most enthusiastic stakeholders. The enhancement

program has brought many new groups and individuals into the transportation planning process. These groups have brought a real interest and enthusiasm to the process.

Strategies:

- Develop tools and techniques for forecasting the benefits and impacts of different enhancement projects. These forecasting techniques should examine both the recreational benefits of enhancement projects, as well as possible functional impacts.
- Develop better tools and guidelines for ranking and selecting enhancement projects.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop a Synthesis on the current use of enhancement funds and the types of projects developed. This Synthesis should include case study examples and should discuss the selection and ranking procedures used in different areas.
- Sponsor research to develop improved techniques to estimate the benefits and impacts of different types of enhancement projects.

Issue 9—Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). There was agreement that ITS may have profound impacts on the future transportation system. Many MPOs are not really involved in ITS-related activities, nor is ITS being considered in the development of long-range transportation plans, however.

Strategies:

- Develop outreach activities to enhance the level of understanding of MPO staff about ITS and develop links between MPOs and the ITS community.
- Develop better modeling tools to estimate the potential impacts of ITS on the transportation system.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop outreach efforts to MPOs on ITS projects and activities.
- Sponsor workshops and training sessions to bring MPO staff and ITS representatives together to discuss issues and common concerns.

Workshop 5—Decision Making

Sarah Campbell, TransManagement Inc.—Chair
Monica Francois, Federal Highway Administration—Recorder

This group discussed a number of issues related to the metropolitan transportation planning decision making process. These included the composition of MPO boards, the relationships between the policy board and the technical staff, coordination with land use and other planning activities, the link between priority setting in the long-range plan and the project selection process in the short-range plan, funding for transportation planning, and the ongoing coordination among all groups involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

It became obvious in this discussion that the characteristics of different areas and the MPOs serving various areas influence the decision making process. As a result, the challenge to the group was to identify strategies and action steps that would be of benefit in a wide range of settings.

The workshop participants identified five major issues related to the decision making process. These were the composition of MPO Boards and decision making groups, the actual decision making process used by different MPOs, the potential conflicts between federal and state laws relating to the roles and responsibilities of MPOs, the link between long-range and short-range plans, and available resources.

Issue 1—Composition of MPO boards. There was general agreement that federal and state regulations provide the flexibility to determine the best MPO board composition to meet the needs of each area. Although there should be some consistency in the composition of MPO boards throughout the country, workshop participants suggested that flexibility is needed to respond to the unique features of each area.

Strategies:

- In the case of redesignation of an MPO, a cooperative process should be used as the basis for determining the MPO board structure. This process should involve representatives from federal, state, and local agencies.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor a Synthesis examining the composition of MPO boards throughout the country. This should include an assessment of state and local laws or policies influencing board membership, the nature of MPO board composition in different areas, and the benefits and

limitations of different approaches.

Issue 2—Basis of decision making. There was agreement among the workshop participants that the ISTEA provides a sound basis for MPO decision-making, beginning with its recognition that an efficient, strategically located, and well-maintained national transportation system for both passengers and freight is a high priority for America.

Strategies:

- The national transportation system consists of state-wide, metropolitan-wide, and local transportation systems that should be designed to work together to support the economic vitality of all areas as well as improving the living standards and quality of life for all segments of American society.

- The 15 MPO planning factors required by ISTEA should be used as the basis for goal-oriented long-range transportation planning that is linked to, reinforces, complements, and draws support from other state, regional and local planning processes. This process should promote the goals of economic and community development, environmental protection, economic opportunity, and social equity.

- The workshop participants further discussed the need for a goal-oriented planning process that is performance-based. Progress toward the achievement of the agreed upon goals should be regularly reported to decision-makers and to the public. Transportation investments can then be selected and funded in accordance with their contributions toward achievement of the goals outlined in this planning process.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop a Synthesis on good practices and case studies of MPO decision making processes that encompass all relevant factors. The Synthesis could include an examination of how the 15 MPO planning factors are being used, examples of goal-oriented planning, and the use of performance-based planning.

Issue 3—Responsibilities of MPOs. The responsibilities of MPOs were discussed including concerns with potential liability issues and possible conflicts that may arise in the cooperative planning process.

Strategies:

- Clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of MPO boards in the transportation planning process.
- Minimize possible liability issues associated with participation on MPO boards.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop a Synthesis assessing the responsibilities of MPOs. This should include a discussion of possible liability issues and case studies on the MPOs role in addressing regional issues.

Issue 4—Linkage of the long-range and short-range planning and decision-making processes. In many metropolitan areas, two separate planning processes are used for the development of the long-range plan and the short-range plan and TIP. Better coordination is needed between these two planning efforts to ensure consistency and to make sure programming decisions support the long-range plans.

Strategies:

- Enhance coordination between the long-range and the short-range planning processes.
- Enhance the use of long-range plans to guide the project selection process.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop a Synthesis documenting current practices in linking long-range and short-range plans. This should include best practice case studies as well as suggestions for additional improvements in the approaches being used in many areas. It should also include an assessment of the phasing of plans to meet long-range goals and the use of objective processes for project selection. For example, incorporating a five year phasing for the near term goals in the long-range plan and adopting an objective selection process for projects identified in the plan should be considered. Examples of the use of performance-based criteria for investments, as well as the use of strategies identified in the management systems for addressing regional needs, could be included in the Synthesis.

Issue 5—MPO resources and funding. The staff and financial resources vary greatly among MPOs. There is a need to explore innovative partnerships and funding arrangements to expand the resources and capabilities of

all MPOs. There is also a need to include all regional transportation projects in the planning process, regardless of funding sources.

Strategies:

- Enhance the staff resources at all MPOs by providing ongoing training and educational opportunities.
- Enhance the financial resources of all MPOs by exploring innovative funding approaches.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop a Synthesis on MPO funding and resources. This should include an assessment of the historical resources utilized by MPOs, innovative partnerships and financing methods, and other approaches that could be used to enhance the roles of MPOs.
- Develop a broader analytic base and better evaluation process which considers all regionally significant projects. Develop a Synthesis on how the planning process when state and locally funded projects are included in MPO plans.

- Support ongoing training opportunities for MPO staff.

Other Issues

The group also identified issues and needs related to the other workshop topics. The following items represent the major topics identified by the group for further discussion.

- Examine and document the interrelationships between land use and transportation. This should include an assessment of the links between job locations and population densities and the potential benefits that can be gained by increasing population densities.
- Assess the potential of using incentives to encourage the enhanced integration of transportation into land uses.
- Examine the role of tax-base sharing at the regional level.
- Examine and document the project selection processes that includes best practice case studies.
- Examine and document examples of effective public involvement programs.
- Examine and document airport access issues and best practices.

Workshop 6—Integrating Related Decisions and Planning Activities

Neil Pedersen, Maryland Department of Transportation—Chair

Cathy Rice, Maryland Department of Transportation—Recorder

A number of issues were discussed in this workshop related to integrating decisions and metropolitan transportation planning activities. The major points covered included coordinating the NEPA and MIS processes; air quality concerns; land use, economic development, and the job/housing balance; water quality; environmental justice; other types of infrastructure improvements; energy consumption; and institutional concerns. It was often difficult in the discussion to focus on the Conference theme of institutional issues related to these concerns.

The major conclusion that came from the wide ranging discussions in the workshop was that transportation planners need to have a better understanding of the technical and decision making processes in these related fields, as well as the relationship between decisions in these areas and the transportation planning process. Transportation planning is not done in isolation. Rather, to be effective, transportation planning must be integrated into and coordinated with these other elements to ensure that the broader societal goals are being met.

A list of some 100 issues was identified in the initial brainstorming session. These were consolidated into the seven areas noted previously. Two main themes emerged from the discussion of strategies, action steps, and research needs in these seven areas. The two common themes were education and technical tools.

Theme 1—Education. Most discussions of educational needs tend to focus on transportation planning professionals. The group felt a broader perspective should be taken to the examination of educational needs. Consideration should be given to enhancing educational opportunities for elected officials, technical staff, the general population, and other agencies and groups.

A number of education methods were discussed. These included both traditional approaches and innovative techniques utilizing advanced technologies. Approaches suggested included retreats, simple presentations and presentation materials, executive training programs, layman's guides, workshops for lay people, cultivating new media contacts, greater use of cable and public access television, better courses on integrating transportation planning with other disciplines, train-the-trainer programs, video conferencing, and computer bulletin boards.

The federal government can play a major role in the

development and dissemination of the various educational materials and programs. There are many small- to medium-sized MPOs throughout the country that would benefit greatly from these types of materials.

Theme 2—Technical tools as they relate to institutional issues. Many times MPO staff use fairly complex technical tools that may not really focus on the problem being addressed. It may be appropriate to step back and make sure the problem has been adequately defined and that the best tools are being applied to analyze it. In many cases, a complex tool may not be the most appropriate approach. Sketch planning techniques or non-quantitative approaches may provide better information for decision makers on many issues.

A better understanding is also needed of the analytical tools and techniques being used in related disciplines. For example, many transportation planners do not have a good understanding of the error ranges in air quality models. Less prescription in technical procedures, especially in the air quality area, was strongly suggested.

It was also suggested that consideration should be given to a comprehensive set of factors in the decision making process, rather than trying to improve the precision of a few elements. Considering a broader range of impacts will become more important in responding to the seven issue areas. In addition, there is a need to incorporate uncertainty into the technical approaches being used. Finally, there is a need to better document the assumptions that are used with many of the models and planning tools.

The key points from the seven issue areas include the following.

Issue 1—The NEPA and MIS Processes

Strategies:

- There is a need to include NEPA considerations earlier into the MIS process. In many states, NEPA is not considered until late in the decision making process.
- There is a need to reach an understanding between the environmental agencies and the transportation agencies on the level of detail necessary in the NEPA process. In most cases, the expectation on the part of environmental agencies is for a much greater level of detail than MPOs and state departments of transportation can provide.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor the development of a Synthesis that examines the coordination between the NEPA and the MIS

processes. The Synthesis should describe the major elements of each process, how the two can be coordinated, and best practice case studies.

- Incorporate information on the NEPA process into the MIS training sessions currently being held throughout the country or sponsor the development and conduct of additional training materials and sessions on coordinating the NEPA and the MIS processes.

Issue 2—Air Quality Concerns

Strategies:

- Concerns were raised over the conformity requirements. It was suggested that more emphasis should be placed on focusing on the real intent of the conformity regulations to make the process less burdensome and more meaningful. This would help link the air quality goals and the transportation planning process that is the real intent of the conformity regulations.

- One approach suggested was the joint development of mobile source plans and budgets by transportation agencies and environmental planning agencies.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor the development of a Synthesis that examines transportation and air quality concerns. Issues to be addressed in the Synthesis include practical techniques for linking the conformity regulations with the transportation planning process, best practice examples, and alternative approaches to the development of mobile source plans and budgets.
- Sponsor a study to examine alternative approaches to the current air quality regulations, focusing on possible techniques to make the process less burdensome, but yet achieving the desired results.

Issue 3—Land Use, Economic Development, and the Jobs/Housing Balance

Strategies:

- There is a need to ensure that transportation planning is coordinated and linked with local comprehensive land use plans.
- There is a need to assess the land use implications of transportation decisions, including non-quantitative impact

assessments.

- There is a need to develop market incentives to encourage efficient land use patterns.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Support the development of a Synthesis examining land use, economic development, and the jobs/housing balance. This should include best practice examples, as well as policies and techniques that can be used to support greater coordination among these elements.

- Support an ongoing research study to monitor and assess changes in land use, economic development, and the job/housing balance in selected metropolitan areas. These areas should be selected to include a mix of transportation modes, land use policies and techniques, and geographic locations.

Issue 4—Other Infrastructure Improvements

Strategies:

- All too often, transportation planning is not coordinated with planning for other infrastructure improvements, such as water and sewer facilities, utilities, schools, and hospitals. There is a need to improve communication and coordination between the groups responsible for these infrastructure elements and the transportation planning process. Forums, workshops, and other methods could be used to enhance coordination among all groups.

- There is also a need to examine cost consideration for all infrastructure elements in the transportation planning process.

- The effect that investments in other infrastructure improvements have on the transportation system should be assessed, as well as the effects the transportation system has on other infrastructure elements.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor the development of a Synthesis examining how the metropolitan transportation planning process can be coordinated with the planning and development processes for other infrastructure elements. The Synthesis should include the identification of practical approaches transportation professionals can use to enhance the coordination with infrastructure planning processes, best practice case studies, and areas for further research.

- Sponsor the development and conduct of a training session and training materials on integrating the metropolitan transportation planning process and the planning and development of other infrastructure elements.

Issue 5—Energy Consumption

Strategies:

- This is an important issue that is often not given adequate consideration. There was agreement that heightened importance should be placed on energy consumption as a factor in the decision making process.

- There is a need to develop better tools and techniques for estimating the energy consumption of different transportation modes and improvements.

- There was also support for the need to fund and build facilities to support alternatively fuel vehicles. This should include the identification of innovative financing mechanisms.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Sponsor the development of additional analytical tools and techniques for estimating the energy consumption of different modes and for conducting comparison among modes.

- Sponsor the development and conduct of training sessions and training materials on these new tools and techniques for staff from MPOs, state departments of transportation, transit agencies, and other groups.

- Sponsor conference or conference sessions focusing on the energy consumption of different modes and comparisons among modes.

Issue 6—Water Quality

Strategies:

- There is a need to identify how water quality and transportation planning can be integrated, especially as it

relates to non-point source runoff issues.

Immediate Action Steps:

- The development of manuals on techniques for addressing water quality issues in different aspects of transportation planning and with various modes should be pursued.

Issue 7—Environmental Justice

Strategies:

- There was a general agreement that environmental justice will be a key concern over the next few years. There is a general lack of understanding in the transportation profession on what environmental justice is, why it is important, and how it can be addressed.

- There is a need to develop methods for incorporating environmental justice into the development of transportation plans, projects, and programs.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Develop a Synthesis outlining the different elements of environmental justice, the approaches transportation professionals can use to address environmental justice issues, and providing best practice examples from throughout the country.

- The development of manuals should be encouraged on the techniques and approaches that can be used to better reach under-represented segments of the population.

- Research should be undertaken to assess the cumulative impact on affected communities that are the focus of environmental justice.

CLOSING SESSION

Brigid Hynes-Cherin, San Francisco County Transportation Authority—Presiding

Federal Response

Jane Garvey, Federal Highway Administration



I am delighted to have the opportunity to participate in the closing session of this Conference. The presentations from the workshop sessions indicate that you have had a very productive three days. I am very interested in the suggestions emerging from the workshops, especially those related to how we at the federal level can help enhance the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The presentations this morning have provided a number of excellent ideas on additional research needs, the development of training programs and best practice case studies, and the ongoing communication of success stories. The need to simplify many aspects of the planning process was also noted in a number of the presentations.

The Administration is strongly committed to making the metropolitan transportation planning process work. The planning principles contained in the ISTEA became the starting point for the discussion of the possible review of the federal program last December. A number of the ideas presented this morning will help in this effort.

There has been a good deal of discussion this past week on the Congressional budget process. Some have suggested that the outcome of this process may encourage a return to the pre-ISTEA funding approaches. I think this would be a mistake. Utilizing the open planning process required by the ISTEA will be even more important in the future as we deal with limited funding. We do not have the financial luxury or the environmental luxury today to make unwise transportation decisions.

A number of the presentations from the workshops noted the complexity of the federal role. The ISTEA focused more authority for transportation decisions at the

state, MPO, and local levels. At the federal level, we are trying to strike the correct balance between assuming more of a leadership role and providing needed assistance, while at the same time being less prescriptive. We are still working to develop the correct balance between these and other responsibilities.

In conclusion, I think it is important to recognize the progress that has been made by many groups in many areas in implementing the provisions of the ISTEA. This includes states, MPOs, local governmental units, transit agencies, and other groups. Sometimes our goals may seem so lofty that we forget how much progress has been made. I would urge you not to get discouraged, but rather to take pride in all that you have accomplished.

I would also like to thank you for your efforts over the past three days. We will be taking the results from this Conference very seriously, and we look forward to continuing to work with all of you to ensure a successful metropolitan transportation planning process that meets the needs of the diverse regions throughout the country.

Closing Remarks

Brigid Hynes-Cherin, San Francisco County Transportation Authority

I would like to thank all of the participants for taking the time to attend this conference and for sharing their thoughts and ideas. We thought the conference would provide an important forum to begin the challenge of preparing for the next transportation reauthorization bill, which some people are already calling NEXTEA. The current activities on Capital Hill, and the potential that reauthorization may occur as early as 1996, has made the conference even more important.

It was equally appropriate that Williamsburg was chosen as the site for this conference, since the first of eight national planning conferences was held here in 1965. I would like to close the conference with a quick synopsis of what we have learned over the past few days. The thoughts and ideas you shared will provide an important benchmark in shaping the future of the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The conference began on Sunday with a series of presentations by major stakeholders in the transportation planning process. These presentations helped establish the theme for the conference. We heard first from John Horsley, representing the Administrators for FHWA and FTA, on the status of activities in Washington, D.C.

Frank Francois, from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, then provided a historical perspective on the growing roles of MPOs. He also outlined some of the problems faced by MPOs and argued for flexibility in allowing the metropolitan planning process to evolve.

Richard Simonetta, from the Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority, provided a transit perspective. He stressed the need for a balanced planning process, with the involvement of all modes. David Burwell, from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, described the 4Ms needed to make the planning process work—mandate, money, management authority, and muscle—and suggested that the ISTEA provides the tools necessary for organizing the metropolitan transportation system. Steve Del Giudice, from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, closed the session by outlining some of the myths and realities of the ISTEA. He suggested that one dilemma is that the states control funding, the locals control land use, and the MPOs are caught in the middle.

The Sunday night dinner speaker, Henry Holmes from the Earth Island Institute, ended the day by challenging us to look at things from an environmental justice perspective. He further suggested that if the planning process focuses on meeting the needs of transit dependents, it will meet the needs of all segments of society.

The session on Monday morning included a series of speakers describing ongoing TCRP and NCHRP research projects focusing on implementing the ISTEA. These reports helped provide background information for the workshop sessions.

Thomas Humphrey described the approaches MPOs are using to consider the 15 planning factors in developing plans and programs under the ISTEA. Ann Mladinov and Tom Larson reported on the approaches states are using to respond to the ISTEA requirements. Tom also described the Bay Area Partnership in the San Francisco-Oakland metropolitan area. Alan Winn discussed some of the barriers to intermodalism. He suggested that these barriers can be overcome by using force field analysis and pushing to have the driving forces exceed the restraining forces. Bruce McDowell identified changes brought about by the ISTEA and the difficulties faced by MPOs. He concluded with specific recommendations on how to strengthen MPOs. Matthew Coogan outlined current

research activities in multimodal planning for freight and passengers.

Our luncheon speaker, Anne Canby, described what Delaware has been doing to implement the ISTEA, and the approaches they have taken that represents a manageable success story.

The next day and a half was spent in the workshop sessions. It seemed that all of the groups had lively discussions about the issues and opportunities related to the ISTEA and the metropolitan transportation planning process. The workshops provided the opportunity to share ideas and problems, to discuss issues, and to develop specific suggestions for changes, studies, and research activities.

This morning we heard the results of the workshop discussions, along with FHWA Deputy Administrator Garvey's initial observations. Thus, the conference provided the opportunity to not only listen to ourselves, but also to learn from each other.

While I do not intend to try and summarize what we just heard, I do want to make a few general observations. Perhaps the most surprising, and rewarding, comments were what we did not hear. That is, there was no sentiment for wholesale changes to the ISTEA. While all the breakout groups discussed some concerns with the current process, and identified ways to make it work better, the overall conclusion was that the process was working, and that we should continue along the existing course.

Some of the most interesting observations I heard from the different workshops concerned the flexibility that is built into the process, the creative approaches that are being taken in many areas, and the new partnerships that are being developed. Clearly, the ISTEA has not created a cookie cutter approach to metropolitan transportation planning.

Another interesting observation was noted in the public participation breakout session. During a heated discussion on different approaches for public participation, one member was heard to say to another "You guys . . ." In response to this, the moderator suggested that there are no "you guys," in the session, "only us."

In conclusion, thank you for your participation and for sharing your thoughts and ideas. Your willingness to share your experiences will greatly enhance the future of the metropolitan transportation planning process.

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