

## SESSION #6: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

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### CHARLES HOWARD, WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

I would like to present 10 major points that in our experience are critical in "bringing it together."

1. *Planning, programming and budgeting need to be linked to make planning relevant.*

A long term plan that is not linked to short term implementation programs and budgets is useless. In Washington, past planning efforts were only related by accident to the budgeting process. In 1993, a new programming process was enacted by the Legislature which specifically ties short term programming to the long range plan. Under this law, the plan defines the needs and the program must be built off the plan. The plan and program also have consistent structures to more clearly make this linkage. In 1996, the department formalized a six year plan process, which serves as the implementation element of the long range plan as well as the short term program, guiding budget development. This real tie to the budget development is a key in making planning relevant. In Washington, the planning and programming functions were organizationally merged which is helping this integration, but organizational merger between these functions is not as important as the planning, programming, and budgeting processes being integrated either in law or practice.

2. *Financial constraint is essential to make planning an effective decision-making tool.*

Washington embraced the concept of financial constraint for its statewide transportation plan, which is consistent with the state's growth management program and federal metropolitan planning requirements. By requiring that the plan be limited to some reasonable funding scenario, the planning process adds value by narrowing unlimited possibilities to a more realistic set of high priority improvements to pursue. In addition, financial constraint allows the state to communicate clearly what can be reasonably expected so that local governments can reflect these in their local comprehensive plans, and what can't be reasonably expected to ensure that unrealistic expectations are controlled. This is important to the development community, citizen groups, and others who want a higher degree of certainty from the planning process. However, it is important to note that

financial constraint does not mean holding plans to current revenues. Washington chose a historical funding trend as the target for the long range plan. While this target will require significant revenue increases to achieve, it is considered to be a reasonable target for long range planning. It is important to keep a balance between the hard realities of today's funding levels and the ability of the plan to create a vision for the future.

3. *Governance of the elements of the transportation system needs to be respected in the statewide transportation planning process.*

A fundamental aspect of statewide transportation planning is that transportation facilities and services that are vital to the state's interest are not all owned by the state. It is important that the statewide planning process respect the other governments' ownership interests, and that the state treat these other owners as equal partners in the planning process, capable of making the important decisions about the state's future. In Washington, we recognized this by developing the plan in two components: one for state-owned facilities (Highways, Ferries, and state-owned airports) and one for "state-interest" facilities and services (Public Transportation, Aviation, Intercity Passenger Rail, Freight Rail, Marine Ports and Navigation, and Non-motorized). The state-interest component was developed with heavy involvement of stakeholders which represented the interests of the other system owners. So, what is the purpose of a statewide transportation plan? It clearly is not to control non-state transportation partners. It's purpose is, however, to guide state-level investment decisions in all modes; to influence transportation partner decisions through cooperation and mutual problem identification; and to provide a state-wide focus on facilities and services of state-wide significance which often cannot be done at the local or regional levels.

4. *Not all statewide transportation planning needs to be done by the state.*

Just as many state-interest transportation facilities and services are owned by other governments, state transportation agencies must recognize that parts of the statewide plan, from needs identification to selecting appropriate solutions will be done by these other governments, and this decision-making needs to be respected in the statewide planning process. Often the

expertise required to understand these varied issues is not contained in the State DOT, and it is appropriate that the governments with the profound knowledge be in the drivers seat. State DOTs cannot be controlling in this relationship: the key is developing a process of coordination and cooperation and mutual respect.

5. *There is a need to be flexible and innovative in public involvement.*

It is difficult to get public interest in statewide policy and long range plans, because often the relationship to the individual is not clear. Also, the public is inundated with planning at the local, regional and state levels that confusion is a real possibility. WSDOT has tried to be realistic with public involvement efforts, trying new methods, keeping what works and dropping what doesn't work, and continuously evolving. What seems to work are:

- Stakeholder committees which pull together people directly involved and affected by the decisions;
- Broad-based newsletters especially tapping into existing interest groups. Washington had a very positive experience with AAA, who included a statewide plan brochure in their news magazine which resulted in a high response from people who hadn't been involved in transportation planning before.
- Going to where the public is already, instead of asking the public to come to us. Washington set up display booths at county and state fairs, giving away state highway maps in exchange for people filling out a survey.
- The Internet has been a big advance in the planning public involvement program. The DOT homepage allows material to be regularly posted and updated, provides opportunities for immediate response surveys, and reaches a growing market share as the internet reaches into more homes and businesses.

6. *Planning documents need to be understandable to the public.*

A large challenge we have as planners is to get out of the jargon-filled text that usually makes up a plan, and to explain what the plan means in "kitchen English". This does not mean that the plan has to avoid complex issues or technical material. Planners just need to recognize that these concepts have to be written to be understandable, and to do a good job of explaining technical details. Formatting, pictures, graphic design, and summary brochures or executive summaries all are needed to make it so people aren't turned off of the plan because of its structure rather than its contents.

7. *Both the plan and the planning process need to be understandable to the policy makers.*

When asked in a survey what was the most useful technical "software" for developing the transportation plan, an easy response was Power Point. If policy makers, whether they are the Transportation Commission, Department of Transportation Executives, or the Legislature, cannot understand the concepts and decisions that they are being asked to make, the planning process is worthless. Planners need to think as much about how to communicate the plan to decision makers as how to do the technical analysis.

8. *Top level management support of the planning process is essential.*

For statewide transportation planning to be successful, executive managers of the Department of Transportation have to see a benefit to the plan, be committed to using the plan to make decisions, and accept the plan as a guide for their own actions. Without this top level support, the plan becomes another exercise.

9. *Not all planning needs to be done by planners.*

As the Transportation Planning Office, our job is to facilitate the planning process, not do all the planning. In fact, most of the actual planning technical analysis, policy setting, and other planning activities are done by program staff. Two examples are the pavement preservation plan, which is developed by the pavement engineers through the pavement management system, and the bridge preservation plan, produced by the Bridge Office utilizing the Bridge Inventory and Management System. By having program staff actually involved in plan development they buy into the results, ensure that the plan reflects their reality, and provide the benefit of more creative minds in the process.

10. *Plan organization needs to reflect department organization.*

Planning is a tool for decision making. Therefore, the plan needs to be structured in a way that supports decisions that need to be made. In Washington, our plan is organized modally, to reflect our department modal organizations, and by programs within modes, to reflect the budget categories that the plan will guide. Having the plan mirror the organizational structure reinforces the role of the plan as a useful decision-making tool.

**BARBARA KIRKMEYER, WELD COUNTY  
COMMISSIONER, COLORADO**

In order for you to understand where Colorado is with regard to statewide transportation planning, you need to hear how we started. I have been a county commissioner since 1993 which is approximately when we started the statewide transportation planning process and the development of regional plans. A neighboring county commissioner drew a cartoon that basically captures where we were at the beginning. It was a Neanderthal man down on all fours with a wheel on his back, and the caption read, "Transportation before we understood the wheel." That is how we started.

The Colorado transportation planning process is influenced by two major pieces of legislation. The first one, of course, is ISTEA. We also had what we called the CDOT legislation which was passed in 1991. In this legislation, the General Assembly changed the Department of Highways to the Department of Transportation. Both pieces of legislation require a statewide transportation planning process in which not only is a preferred plan identified, but you also have to do a constrained plan. Both require regional plans for the MPOs. In the state legislation there are optional regional plans for the rural planning regions, and in the federal legislation the state DOT is to include rural needs in the planning process. The state legislation also established a Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee. Our legislation did not address the transportation needs of Indian tribes, whereas ISTEA called for addressing such needs. Our state legislation did not provide the funding for transportation planning, and in ISTEA transportation planning is eligible for federal funds. Also, the state legislation does not really address public involvement, whereas the federal legislation has fairly extensive public involvement requirements.

Colorado formed 15 transportation planning regions, 10 of which are rural regions and five are MPOs. Our largest MPO is the Greater Denver Regional Council. I chair the Upper Front Range Regional Planning Commission, and I am also a member on the North Front Range MPO. The Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) is comprised of one person from each of these regions, and it is usually the chair of the regional planning commission who goes to the staff meetings.

The STAC represents a wide range of interests and expertise. What this means is that some of us really didn't know a lot about transportation planning when we began, whereas others had vast knowledge of transportation planning. The STAC membership consists of county commissioners, city council members and senior level staff representatives from the MPOs. The STAC reviews and comments on the 15 regional transportation plans. We

also make recommendations to CDOT on the integration of these 15 plans into a state plan. By statute, we provide advice to the Department on transportation system needs, and assist in resolving conflicts that can arise among each of the transportation planning regions or between the Department and the regions.

The process of developing a state transportation plan took approximately 3 years. We took this long because we believed in a grass-roots process. There was a lot of public involvement. In my own transportation planning region, we had meetings every other week that were open to the public. We met monthly as a regional planning commission. So, we did really try to involve the public as much as possible, bringing some new voices to the planning process. As we went through the planning process, CDOT worked with us to make sure that the process was consistent from one region to another and that planning information provided to the planning regions was also consistent. Even with this, our process still calls for flexibility to account for regional diversity.

Regional priorities are developed through a criteria-based consensus process. Each regional plan went through all of the steps, developing a mission statement, identifying goals, and then coming up with a plan that consisted not only of projects, but also a statement of policy on where we would like to see our region head over the next 20 years. We think our state plan reflects regional needs and priorities, and seeks to balance quality of life issues, mobility, environment, and economic development. It became very apparent during this process that the vision for a transportation system inherent in ISTEA and in our own state legislation was not widely shared by most people or even by most state and local officials. The same conflicts that existed before ISTEA and before our state legislation still exist. There is still a rural versus an urban conflict; roads versus transit, the state DOT versus the MPOs and local governments; and even CDOT has its own internal conflicts between engineers and planners. All of these things still exist. Another important conflict that surfaced early in the planning process was the disparity in the amount of resources that each region could devote to planning. The MPOs receive money for planning. The rural transportation planning regions receive none. These regions didn't get any staff, which meant that county commissioners in my region spent a lot of time dealing with transportation issues. The CDOT did help fund the first go-round, and they still provide some funding for planning, especially for the rural transportation planning meetings.

The planning process helped everyone learn about their own region and related transportation needs. As a new commissioner, I never really had any experience in transportation planning. So, this planning was a very good

experience. When a new Director of the Department of Transportation was appointed two years ago, he took hold of this statewide planning process and made it a priority within the Department. He involved his own executive management team—the engineers, budget officers and the policy makers. Everyone became involved and it really started making a difference. We don't just have staff meetings now. We have staff DOT meetings. The Advisory Committee and the executive management team meet together. So, when we make recommendations to the Transportation Commission, these recommendations have been developed with everyone involved.

The Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee went beyond just regional boundaries and started looking at the state as a whole which really hadn't happened in the past. I think MPOs have a problem when they only want to address the issues within their MPO boundaries. I am in an MPO that is up north and I am in a transportation planning region that is in between Denver and this MPO. Neither of the MPOs wants to address the major Interstate corridor between them. The statewide planning process brings together everyone who have concerns that cross jurisdictional boundaries, and starts educating people and sharing information. I think we started getting past some of the regional boundary issues and turf issues, and we really are starting to look at the state as a whole, starting to build consensus and finding agreement in areas where maybe there wasn't any agreement before. As we developed our plan we were also able to set priorities in the statewide plan. We developed what we call our state significant corridor system, which is a state transportation system that all of the staff members, the Advisory Committee, and even the Commission at this point feel comfortable with. This is a system that we all know we must take care of; it impacts all of us in the state.

We also noticed that our needs on this system were much higher than our revenues. Our expected revenues over the next several years are \$19.2 billion. Our price tag for the preferred plan was \$37.55 billion. This is the type of information everyone involved in such a process needs to have. We had to set some priorities and we came up with a plan that totaled \$27.36 billion which was still about \$8 billion over available revenues. We call it our priority plan. This is the plan we feel we all need and that we are all willing to work for. It isn't a constrained plan because we don't currently have the money to implement all of the proposed projects, however, this is more of a vision plan that is something we can work for over the next 20 years. We realize that we are long on recognition and short on solutions, but we have a lot of external factors influencing our plan at this point.

I find it amazing that people think that if you pass a law, you are going to change people's attitudes and

behavior. Passing ISTEA or passing the CDOT legislation in Colorado didn't change anyone's general attitude or change their behavior. In fact, the use of single occupant vehicles is probably higher now than it was 5 years ago. So, people are still driving their cars. They still have a lot of miles to travel, and they still want to live where they feel most comfortable. No government is going to them where to live and work. However, the governor about a year ago started a smart growth and development initiative. He had 1000 participants who were actually involved in this process. They met in different regions as citizen groups. We have a lot of people starting to become aware of growth issues. In fact, it is the No.1 issue in Colorado. As we went through the governor's smart growth and development initiative process, it was really interesting to find that by the end, transportation was the No.1 issue of all of these people. After identifying 100 issues, transportation was the most important and it was mostly defined as insufficient transportation financing. To deal with this issue a blue ribbon panel was formed to examine the long-term transportation funding base, and to recommend sources of new funding. The panel consists of 21 members from many different economic persuasions. The first activity of the panel will be to validate the \$8 billion shortfall identified in the plan, after which we will look at how to influence our legislators, the governor and key people in the state. We might need a state initiative ballot, but we feel we have the momentum going for some form of new revenue. People recognize that transportation is an issue in our state, and if we keep sharing information with them, they will be willing to vote for an increase in the motor fuel tax or an increase in registration fees.

Before we can do this, however, we need to bring the legislature along with us. They haven't really been following this process as much as I would like them to, even though in 1991 they passed the enabling law. In the last couple of years, the state has had a surplus of funds which have gone to highways even though the legislature said in 1991, "Do multimodal planning, do all this transportation planning." They still only want to fund highways, and I think this is just a mind set that sooner or later will change. We will continue working with them. The problem is that they went out and raised expectations through the state law. So did ISTEA. ISTEA and the CDOT legislation raised expectations, but they didn't provide the funding to meet these expectations.

Both ISTEA and the CDOT legislation have been challenging, frustrating, and disappointing. They have been challenging in the need to bring new people and voices to the table. They have been frustrating because you find out that there are different rules that we now have to play by. And they have been disappointing



because when we get to the end of the planning process, we find there isn't additional funding.

So, what is next? STAC isn't going away. We are going to continue our joint STAC and executive management team meetings. We are working now with the Department on implementing the plan, refining the process, and are already trying to figure out how to develop plan amendments. We are going to keep working. The STAC is a different tool that we have been given in Colorado, and it has really made a difference. Yes, we are local elected officials, but we are talking to our constituents pretty much on a daily basis. We understand what is going on at the local level. The partnership that has developed with the Department of Transportation has been a very positive one. It can only lead to good things. The STAC can help the Department sell the transportation plan which as I mentioned before is basically what we have to do. We view it as our transportation plan, not the Department's. If the STAC and the DOT can stick together, we should be able to resolve differences, set priorities, and build consensus.

#### **JEFF SQUIRES, VERMONT AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION**

From 1991 through 1995, I was Director of Planning for the Vermont Agency of Transportation. Six months ago, I became Deputy Secretary of Transportation which is a political appointment. My job now is to get things done, working with the governor, the legislature, and all of the different groups in Vermont who have a stake in the transportation system, and what it provides to the state. In my new capacity, planning has taken on a new significance. It is now a matter of whether planning has provided a sufficient foundation to achieve this new objective.

Similar to Colorado, Vermont passed legislation at about the same time as ISTEAs that really reinforced what ISTEAs were intended to accomplish. Most people in Vermont feel pretty good about implementing ISTEAs. It seems relevant to a place like Vermont. We are an extremely rural state with a large percentage of the population living outside of urban areas. The Burlington area, our largest city, has about 150,000 people. So, whenever I go to national gatherings such as this, I find myself putting all of the lofty issues being faced by my colleagues into a slightly different perspective. We have transportation problems that sound about the same. The size and complexity are a little smaller, and I feel fortunate that this gives us a situation that perhaps is a bit more pliable.

We prepared a long-range transportation plan. In doing the plan, we set out to promote ideas for a future transportation system that would support the collective view of where Vermont was going. Rather than looking over our shoulder and saying this is what we have needed in the past, we looked toward the future. For example, timber harvesting has been a key industry in Vermont and the state's highway system has been critical in supporting this industry. Although land-based activities are still important, we found that the service industry, tourism, high-tech activities, and home-based activities seemed to be the direction the state's economy was heading in. So, we wanted a transportation system that supported the types of economic activities that were becoming feature components of Vermont's economy.

We spent a lot of time talking to people about what transportation could do for their quality of life. We asked them what was important, and we asked them how they would like to participate in transportation issues. Most of their ideas were addressed in the plan which made people feel pretty good. In fact, we had one of the more memorable moments in our transportation planning history when the Chairman of our House Transportation Committee said that he had adopted our plan as the blueprint for the upcoming legislative session. That felt pretty good, and in fact, he delivered on that commitment. He frequently referred to the planning document and to his network of constituents who had participated in the process. Our business groups and environmental associations embraced our plan. Our own DOT employees are now debating within the terms of this plan which means to me that the plan has served its purpose of being a major guidance document that informs investment decisions.

Let me now talk about some of the things we learned from this planning process and then offer four very simple thoughts or ideas on where we should be heading. Statewide planning has helped us to do a couple of things. It has helped us to clarify and focus our mission. As we were going through our long-range planning efforts we also were involved in an internal strategic planning exercise. The two became intertwined, and in the front of our long-range plan is a mission and vision statement that came from our strategic planning effort. Our mission was recast for us as first and foremost maintaining the existing asset base and then secondly making capital investments, but to make them strategically, focussing on healthy communities and economic vitality.

The planning process also helped us identify our customers and partners. The concept of partnership is very fundamental. We identified a number of groups, system users and providers, people who are shippers and haulers, folks like you and me who are motorists,

bicyclists, and walkers. Local officials and citizens who serve on commissions and committees on a voluntary basis were very active in our process. Local elected officials and town officials are also key partners. Another group, which we refer to as conveners, i.e., the MPOs and the regional planning commissions, played a critical role in bringing local officials, citizens, partners and customers together. We emphasized the point in our process that the MPO is an important actor not because of the staff and the fact that it is around their table that everyone sits, but rather for the individuals and groups it convenes. Key legislators were also critical. We involved legislators early in the process so that they were familiar with the plan as it was unfolding, and so that when it landed on their desk, it had some credibility attached to it. Resource and development agencies, that is, other state agencies involved in natural resource protection, historic resource protection, economic development activities, tourism, travel, marketing as well as some of the federal permitting resource agencies, were extremely important to us from our point of view in the statewide plan. Officials from the U.S. DOT, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Railway Administration were important contributors to our process. We sought the active participation of Congressional staff. We feel it is really important to keep our Congressional staff up-to-date on plan development and to learn from them what their interests are. In Vermont, non-profit and advocacy groups are key players in state and local policy making, so their participation was actively sought in our process. Going through our planning process helped us sort out these groups and recognize their role in the process.

Finally, the plan helped document the financial limits that we were confronting and the theoretical full-cost of the range of improvements that would be useful.

So, we had these three important revelations during our planning process—what are we trying to do?; who are we working with?; and what resources do we have available to us? Together these revelations are leading the Vermont Agency of Transportation into the future with a plan and a planning process that is viewed by our customers as being credible and realistic. The Vermont Agency of Transportation is moving toward a new set of redefined roles. We are system maintainers and operators. This is now our primary mission—maintaining the asset base of our transportation system. Another role is to coordinate the process of planning and investment decision making which includes all of the players I mentioned earlier. We are people who are turned to for money, to support capital investment and to support operations. We are people who are turned to, and hopefully in the future will be turned to even more, for

technical advice. We continue to be builders of facilities as we traditionally have been, but the difference now is that these facilities will be more strategically focused. We will respond in a build mode in those areas where it enhances the state's economic vitality and the health of our communities.

Based on this new perspective that evolved out of our planning process, I would like to offer four ideas that certainly influence how we do transportation planning in Vermont, and I suspect might be important to your states as well. The first idea is that we ought to rethink our traditional focus on projects. The second idea is that we ought to look at extending the partnership relationship to include implementation. A third idea is that we should collaborate with the resource agencies at a program level on strategic investment. And fourth, our experience in working with our neighboring states in goods movement has been useful, which suggests that perhaps a multistate regional approach to goods movement makes sense. Let me talk about each of these in a little more detail.

I am relatively new to transportation. I came from a general background as a city planner, and I appreciate and admire the work that has been done in the area of transportation. As I have come to understand our organization and those in the other states, it is clear that these organizations were established to accomplish a mission of building a transportation system, and in particular, a highway transportation system. As such, we have looked upon our mission as a series of construction projects, and we have developed systems to accomplish this. ISTEA suggests we are in a new, post-Interstate era. This mission and the role articulated for us through the development of our long-range plan suggests that we are system maintainers. We are coordinators. We are financiers. We are technical advisers. We still remain builders, but not to the exclusion of these other roles. In that sense, I wonder whether it is time to think about the role that the "project" plays in our business.

The term "project" often dominates much of our discussion as transportation officials. We have a "build response" to problems, and the build response is becoming unaffordable in many cases and frequently lacks public support. The build response tends to be extraordinarily disruptive, includes many permit and resource issues, and lots of right-of-way issues. We have a hard time in our state getting projects done. I have found working with our one MPO that the focus on the TIP tends to be something of a distraction. We spend incredible amounts of time on project discussions—what stage the project was in, how much we are spending on the project, and why the project is taking so long. The focus on discrete projects has been a hindrance. I don't have a ready suggestions as to how we maintain a meaningful role for

MPOs, but still move away from this obligation authority and the TIP focus, but I think it is something to think about.

We have many more projects on lists and on the books than we could ever hope to accomplish. In fact, we spent this last session trying to eliminate 185 of these. We succeeded in getting rid of 75. We have 20 that stayed in, and we have another 90 that we taking a closer look at. However, this still leaves six or seven hundred projects in our program. There is no way are we going to get all of these done. So, we are looking at some other ideas.

Projects tend to follow a linear development process. You do preliminary planning, then preliminary engineering, then an environmental documentation phase, and then a right-of-way phase. It takes forever because we are dealing with a 'project'. So, maybe we should place greater emphasis on programs rather than projects, and look at planning decisions being focused first and foremost on allocation of resources as opposed to project selection. Program examples in our state include bridge rehabilitation, safety, lines and signs (a paving program), bicycle, shoulder improvement, and the enhancement program. These are areas where we can work with the legislature and with our own process to put money into a program category, and then use the grass-roots process and our decentralized district process to get the work done, hopefully in a more efficient way. I remind you again, that my job now is to get things done, so such an approach resonates with me. There is a role for projects, but perhaps not the dominant role that they now play.

My second idea is to extend partnerships to include implementation. Maybe some of you have already moved into this mode of operation, but we do very little of this. My perception is that we have Interstate-era regulations that pretty much reserve implementation responsibilities to the state DOTs. They had the expertise. They had the capacity. They were the ones who could carry out of the projects. Our problem, however, is that we are now a down-sized organization. We have less production capacity, but the demands haven't gone down. Getting things done is very challenging.

During my prior experience, I saw major capital or public works ventures like water supply or waste water collection and treatment plants being carried out through federal, state, and local partnerships where the locals were responsible for implementation. I suspect there are some models that we could look at here. Some of our programs, such as the bike-ped program, a park and ride program, or bridge rehabilitation, are the type of things that local governments could be responsible for implementation. So, I am suggesting that we move to a strategy where the state delivers financial support and technical assistance for selected classes of programs and projects with the

contracting and construction oversight provided by local government. To the degree that we need some change in federal regulations, I would be interested in exploring them. I should point out that Vermont is a state that relies the most heavily on its federal funds for our construction program, and so for those of you where the federal component is much smaller perhaps this isn't as big an issue. For us it is a very big issue.

My third idea suggests a stronger collaboration with resource agencies at a program level for strategic capital investment. What I mean by this is that the linear project development process seems extraordinarily time-consuming. The criticism we often receive is that we cannot get anything done. One of the big time consumers is the old permit clearance and resource impact mitigation component. We work with resource agencies that have expertise in these areas. However, they don't have dollar or human resources to play a proactive role in our development process. All they can do is sit back and say, "Bring us your proposal, and when it gets to a certain level of design we will let you know whether it is okay." This is not a very effective or predictable system. Often the project is not acceptable to the resource agency. We are rethinking our approach. We hope to develop a more collaborative process with more active participation from the resource agencies earlier in the process.

This prospect is now enhanced by the fact that through our statewide planning process and through the designation of the NHS, we are a more focused on those areas where capital projects are the likely response to a problem. On the NHS it seems to make sense to straighten, widen, add capacity, and add passing lanes, the disruptive kinds of things that are warranted by public benefits. At this point, we are inclined on the NHS to pretty much maintain what we have, try to stay within the right-of-way, ensure safety at reasonable speed limits, ensure a good smooth ride, but not add capacity. Therefore, I am suggesting that we develop a process that focusses on the NHS and connectors that includes identifying and addressing resource issues. This could very well mean that we put money up-front, that my agency and the resource agencies hire people together, that we do wetlands and other resource mitigation banking, and that we work as a team on those parts of the state where we have made the decision that the public interest is served by enhanced mobility.

The exchange for the resource agencies is added resources, added dollars, and knowledge that we are not going to be that disruptive off of the NHS system. I don't know whether this requires any movement at the federal level, but certainly an agreement among resource agencies to work with this would be helpful. I was very encouraged to hear Ron's comments from North Carolina

about their attempt to do corridor-level work with their resource agencies.

My fourth suggestion relates to establishing a multistate, regional approach to goods movement. We were one of the recipients of the intermodal planning grants in ISTEA. Six New England states received about \$500,000 to develop a process and plan of cooperation. In that plan we ended up focusing on goods movement. We now have the classic document that talks about good ideas, but we haven't taken that next step. Freight movement is generally regional and national in scope. There is a national interest in this issue, but there is a reluctance to designate a national transportation system. We found in Vermont that it was in our interest to coordinate with our

surrounding states on the freight movement issue. We found, for example, that the State of Connecticut is essentially the front door to Vermont. If they have an idea of how to move goods, it is going to be helpful to us. We have a railroad that serves one of Connecticut's ports. Working together makes sense. So, perhaps we ought to see if our regional model of cooperation can work in other places, encourage states to work together, encourage states to identify goods movement investments and what tends to strengthen the national interest in freight. Just as we have done with metropolitan areas, let's get state and local governments to work together because it is a regional issue. Multistate activity should be supported in these areas.