



For More Information email: info@walshgraphics.com

Use of this document is prohibited without specific permission from author or owner

SECTION II: SUMMARIES OF FOCUS GROUPS AND WEB SURVEY

July 11, 2001 Focus Group Fostering State and Local Collaboration on Transportation Management and Operations

The session began with welcoming remarks by Robert Hicks, Public Technology, Inc. (PTI) and Janet Oakley, The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), followed by introductions. Hicks and Oakley expressed their appreciation for the time, interest, and participation of the attending state and local officials. Hicks explained PTI's mission and intent in relation to convening the focus group, noting that PTI is the non-profit technology organization of the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and the International City/County Management Association. Both, Hicks and Oakley commented on the significance of collaboration in furthering transportation efficiency.

Facilitator Kathy Stein summarized the roles of participants, observers, and herself, and explained how the group would use technology as an aid in processing comments. She described the goals of the focus group:

- to understand current collaborative efforts between states and localities;
- to identify challenges and opportunities for increased collaboration;
- to obtain participants' views on ways to foster collaboration, and recommended next steps;
- to contribute to the National Dialogue on Operations; and
- to contribute to the October 2001 National Summit on Operations.

For the purposes of the focus group and the entire initiative, Stein defined "collaboration" as any cooperative effort between localities and states working together on some aspect of transportation operations. Such collaboration might range from very informal, ad hoc activities to more planned, organized and formalized

Section 2: Summaries of Focus Groups and Web Survey

A. Summary of July 11, 2001 Focus Group: Fostering State and Local Collaboration on Transportation Management and Operations

Introductory Remarks

The session began with welcoming remarks by Robert Hicks, Public Technology, Inc. (PTI) and Janet Oakley, The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) followed by introductions. Hicks and Oakley expressed their appreciation for the time, interest, and participation of the attending state and local officials. Hicks explained PTI's mission and intent in relation to convening the focus group, noting that it is the non-profit technology organization of the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and the International City/County Management Association. Both Hicks and Oakley commented on the significance of collaboration in furthering transportation efficiency.

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 6:56 PM

Deleted: PTI

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 6:57 PM

Formatted

... [8]

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 6:58 PM

Deleted: Mr. ... Ms. ... Mr. Hicks described ... PTI ... Mr. ... Ms. ... on ... operations to their organizations

... [9]

Facilitator Kathy Stein summarized the roles of participants, observers, and herself, and explained how the group would use technology as an aid in processing comments. She described the goals of the focus group:

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:00 PM

Deleted: role as facilitator...she briefly ...to

... [10]

- to understand current collaborative efforts between states and localities;
- to identify challenges and opportunities of increased collaboration;
- to obtain participants views on ways to foster collaboration, and recommended next steps;
- to contribute to the national dialogue on operations; and
- to contribute to the October 2001 national summit on operations.

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:01 PM

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:00 PM

Deleted: ,

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:00 PM

Deleted: ,

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:01 PM

Deleted: . She also noted that this focus group was part of the

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:01 PM

Deleted: , and that its results would help

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:02 PM

Deleted: Ms. ...also ...to mean.....

... [11]

For the purposes of the focus group and the entire initiative, Stein defined "collaboration" as any cooperative effort between localities and states working together on some aspect of transportation operations. Such collaboration might range from very informal, ad hoc activities to more planned, organized and formalized ways of working together. Put another way, she said, collaboration was the process of parties working together toward mutual advantage and assistance.

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:03 PM

Deleted: focus group agenda was divided into three major parts

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 6:12 PM

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:06 PM

Deleted: what is ...making these efforts successful...what

... [12]

Finally, she reviewed the agenda and timing for the focus group before launching the discussion. The agenda introduced three major activities:

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 6:12 PM

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:06 PM

Deleted: different

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:05 PM

Deleted: .

1. General Collaboration. Discussion of the ways in which localities and states are collaborating currently on transportation operations, including activities leading to success, and the challenges and issues that have emerged;

2. Specific Collaboration. More detailed consideration, via small group discussion, of collaboration on four aspects of transportation management and operations:

- Planning for operations

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 6:12 PM

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

COLLABORATION

Possible approaches to future collaboration range from ad hoc and informal approaches at one end of a continuum, to formally designating existing or new multi-state or regional entities to carry out specific operational activities at the other.

ways of working together. Put another way, she said, collaboration was the process of parties working together toward mutual advantage and assistance.

Finally, she reviewed the agenda and timing for the focus group before launching the discussion. The agenda introduced three major activities:

General Collaboration. Discussion of the ways in which localities and states are collaborating currently on transportation operations, including activities leading to success, and the challenges and issues that have emerged;

Specific Collaboration. More detailed consideration, via small group discussion, of collaboration on four aspects of transportation management and operations:

- Planning for operations
- Incident response
- Traveler information
- Performance measurement

Future Opportunities. Consideration and discussion of a range of possible approaches to future collaboration, ranging from ad hoc and informal approaches at one end of a continuum to formal designation of existing or new multi-state or regional entities with responsibility to carry out specific operational activities at the other.

How States and Localities are Collaborating Now

EXAMPLES

Participants cited a wide range of examples of current and recent collaborative efforts between their organizations and corresponding state or local entities in their regions. These included:

Collaboration around major planned events of national and international stature, e.g.:

- the Democratic National Convention
- the Olympics

Regional and local efforts, e.g.:

- A regional database in Houston on road construction closures
- Co-location of offices in Los Angeles between city transportation and Caltrans district staff

- Incident response
- Traveler information
- Performance measurement

3. **Future Opportunities.** Consideration and discussion of a range of possible approaches to future collaboration, ranging from ad hoc and informal approaches at one end of a continuum to formal designation of existing or new multi-state or regional entities with responsibility to carry out specific operational activities at the other.

Summary of Focus Group Discussions

How States and Localities are Collaborating Now

Examples

Participants cited a wide range of examples of current and recent collaborative efforts between their organizations and corresponding state or local entities in their regions.

These included:

- Collaboration around major planned events of national and international stature, e.g.
 - the Democratic National Convention
 - the Olympics
- regional and local efforts, e.g.
 - a regional database in Houston on road construction closures
- Co-location of offices in Los Angeles between city and Caltrans district staff
- Collaboration in the planning and operation of transportation facilities and services that spanned multiple jurisdictions, e.g.:
 - Minnesota's emphasis on interregional corridors rather than individual roadways
 - Silicon Valley's smart corridor with monitoring and control systems spanning multiple local jurisdictions.

Two important points emerged early as participants related these examples

1. Collaboration is not just working together. It is thinking in a fundamentally different way about the nature, scale, outcomes, and relevance of transportation systems operations to many governmental entities.

2. A customer focus is key, because it fosters such collaboration and new ways of seeing operations, and because it requires attention to the interconnectedness of the transportation system and a bottom line focus on the outcomes of operations for customers.

Success Factors

About a dozen different success factors were noted, with communication, leadership and funding emphasized most. 1. Communication factors included:

- The value of informal networks in overcoming communication barriers
- Regular sharing on critical issues between partners before they become policy and budget problems
- Constant communication across all lines so everybody knows everyone else's business.

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 6:12 PM
Formatted: Bullets and Numbering ... [13]

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:06 PM
Deleted: extending ... very ... related ... [14]

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 7:07 PM
Deleted: :

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:23 PM
Deleted: ranged from

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:23 PM
Deleted: collaboration

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:24 PM
Formatted: Bullets and Numbering ... [15]

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:26 PM
Deleted: , like t

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:26 PM
Deleted: and the Olympics, to

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:24 PM
Formatted: Bullets and Numbering ... [16]

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:25 PM
Deleted: , such as

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:23 PM
Deleted: , and

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:23 PM
Deleted: co

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:24 PM
Formatted: Bullets and Numbering ... [17]

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:23 PM
Deleted: . They also spoke of c

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:24 PM
Deleted: , such as

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:24 PM
Deleted: and ... its ... [18]

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:28 PM
Deleted: First, c

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:28 PM
Formatted: Bullets and Numbering ... [19]

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:28 PM
Deleted: Second, a

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:29 PM
Formatted ... [20]

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:29 PM
Deleted: :

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:29 PM
Deleted: Many different aspects of ... [21]

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:29 PM
Deleted: the helpfulness

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:32 PM
Formatted: Bullets and Numbering ... [22]

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:29 PM
Deleted: ,

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:29 PM
Deleted: r..., and c ... [23]

Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:31 PM
Deleted: Participants stressed the v ... [24]

Collaboration in the planning and operation of transportation facilities and services that spanned multiple jurisdictions, e.g.:

- Minnesota's emphasis on interregional corridors rather than individual roadways;
- Silicon Valley's smart corridor with monitoring and control systems spanning multiple local jurisdictions.

Two important points emerged early as participants related these examples.

1. Collaboration is not just working together. It is thinking in a fundamentally different way about the nature, scale, outcomes, and relevance of transportation systems operations to many governmental entities.
2. A customer focus is key, because it fosters such collaboration and new ways of seeing operations, and because it requires attention to the interconnectedness of the transportation system and a bottom line focus on the outcomes of operations for customers.

SUCCESS FACTORS

About a dozen different success factors were noted, with communication, leadership and funding emphasized most.

Communication factors included:

- The value of informal networks in overcoming communication barriers;
- Regular sharing on critical issues between partners before they become policy and budget problems;
- Constant communication across all lines so everybody knows everyone else's business;
- Internal and partner-to-partner communications;
- Two-way communication with users and citizens, so agencies understand customer needs and so users and community members are informed and educated via communication from agencies.

Participants stressed the value of such communication in building appreciation for partners' goals and needs and in fostering shared agendas.

Roles. In addition to citing their own interest in and encouragement of collaboration, focus group leaders commented on the essential roles of leaders and champions more generally. Leadership factors included:

- Creating understanding relationships with funding managers;
- The necessity of leader buy-in and commitment in setting an example for staff at all levels to be good partners with others.

CUSTOMER FOCUS

A customer focus is key, because it fosters such collaboration and new ways of seeing operations, and because it requires attention to the interconnectedness of the transportation system and a bottom line focus on the outcomes of operations for customers.

- Internal and partner-to-partner communications.
- Two-way communication with users and citizens, so agencies understand customer needs and so users and community members are informed and educated via communication from agencies.

Participants stressed the value of such communication in building appreciation for partners' goals and needs and in fostering shared agendas.

2. In addition to citing their own interest in and encouragement of collaboration, focus group leaders commented on the essential roles of leaders and champions more generally. Leadership factors included:

- Creating understanding relationships with funding managers;
- The necessity of leader buy-in and commitment in setting an example for staff at all levels to be good partners with others.

3. Funding emerged repeatedly in the focus group as a key factor, including:

- Realistic, adequate funding to support collaborative efforts;
- Adequate planning for the level of financial support truly necessary for operations to work smoothly and meet customer expectations;
- Day-to-day funding needs of operations are crucial—and they are not insubstantial—in addition to funding for visible capital investments that generally capture the public's attention and gain recognition.

Other success factors included:

- Building on a successful track record of accomplishments;
- Making public acknowledgement of partner agencies' contributions;
- Gaining positive media coverage and political support;
- Responding to real public needs; and
- Gaining trust in one another.

Challenges

Drawing on their experiences in collaborating, participants cited a host of challenges, with three receiving the most attention—funding, competing or shifting priorities, and a variety of structural and procedural challenges emanating from our organizations and how we do business.

1. Funding issues included:

- Inadequate funds to meet operational needs and customer expectations;
- Poor alignment between budget schedules and resource needs; and
- The complicated mix of funding sources, splits, requirements, and constraints.

2. Priorities were addressed from several angles:

- At a basic level, organizations often have different agendas;
- Certain challenges emanate from changes induced by funding priorities—some needs must be met first and others, while still important, become a lower priority;
- Priorities change relative to user needs and markets and, while this is good from the standpoint of responding to those we serve, it means that our focus shifts from other efforts underway.

- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:31 PM
Deleted: , they stressed t
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:32 PM
Deleted: he need for and value of t
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:32 PM
Deleted: As well as...the ...in the fd ... [25]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:33 PM
Formatted: Bullets and Numbering ... [26]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:33 PM
Deleted: c... to t ... [27]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:34 PM
Deleted: —and in this discussion of ... [28]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:34 PM
Deleted: r... was critical. More gen ... [29]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:38 PM
Formatted: Bullets and Numbering ... [30]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:35 PM
Deleted: dequately ...real ...that is ... [31]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:37 PM
Deleted: .
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:38 PM
Deleted: that people mentioned ... b ... [32]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:39 PM
Formatted: Bullets and Numbering ... [33]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:38 PM
Deleted: , m
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:38 PM
Deleted: , g
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:39 PM
Deleted: , r
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:39 PM
Deleted: , ...gaining ... [34]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:40 PM
Deleted: :
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:40 PM
Deleted: of ...said there is...but ...v ... [35]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:42 PM
Formatted: Bullets and Numbering ... [36]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:41 PM
Deleted: side, i
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:42 PM
Deleted: poor
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:42 PM
Deleted: the
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:42 PM
Deleted: are real challenges that loc ... [37]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:42 PM
Formatted: Bullets and Numbering ... [38]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:43 PM
Deleted: different [39]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:44 PM
Deleted: sometimes just simply hav ... [40]
- Pat Walsh 11/17/02 8:44 PM
Deleted: just have to.... Participant ... [41]

WHAT IS “MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS”?

During the post-World War II era of interstate construction and suburbanization, transportation activities were viewed as falling into two categories: “construction” and “operations and maintenance.” Construction brought highly visible improvements to the public’s transportation experience. The interstate system, new bridges and widening and improvement of major arterial roads made auto travel faster, easier and more convenient.

“Operations and maintenance” during this period referred to the routine work necessary for day-to-day use of highways, roads and bridges – work such as pothole repair, street repaving, snow and ice removal, toll collection, traffic signal maintenance. These activities were and are vital to keeping the transportation network functioning smoothly, but were not thought of as improving personal mobility or the ease or convenience of auto travel. The solution to traffic congestion and delay was found in construction, rather than operations.

Of necessity, this prevailing assumption has proven to be false as construction of new highways spans years while Americans are using their cars more than ever. The average person traveled 8,323 miles per motor vehicle in 2001, an increase from 7,081 miles per person in 1990. This 16% increase from 1990 to 2001 followed a 15% increase in vehicle miles traveled per person from 1977 to 1990.¹

Meanwhile, highway construction has lagged far behind traffic growth. The number of highway lane miles increased by only 1.3 percent from 1993 to 2000, while total vehicle miles traveled on U.S. highways increased by 20.5 percent.²

This imbalance has generated predictable results. “Freeways” no longer evoke the allure of wide-open roads but rather the delays, inconvenience, and uncertainty of interminable traffic congestion. The Texas Transportation Institute esti-

¹U.S. Department of Transportation, “Summary Statistics on Demographic Characteristics and Total Travel, 1969, 1977, 1983, 1990, and 1995 NPTS, and 2001 NHTS,” available: http://nhts.ornl.gov/2001/html_files/trends_ver6.shtml

²Federal Highway Administration, 2002 Status of the Nation’s Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions & Performance, page 2-11.

What is “Management and Operations”?

During the post-World War II era of interstate construction and suburbanization, transportation activities were viewed as falling into two categories: “construction” and “operations and maintenance.” Construction brought highly visible improvements to the public’s transportation experience. The interstate system, new bridges and widening and improvement of major arterial roads made auto travel faster, easier and more convenient.

“Operations and maintenance” during this period referred to the routine work necessary for day-to-day use of highways, roads and bridges – work such as pothole repair, street repaving, snow and ice removal, toll collection, traffic signal maintenance. These activities were and are vital to keeping the transportation network functioning smoothly, but were not thought of as improving personal mobility or ease or convenience of auto travel. The solution to traffic congestion and delay was found in construction, rather than operations.

This prevailing assumption as proven to be false as construction of new highways spans years while Americans are using their cars more than ever. The average person traveled 8,323 miles per motor vehicle in 2001, an increase from 7,081 miles per person in 1990. This 16% increase from 1990 to 2001 followed a 15% increase in vehicle miles traveled per person from 1977 to 1990.¹

Meanwhile, highway construction has lagged far behind traffic growth. The number of highway lane miles increased by only 1.3 percent from 1993 to 2000, while total vehicle miles traveled on U.S. highways increased by 20.5 percent.²

This imbalance has generated predictable results. “Freeways” no longer evoke the allure of wide-open roads but rather the delays, inconvenience, and uncertainty of interminable traffic congestion. The Texas Transportation Institute estimates that a trip that would take 20 minutes during non-peak, non-congested conditions typically requires 27 minutes during the peak period of travel. Two-thirds of all peak-period auto travel in metropolitan areas takes place under congested conditions, compared with one-third of peak-period travel twenty years ago.³

Congestion is no longer restricted to the traditional “rush hour” nor to large metropolitan areas. In big cities, “rush hour” has extended from two or three hours per day to five or six hours as commuters attempt to avoid rush-hour congestion. Congestion levels in medium-size metropolitan areas now resemble the congestion once experienced only in large metro areas, while small cities now have sizeable rush hours of their own.

¹ U.S. Department of Transportation, “Summary Statistics on Demographic Characteristics and Total Travel, 1969, 1977, 1983, 1990, and 1995 NPTS, and 2001 NHTS,” available: http://nhts.ornl.gov/2001/html_files/trends_ver6.shtml

² Federal Highway Administration, *2002 Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions & Performance*, page 2-11.

³ Texas A&M University System, Texas Transportation Institute, *The 2004 Urban Mobility Report*, page 1.

Taly Walsh 3/20/01
Style Definition
Bulleted + Letter
Tab after: 0.4

Taly Walsh 3/20/01
Deleted: Inter

Taly Walsh 3/20/01
Deleted: Inter

Taly Walsh 3/20/01
Deleted: the

Taly Walsh 3/20/01
Deleted: not

Taly Walsh 3/20/01
Deleted: Of ne

Taly Walsh 3/20/01
Deleted: has b

Taly Walsh 3/20/01
Deleted: has sl

Taly Walsh 3/20/01
Deleted: had

Taly Walsh 3/20/01
Deleted: symb

Taly Walsh 3/20/01
Deleted: and s

Patrick Walsh
Deleted: 3/6/2