

Organization for Metropolitan Transportation Planning

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Montgomery-Greene County

Transportation and Development Planning Program

Dayton, Ohio

1962 HIGHWAY ACT ENCOURAGES PLANNING

I am sure that we all agree that it was the 1962 Federal Aid Highway Act that launched the Metropolitan Transportation Planning process across the country. The act carried with it the commitment by the federal government for funding the planning process. The mandate for planning and commitment for funding by the Federal Highway Administration is both unprecedented and commendable. How many federal programs have we all seen that require certain planning functions to be performed but require local sources for all or major portion of the funds. This commitment to adequate funding makes transportation planning in our metropolitan area a reality.

ORGANIZING A TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROGRAM

Early this year, Prof. Harold Michael wrote me and asked me to present a paper at the 56th Purdue Road School on the subject of organization for metropolitan transportation planning. Thus, I would like to share with you some of my experiences, observations and thoughts on how we should organize and manage a transportation planning program in our metropolitan areas.

Traffic Engineers Should Play a Key Role

I believe Professor Michael has done an excellent job of matching the subject matter with the audience. The traffic engineer, if he has not already done so, should assume leadership and play a key role in metropolitan transportation planning. It would be an injustice to your community, your constituents, and to your profession to limit your involvement to traffic operations only. A professional traffic engineer should, by initiative, have a hand in the planning and programming of highway and mass transit improvements in his community. If he does not, someone else will. As traffic engineers, you

have the opportunity to participate in one of the most gratifying and rewarding aspects of your profession, namely, the opportunity to participate in and share the responsibility for the development of your own community.

I am not insinuating that detailed operational and design problems do not have a profound impact on the community, but I would argue that the traffic engineer's responsibility must go beyond these elements. When discussing the traffic engineer's role or responsibility, I think it is important to consider the organizational structure that he works in.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization Can Be Organized Within Existing Agencies, Or a New Agency Formed

Metropolitan transportation planning can be organized within an existing regional governmental agency such as a regional planning commission, a council of governments or an operating agency of a metropolitan government as in Indianapolis-Marion County. Often a single-purpose regional planning commission is created solely for transportation planning. The organization selected or created for successful transportation planning depends heavily on the history of planning and the prevailing political climate in the particular metropolitan area.

Development of Dayton's Transportation Planning Agency As An Example

Community leaders of the Dayton Metropolitan area, in the Fall of 1967, created a single-purpose regional planning commission for transportation planning in addition to the existing Regional Planning Commission. The following year, a third regional agency, a council of governments was created. Its lack of aggressiveness and initiative to get involved in urban problems resulted in the withdrawal of funding by the local community leaders forcing a merger between COG and the Regional Planning Commission. From time to time, strong pressure is being brought to bear to force a merger of the Transportation Planning Program with the Regional Planning Commission. The current position of the policymakers in the Transportation Planning Program is to keep the two agencies separate. The independence of the Transportation Planning Program lies in its action program. The Transportation Planning Program has been successful in achieving major identifiable political administrative actions in the development of highway and transit facilities. The evaluation of the success of the Transportation Planning Program is not

in the excellence of long-range planning but in the implementation of plans and programs.

*Choose an Agency That Can Implement the Planning Program
Through Administrative and Political Processes*

The organizational structure for transportation planning should be such to enable plan implementation through administrative and political channels. If you have an occasion to participate in the organizing of a transportation planning agency or fixing the responsibility for transportation planning in an existing agency, my suggestion to you is to choose the agency or structure that has ability to effectuate implementation through administrative and political process.

**ELEMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING, OR
ADMINISTERING THE PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

In the development or in the administration of a metropolitan transportation planning organization, the following elements will require to be clearly and precisely spelled out:

1. Goals and purpose
2. Work program
3. Area covered
4. Membership
5. Policy and technical committees
6. Staff
7. Budget and funding

Goals and Purpose

The goals and purpose of metropolitan transportation planning have not changed significantly over the past ten years. The ultimate goals of planning a transportation system still is to serve people—1) to help them attain the mobility which they want, 2) to help them go where they want and need to go, and 3) to enable them to ship and receive the goods required to support their society. In many metropolitan areas, the purpose of transportation planning is more overwhelming than the goals. As you know, the receipt of continued federal aid highway dollars requires a continuing, comprehensive, cooperative transportation planning program. There is little or no change in the objective of planning. However, there appears to be change of emphasis on mass transit and citizen participation.

I would like at this time to skip over the second item on the list “work program” and come back to it later.

Area Covered

The federal guidelines, PPM 50 = 9, calls for metropolitan transportation planning area to include all of the urbanized area and these portions of the area that most likely will be urbanized within the next 25 years.

Often, too little area has been included in the planning process. The Bureau of Budget establishes guidelines for delineating regional planning areas for federal programs. Recently, a number of directives have come out with a variety of interpretations. The current 1970 Census will play a key role in redefining regional planning boundaries. My advice here is, watch this element very carefully and check with the Bureau of Budget, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Transportation—Federal Highway Administration for current policy.

Membership

Membership in the metropolitan transportation planning process should be extended to all governmental levels having planning regulatory and operating powers in transportation. In the Dayton area, participation in the transportation planning process is extended to Municipal and County Governments, and the Ohio Department of Highways. Ex-officio or nonvoting membership is extended to the Bureau of Public Roads, the Regional Planning Commission, the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and the Federal Aviation Administration. The representation or the number of votes per governmental jurisdiction reflects the size of the population represented. In our area, the City of Dayton has six votes while the small villages each have one. The important point here is to work toward one-man-one-vote principle and still maintain the interest of the small community. One-jurisdiction-one-vote rule has been the failure of many regional planning commissions and the council of governments.

Policy and Technical Committees

Every metropolitan transportation planning organization should have a policy committee, a technical advisory committee and a citizen's advisory committee. The policy committee should be composed of a minimum of fifty per cent of elected public officials that have the power of implementing plan proposals. The technical advisory committee, perhaps is the key committee in the entire metropolitan transportation planning process. In many urban areas, including Dayton, the technical people, the "technicrats" establish or influence public policy. If the transportation plan proposal does not have the backing

of the technical advisory committee, the policy committee will most likely fail to act. One word of caution, the technical advisory committee should, from time to time, be counseled to evaluate the plan proposals only from technical viewpoint. Often, the technical advisory committee tends to evaluate plan proposals from a political point of view, or what they think politically attainable. Political evaluations by technicians most often tend to be conservative, thus limiting the full potential of the plan proposal. The citizen's advisory committee's participation in the planning program can be effective in securing acceptance of plan proposals. However, the extraction of community values and goals from the citizen advisory committee usually ends in disappointment. The community values and goals for transportation can only be extracted with great strain and effort at the grass roots level, from the neighborhood groups and block organizations.

Staff

I believe that a metropolitan transportation planning program should allocate roughly 50 per cent of the staff effort to plan implementation and service, 25 per cent to long-range plan update and the remainder 25 per cent to mass transit planning. The qualifications of personnel assigned to the plan implementation and service area should include, highway design and programming, traffic engineering, computer system analysts and transportation planners. The personnel working on long-range transportation plans should be qualified in transportation planning, regional or urban planning, sociology and/or urban geography. To find personnel experienced in mass transit planning is next to impossible. Planning for mass transit has been neglected for so long now that there are virtually no experienced professionals in the field. The only course of action is to recruit bright young planners and hope that within a short period of time they will develop an expertise in the mass transit planning field.

Budget and Funding

The program budget, of course, reflects the amount of work anticipated to be carried out over an established budgetary period, usually five years. Every participating agency should contribute an appropriate share of the budget. The metropolitan area collectively, should contribute up to 25 per cent of the assessment on per capita basis. The state and the federal government should provide the remaining 75 per cent of the funds. It is desirable to diversify the fund sources, particularly at the federal level. Federal appropriations and rules for expenditures change very often, particularly in the Department of

Housing and Urban Development making budget planning both difficult and frustrating. Dependence for a major share of federal funds for any work element, particularly the funds from HUD's "701" program should be avoided.

Work Program

Shown here is a work program outline for a continuing transportation planning program:

- Plan Implementation
 - Surveillance
 - Service
 - Annual Report
- Plan Update
 - Reappraisal
 - Procedural Development
- Mass Transit Planning

The majority of the metropolitan transportation planning programs are in the continuing phase. This means that the regional transportation planning process has completed a full cycle. There exists a comprehensive regional transportation plan and a transportation planning agency engaged in the continual update of the plan. The five work elements: 1) Surveillance, 2) Reappraisal, 3) Service, 4) Procedural Development, and 5) Annual Report, which are spelled out in the Bureau of Public Roads Instructional Memorandum 50-4-68 are identifiable in the listing of the work program.

WORK PROGRAM SHOULD EMPHASIZE PLAN PROGRAMMING AND IMPLEMENTATION

In reviewing the work elements, the emphasis as I see it, again, should be on plan programming and implementation. The work elements including 1) Surveillance of highway use and urban development, 2) Service in form of assistance in plan implementation and data, and 3) The annual report functions all contribute directly to the implementation of the metropolitan transportation plan.

The implementation program should clearly establish the priority of highway projects to be undertaken by the state and local governments over a five-year period. This list should be kept up-to-date and modified from time to time to reflect changing conditions in urban development patterns and the availability funds. Acceptance of the five-year program and priorities should be secured both at the local and state levels. To achieve this, the staff should assist the local com-

munities in detailing and refining the plan through programming for construction.

In addition, the planning agency should participate fully in public hearings to insure a minimum of dissent and speedy public acceptance of highway improvements.

In Dayton, our staff is participating as one of the interdisciplinary team members in the development of a highway corridor through the Model Cities target area. Using the concept of multiple use and joint development of transportation facilities, we hope to achieve the fulfillment of the regional transportation plan without sacrificing the rights and aspirations of citizens living in the Model Cities area.

*TOPICS Program and Highway Classification Study
Key to Plan Implementation and Federal Aid*

Two key programs in the area of plan implementation are TOPICS and the Highway Classification Study. The TOPICS Program is very near and dear to the traffic engineer. The forthcoming future highway classification study and its accompanying needs report should be treated seriously by metropolitan transportation planning agencies. The adequacy and the level of future federal highway aid expenditures in the metropolitan areas will be based on what goes into the report now.

*Computer Data System Necessary for
Implementing and Updating*

One of the key service functions is the development and maintenance of a computerized data system for the region. Adequately qualified staff is crucial in this area, as are locally available computer facilities. The data system may prove time consuming and costly to develop, but it is a necessary resource in both the plan implementation and update elements. The current U. S. Census data to be available soon should be made an integral part of this data system.

Annual Report Effective in Communicating

The annual report plays a key role in the success of the metropolitan transportation planning process. It is an effective tool in the communicating with the citizenry and the news media. In Dayton, last year, we were able to attract U. S. Department of Transportation Secretary John A. Volpe as our guest speaker. A full house crowd of about 600 people attended the luncheon meeting, and we have reason to believe that this meeting resulted in greater community response to our program.

CONTINUAL UPDATING IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER AREA PLANNING AGENCIES NECESSARY

The necessity of keeping the metropolitan transportation plan up-to-date on a continual basis cannot be over-emphasized. This process necessitates a very close cooperative working relationship with other planning agencies in the area. Reworking of the transportation plan by collecting costly new origin and destination travel data should be avoided when possible.

Procedural Developments Should Be Handled by Universities Research Organizations

Procedural developments are difficult to get accepted and funded on the local level. This work element should be handled by the universities and research organizations such as the HRB.

MASS TRANSIT PLANNING MUST BE EMPHASIZED

Mass transit planning is a key element in the total transportation planning process. We all realize the fact that highways alone will not be able to accommodate the travel demand of our growing population. More emphasis must be placed on improving mass transit service. In many urban areas, we have to work very hard just to keep the bus service alive. It is true here what the red queen told Alice in Wonderland that sometimes you have to run very hard just to stay in the same place. In Dayton, we have put emphasis on the improvement of mass transit service. This included lobbying on behalf of passage of both state and federal mass transit legislation. We have two transit studies underway, one to improve the employment level of the Model City target area residents, the other a policy and action oriented study to assure continued service. We have completed a transit study in cooperation with the National League of Cities, U. S. Conference of Mayors, and the U. S. Department of Transportation. Your capital City of Indianapolis was part of this eight-city project. This study identified the nontechnological impediments to mass transit improvements. The final report was recently published in the February Issue of the *Nation's Cities Magazine*.

Just a few days ago, we submitted to DOT an application for study funds for the development of an urban transportation corridor which would utilize an existing rail line to carry passengers into and out of the downtown area during peak travel periods.

SUMMARY

In summary, I would like to emphasize again that the traffic engineer plays a key role in the metropolitan transportation planning process. If your area does not have an on-going transportation planning program, organize one. If one exists, work to strengthen the organization to make it action oriented and responsive to local needs.

The metropolitan transportation planning organization should have its goals and purpose clearly spelled out. The work program should be detailed for a five-year period. The area covered should include all area estimated to be urbanized within the plan period. Membership on the policy and technical committees should reflect action and technical competency. The staff should be adequate to provide a service to the community. The budget and funding should be given careful attention to assure a continuous planning program. Mass transit planning should be given greater attention than it has in the past.

I have deliberately skipped over one important process in metropolitan transportation planning and that is intergovernmental cooperation. I would like to call your attention to the program tomorrow morning. Wednesday at 10 a.m. there is a general session on the subject, "Governmental Cooperation in Transportation Activities." I think it will be an informative session and if you have interest in this area, I urge you to attend. At this time, however, I would like to say that without intergovernmental cooperation, transportation plans have little chance of being implemented.

It has been a pleasure sharing my thoughts with you on organizing for metropolitan transportation planning. I think that we have come a long way and advanced further in any one specific discipline of urban planning. There is a lot more that needs to be done. It requires the efforts of all of us. For my part, I look forward to the challenge.