

MINUTES

Committee ADA30
Transportation Planning for Small and Medium Sized Communities
Tuesday, January 24, 2006, 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Washington, DC

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jerry Schutz, Chair	BTC, WA
Stacey Bricka, Secretary	NuStats, TX
Michael Anderson	University of Alabama
Jerry Everett	University of Tennessee
Marsha Fiol	Virginia DOT
Jon Fricker	Purdue University, IN
Leta Huntsinger	North Carolina State University
Vicky McLane	North Front Range MPO, CO
Jeff Moore	Kentucky Transportation Cabinet
Elaine Murakami	Federal Highway Administration, WA
Jo Laurie Penrose	City of Destin, FL
Ron Poole	NCDOT (retired)
Libby Rushley	Ohio DOT
Tom Schwetz	Lane Council of Governments, OR
Barbara Singleton	Community Transportation Action Agency, WA
A. T. Stoddard	LSC Transportation Consulting, CO
Mohan Venigalla	George Mason University
Montie Wade	Texas Transportation Institute
Lynn Zanto	Montana DOT

FRIENDS PRESENT:

Janet Bell	Jefferson County, CO
France Bernard	City of Montreal
Thera Black	Thurston Regional Planning Council, WA
Kathleen Davis	Washington DOT
Vinod Dega	Wilbur Smith Associates, OH
Philip Hazen	Federal Highway Administration (Retired)
Paul Hershkowitz	Wilbur Smith Associates, MI
Ming Le	Utah State University
Rachel Moriconi	Santa Cruz County RTC, CA
Charles Robinson	University of Alabama – Birmingham
Nanda Srinivasan	Cambridge Systematics, DC
Effie Stallsmith	Federal Transit Administration, DC
Katie Turnbull	Texas Transportation Institute
Tom Vaughan	New York DOT
Nicole Waldheim	AMPO, DC

AGENDA:

Attachment 1

(Minutes are not necessarily in the sequence in which items were considered)

1. Introductions

Jerry Schutz opened the meeting with a welcome to all attendees. Introductions took place

- 2. Minutes of Summer Meeting.** These were approved as submitted. Stacey Bricka reviewed the annual paper statistics: the committee received 8 papers, of which 4 were accepted for presentation and 2 (of the four) for publication. Each paper was reviewed by an average of 3.9 reviewers. The biography information that everyone provided was particularly helpful, helping to assign the 8 papers across 22 reviewers (18 committee members and 4 friends). Each person reviewed an average of 1.4 papers. Thanks to everyone for making this process a success!

- 3. Chair's Report. Jerry S.** updated the committee on section activities.

- a. **Recognition.** South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (treasurer Tim Chelius' agency) received a National Road Safety Award for its Local Road Safety Audit. Sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration and the Roadway Safety Foundation, the SJTPO project was found to be an outstanding example of highway safety projects. Email Tim (tchelius@sjtpo.org) for more information.
- b. **Young Person's Reception. Jerry S.** represented the committee at this Sunday afternoon event.
- c. **All Chair's Meeting** – At this Sunday evening event, the focus was on how TRB identifies topics for the annual meeting. TRB is a bottoms-up organization and the strategic plan and focused areas link the committees together. While we didn't contribute to the last strategic plan, we will be more aggressive about committee involvement in the strategic plan or have nothing to complain about if we don't like the outcome. Also, NCHRP's Quick Response Project 25-25 is focused on environmental projects.
- d. **Other.** The research committee identified a synthesis topic of condensing research related to small and medium-sized communities across various subjects and reports into one document.

→ **Jerry S.** will (did) submit the synthesis statement by February 10th.

4. Vice Chair's Report – AT Stoddard

- a. **Strategic Plan.** Editorial changes/updates included:

- **Website:** plan was updated to show **Tom Schwetz** as the subcommittee chair. The new website is now "live". Future updates include posting the conference proceedings on the site and a customer satisfaction survey.
- **Research Briefs:** AT indicated that we need a new "lead" with the research briefs. Former committee member **John Edwards** championed this effort in the past. There was some discussion about the future of this project, ranging from deleting to using the web for easier submissions and leveraging best practices from the conference attendees. The committee agreed to continue the program for one more year to see how these new approaches worked in actively stimulating research briefs.
- **Summer Program:** For the past two years, one goal has been to get on the summer program. **Jerry S.** indicated that this year, 8 committees participated in setting the mid-year meeting program. As a committee, we agreed to continue to push for direct involvement and inclusion on the planning committee.

- Conferences: We have the goal to plan conference locations at least four years in advance. So we need to begin looking now for the next conference location. After some discussion, the potential exists for a Virginia conference in 2010 and a Montana conference in 2012.
 - Liaison Program: The plan calls for us to maintain and coordinate liaisons with other committees. The main mechanism is a reporting form. **Lynn Zanto** is now coordinating this program. She will summarize the input from committee members and we will begin posting that on the website along with committee minutes.
 - ➔ **Tom** will update the web to welcome research briefs. **Jerry S.** will provide text.
 - ➔ **Mike Anderson** will work with **Tom** to organize prior conference papers topically.
 - ➔ **Stacey** will draft customer survey questions for discussion at the mid-year meeting.
 - ➔ **Libby** will follow up with **Marsha Fiol** and **Lynn Zanto** regarding sponsorship of future conferences and providing details of what this entails. This will be revisited at the mid-year meeting.
- b. 2007 Annual Meeting Sessions.** Each committee has 2.2 sessions available. For 2007, we identified the following sessions:
- Best Papers Session: The best papers session, moderated by **Mike** as the Nashville Technical Chair, These papers will be identified immediately following the Nashville conference.
 - General Paper Session: The committee agreed that the 2nd session should be some type of organized paper session, with a call for papers that included a “feature” topic but also left room to accommodate other topics. Ideas presented by the committee included: (1) critical issues (institutions, finance, workforce), (2) equity in meeting the transportation needs of small and medium-sized communities workforce (with or without an overlap that specifically focuses on Native Americans, (3) institutional relationships between small and medium-sized communities and State DOTs and MPOs, and (4) plan implementation. **Montie Wade** will chair this session and ultimately select the “featured” topic. We all agreed that a well-publicized call for papers was critical to the success of this paper session.
 - Joint Session – ideas included leaving this open and seeing who approaches us, specifically teaming with the Transportation and Air Quality committee, as well as the Transportation and Land-Use committee.
 - Poster Session: Poster sessions and workshops are “free” in that they don’t require any of our “points.” **Tom** suggested a poster session that includes a map with all small and medium-sized MPOs across the US (he has staff working on this now). The poster would be used for marketing the committee’s efforts and upcoming conference with bookmarks or trading cards.
 - Workshop: Sunday afternoon (or the half-day opposite our conference subcommittee meeting), Mohan will be our representative at a half-day workshop on the Best Practices on Conformity in Small and Medium-Sized communities.
- ➔ **Jerry S.** will coordinate a joint session.
 - ➔ **Tom** will present a poster session proposal at the summer meeting.

5. Subcommittee and Task Force Reports.

- a. **Conference.** **Libby** updated the committee on the progress towards the September conference. Logistically, all is going well. Technically, we determined which abstracts to accept. There were fewer abstracts received than for prior conferences, and a few sessions were missing one paper each (technology, small systems, public involvement, environment, and transit). A final administrative duty was to assign the State Caucus to **Jeff Moore** and the public involvement session moderation to **Leta Huntsinger**. Also, there was one session open, which **Jerry E.** was offering first to conference sponsor Tennessee DOT. Should they decline, **Jerry S.** indicated that National Parks committee was interested in putting together a session.
 - b. **Air Quality.** **Vicky McLane** updated us on the AQ subcommittee activities. In particular, **Jerry S.** will be submitting a quick response project idea to survey planning agencies and determine their research needs. The subcommittee also identified the potential for a workshop with the Transportation and Air Quality committee, looking at best practices in conformity. Finally, the focus this year will be on subcommittee representation by small and medium-sized communities.
 - c. **Research.** **Mike Anderson** updated the committee on the research subcommittee meeting, held Monday morning. We had one NCHRP project statement submitted through NCDOT (with **Ron**'s help). In addition, the subcommittee identified a synthesis project of small and medium-size communities that were highlighted in case studies across FHWA and TRB reports in particular, grouping the details by size of community (<50,000, 50-150,000, and 150,000-250,000 in population).
 - d. **Web.** **Tom Schwetz** let us know that the new web site was "live" with most of the content being finalized through virtual meetings. The goal is to have something new on the first page each month (so all committee members and friends need to help **Tom** develop these monthly ideas!). Committee minutes and the roster will also be posted on this site. The research committee will organize prior papers into categories and have them ready for posting on the site (probably after the Nashville conference). **Nicole Waldheim** offered the AMPO e-newsletter as a venue for publicizing the website and committee updates.
- ➔ **Subcommittee Chairs** need to email **Jerry S.** as soon as possible with any meeting time requirements for the annual meeting. At this point, each subcommittee has only a 75-minute time slot.
 - ➔ **Any committee member or friend** who would prefer to not have their contact information listed on the website, please email **Jerry S.**

6. **Triennial Review.** **Jerry S.** indicated that the committee's triennial review was due this May. Since we have an active and updated strategic plan, this reporting is fairly straightforward. **Jerry** plans to draft this review and finalize after a teleconference with the executive committee members.
- ➔ **Anyone** with input into the triennial review should email their thoughts to **Jerry S.** (jbschutz@btconcepts.net).

7. **Small & Medium Bibliography.** The goal of the bibliography is to provide planners in small and medium-sized communities with a quick reference tool to identify useful resources in 15 topical areas. While there has been some input over the last year, we do not yet have a complete tool to post on the website.
- ➔ **Jerry S.** will redistribute a list of the 15 topic areas. **Each committee member** should look at those areas and email Jerry at least one reference or citation in as many areas as applicable based on our areas of expertise.
8. **TRB Report.** **Kim Fisher** provided the committee with details about upcoming conferences and annual meeting details.
- a. **Annual Meeting Stats.** There were 10,000 attendees at the annual meeting this year. Obviously this showed in the shuttle lines and general crowds in the hallways.
 - b. **Kim** recognized and congratulated **Montie Wade** for his service as committee treasurer and conference subcommittee chair for so many years. She also recognized **Elaine** for her efforts in the committee membership drive.
 - c. This is not a rotation year for our committee.
 - d. **Kim** has the conference proceedings CD and will coordinate getting these papers into the TRIS system.
- ➔ Anyone with ideas for improving the annual meeting should email **Kim Fisher** (kfisher@nas.edu).
9. **Committee Liaisons.** Lynn distributed a list of committees and asked members and friends to indicate to which committee(s) they were willing to serve as liaisons.
- ➔ **Liaisons** should complete their 2006 annual meeting reports and provide those to **Lynn** by March 10th.
 - ➔ **Lynn** will provide **Jerry S.** with a final list of liaisons. **Jerry S.** will send letters to the committee chairs indicating the liaison appointments.
10. **ADA 30 Desk Manual.** This is not a static piece, but a living document that provides details on the committee operations for members. **John Edwards** was the keeper of this document, but with his “retirement” from the committee, it needs a new champion. **Mohan Venigalla** agreed to take this manual on. The first task will be to make all appendices available in electronic format
- ➔ **Jerry S.** will send **Mohan** all appendices (those available electronically and in paper format only).
11. **Other Business.**
- a. **National Travel Survey Program.** **Nanda Srinivasan** informed us that the 2007/8 survey cycle looked much more promising, thanks in part to the help of committee members and data users.
 - b. **Conferences:**
 - There is an Innovations in Travel Modeling conference in Austin May 21-23. see <http://www.trb.org/calendar/event.asp?id=237> for more information.

- The mid-year meeting will be July 9-11 in LaJolla, CA. See <http://www.trb.org/conferences/jointsummer/2006/> for more details.
 - Metropolitan Plans and Processes committee will be holding an invitation conference for MPO staff on MPO-related research. Contact **Libby** if you are an MPO staff and interested in participating.
- c. **2007 Annual Meeting.** For those interested, **Jerry S.** will organize a group dinner on the Saturday night prior to the start of the annual meeting. He'll make reservations for us at the Buca di Beppo restaurant for around 7:30 pm. Look for an email from Jerry next fall.

12. Transportation Planning Policy & Process Section. **Katie Turnbull** updated us on section news. She thanked the committee and congratulated us on all our efforts over the past year. Overall, the section is working to enhance cross-committee communications and coordination (such as building and enhancing research activities). She congratulated **Mike Anderson** for being awarded the section paper award for his 2005 paper on spatial economic models.

The spotlight theme for the 2007 Annual Meeting is "Transportation Institutions, Finance, and Workforce Development: Meeting the Needs of the 21st Century."

13. Panel Discussion: Transportation 2025. Jeff Moore, Tom Schwetz, Libby Rushley, Vicky McLane, and Jerry Schutz each presented on various issues related to Transportation 2025. See Attachment 2 for summaries of each person's presentation. This discussion will be used as an appendix to the committee's millennium paper.

- ➔ Committee members and friends are invited to email **Jerry S.** with their thoughts on this new roundtable format.

14. Transportation Information Needs Assessment.

- a. **Model Quality.** Agencies can't afford to update household surveys and the data for the model becomes outdated. Current models aren't adequate to provide answers to policy questions or measure policy impacts. We need tools that can provide information about changes in travel based on land use and future reactions to policies.
- b. **Local Level Information Availability.** In Colorado, the COG structure doesn't allow for sub-area planning so Jefferson County had to develop its own data. The used a bottom-up approach by listening first to local municipalities. In Ohio, the DOT helps with this. Not very consistent and hard to determine who has the information needed for these planning tasks.
- c. **Good Financial Planning Information.** Colorado DOT monitors the project status, with financial information available only on a quarterly basis. (Project status information is available all the time, but financial information is available only quarterly). Washington DOT has no data on project status. Ohio DOT has historical data but the MPO had the projections.
- d. **GIS systems.** Base data drives the information available. Is it sufficient for small and medium-sized areas now? Do all small area transit systems now have good GIS data and tools?

- e. **Environmental Analyses in Small Areas.** SAFETEA-LU puts the burden for preliminary environmental analysis on the small MPOs. But they are not capable of doing this (limited staff time, expertise).
- f. **Environmental Justice.** Equity issues abound in all these discussions. Small towns need extra help.
- g. **Information Management.** MPO staff spend too many hours reconciling local TIPs with State TIPs. Timely, operationally valuable information needed along with an efficient process.

➔ Committee members and friends are invited to email **Jerry S.** with any other information needs.

15. Roundtable. Committee members and friends updated us on current programs and issues.

- a. **Vicky McLane/North Front Range MPO (Ft. Collins, CO).** The NFRMPO is participating in an FHWA pilot program that integrates NEPA up front in the planning process. The MPO had four projects “stuck” in the NEPA process. This pilot program centers about a GIS framework that member government agencies can access. It provides for a regional level cumulative impact assessment. There has been mixed input and participation, but thus far the MPO is pleased with the progress achieved through this pilot.
- h. **Jo Laurie Penrose/City of Destin (FL).** Destin is a resort town with a permanent population of about 12,000. It is on a barrier island, with not much room to expand. There is one regional arterial, US 98. The remainder of the transportation infrastructure is categorized as collector roads. The area faces high development pressure. So with this new comprehensive plan, the city is shifting to a multi-modal capacity program, focusing on bike, pedestrian and transit. They have developed a multi-modal transit district that is walkable and people-friendly. They are developing requirements for the land development code where if you meet the multi-modal criteria, you meet concurrency.
- i. **Jerry Schutz/Balanced Transportation Concepts.** ITE is updating the Transportation Planning Handbook. Jerry is writing a chapter on planning for small communities and tribal nations.
- j. **Effie Stallsmith/Federal Transit Agency.** The FTA has completed its “transit at the table” research in large urban areas. They now will turn their focus to small and medium-sized areas and are looking for good transit examples.

Attachment 1 – Agenda

TRB Committee on Transportation Planning for Small and Medium
Sized Communities
ADA30
2006 TRB Annual Meeting
January 24, 8:00 A.M.
Hemisphere South - Hilton
Agenda

- Introductions 10 min
- Minutes of summer meeting 5 min
- Chair's report 5 min
- Vice Chair's report 20 min
 - Strategic plan
 - 2007 Annual meeting sessions
- Committee and Task reports
 - Conference 10 min
 - Air-Quality 10 min
 - Research 15 min
 - Web-Site 15 min
- Triennial Review 10 min
- S&M Bibliography/Resources 5 min
- TRB Staff Representative - Kimberly Fisher 15 min
- Committee Liaisons 10 min
- ADA30 Desk Manual 10 min
- Other business 5 min
- Trans. Planning Policy & Process Section -
Katie Turnbull 5 min
- Panel Discussion - Transportation 2025,
the FHWA, and Small and Medium Sized
Communities 60 min
- Around the Room Until Noon

Attachment 2: Transportation 2025.

The presentations and discussions centered about five questions:

1. What should your agency look like in 2025, and what steps would need to be take to achieve this vision?
2. What will be the biggest issue facing your agency over the next 20 years, and how should it be addressed?
3. For surface transportation, now that we have gotten the farmers out of the mud and completed the Interstate system, what is the mission for the federal-aid program?
4. What steps will be need to be taken to assure adequate and predictable funding in your area between now and 2025?
5. TRB has released its latest version of Critical Issues in Transportation at this meeting. What are some of the things that will need to be done to address these issues between now and 2025?

1. What should your agency look like in 2025, and what steps would need to be take to achieve this vision? (Jeff Moore, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet)

Jeff's unit of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) provides transportation planning for 10 counties in south central Kentucky, one of which was recently designated as an MPO. In answering this question, Jeff organized his presentation around a poster he has that says, "Hard work got me where I am – Where am I?" Thus, his talk centered about where have we been, where are we now, and where do we want to go?

KYTC uses a bottom-up planning approach. They fully embraced the ISTEA requirements in 1993, particularly consulting with local officials. Community conversation is a core piece of their regional transportation committees. Each county also has a local transportation committee with involvement by KYTC. In the south-central region of Kentucky, the regional council meets every two months to identify needs. The goal is to plan for a multimodal transportation system, in a financially reasonable manner, to address existing and future needs for transporting people and goods (multi-modal, land use, political, and technical). They use a project identification form to identify needs. This project focus enables the counties to bring up problems or needs, provide information about the needs, prioritize needs for funding (on a two-year cycle) and scheduled within the six-year plan. The 10 counties that Jeff works with have 200 projects and each is rated as high, medium, or low priority, whether or not it's a safety issue, and then all are ranked. The KYTC involvement at these regional meetings allows for quick little "wins" through constant and continuous conversations, with both short term and long term needs getting met.

In 2000, one of the ten counties was designated as "urban." They continue to be involved in this regional process and connected. The goals and objectives of the regional planning effort remain the same- to improve safety, access, Intermodal connectivity, and mobility with an eye on economic and environmental stewardship and public inclusiveness.

The main terms that drove this process to date, and which will determine the activities of KYTC in approaching 2025 are robustness, devolution, and financing.

- **Robustness:** From 9/11 to the hurricane damage in the Gulf Coast, KYTC has had to evaluate where they stand with disaster preparedness. They need to ensure they have a robust transportation system that can take a hit but continue to function – its not about the big scary scenarios, but also the day-to-day operations of the system. They accept that all of our systems are vulnerable to attack (man-made or natural) but chose to concentrate on post-incident “recovery” in addition to incident prevention.
- **Devolution:** The federal government is backing off from MPOs and rural planning agencies, providing increased flexibility to identify needs, prioritize them and pay. FHWA will continue to provide over-arching guidance, but it must recreate itself in a post-interstate era and develop standards that provide guidance but also provide room for innovation.
- **Financing.** The project prioritization process tells them that they have these needs. But with \$1 to spend and the cost of the needs at \$3, how can they fulfill these needs? Decreasing expenses is not an option, it will need to be increasing revenues. Communities need to use the new devolutionary flexibility to develop innovating funding for projects.

Discussion:

- Devolution is great, but when the state DOT will not do its share, and FHWA taking a hand’s off approach, the situation is very frustrating for local agencies and MPOs.
- Financing: Washington DOT increased their gas tax and fees. There was a political battle, but the program remains in place and is the largest transportation program in the country due to these funds. In addition to just successful funding, a larger success is that through accountability and project delivery, the DOT was able to turn the attitudes of citizens into one of trust, which helps newer funding efforts (citizens see that DOT did what they said they would with the initial funds, they recognize the needs of the region, and are willing to say “yes” to new funding fees and taxes because they see the benefits).

2. What will be the biggest issue facing your agency over the next 20 years, and how should it be addressed? Tom Schwetz, Lane Council of Governments.

As a COG, Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) is the MPO, the Area Agency on Aging, provides telephone services, small business loans, and other services. Transportation is one of the most critical issues for their member agencies. As an MPO, the biggest challenge they face is the fostering of a regional process that delivers in terms of relevance and value to politicians, residents, and businesses. Of course, this is complicated by funding shortfalls.

The business of the agency is delivering this regional process. Two factors impede this:

1. **High level of distrust.** Policymakers and the public are polarized around values (e.g., the chamber of commerce vs. environmentalists).
2. **Complexity of Process.** The transportation planning process requires public participation, yet parts of the process are inaccessible for a great deal of the public. For example, a significant regional project that goes through the wetlands has been held up for about 20 years. Opponents found a way to hold up the regional decision-making process, so the lack of consensus means it cannot pass through the metropolitan planning process to implementation. And this is just one project. The main difficulty is that the process invites the exploration and identification of diversity, but is not structured to facilitate resolution.

To foster the regional process, LCOG will need to adopt a fundamental organizational response of “ad hococracy,” a term that refers to efforts to effectively organize an agency’s resources to adapt to change as it occurs. To successfully adapt its process in a dynamic environment, increased ability for participants and staff to interact is required, as well as the need for participants to interact among themselves. Through this, the process incorporates values and enables LCOG to focus on stability, expand its environmental justice element, and increase the level of operations and maintenance across all infrastructure.

Discussion:

- Difficult to capture values
- Getting buy-in from the local communities is critical.
- Important to demonstrate that on-time and on-budget performance is achievable. This is easy on the capital side, but not a sexy topic for the local maintenance and preservation issues.
- This is an example of 20th century institutions dealing with scary 21st century issues.
- Public involvement was critical to the establishment of a special improvement district, including drafting land use recommendations and checking on infrastructure needs. But the resultant projects passed by a wide margin due to the public involvement successes.
- It’s increasingly difficult for the processing to result in a recommendation for A or B. It requires more of a solution that includes both A and B.

**3. For surface transportation, now that we have gotten the farmers out of the mud and completed the Interstate system, what is the mission for the federal-aid program?
Libby Rushley, Ohio DOT.**

Libby began her talk with two pictures, one a truck stuck in the mud (from the 1930s) and the other design features of the I-70/I-75 interchange in Dayton, which incorporates aircraft into the design (the Wright Brothers were from that region). Ohio DOT was involved in one of the last Interstate sections, completed in 2003. And, one of the costliest interstate sections to build was a section of I-670 (the Columbus downtown bypass).

The Goals of the Federal Highway System (and thus Federal Aid Program) included safety, mobility, global connectivity, and the environment. Priorities included safety, congestion mitigation, environmental stewardship, and project streamlining. Ohio DOT’s goals include safety, mobility (people and goods), environmental stewardship, project streamlining, and financing. Gas tax funds can only be used for highway programs. However, the DOT coordinates with transit and rail, particularly on safety elements (such as grade separations). They contribute as they can to transit and rail, but the DOT’s main focus is highways.

Now that the large key construction pieces are completed, the agency is shifting its focus to safety, mobility (congestion), and a reconstruction process. This is necessary because the original Interstate construction standards from the 1950s and 1960s are outdated. In addition, the trends in travel behavior are changing, with vehicle ownership and rates of vehicle-miles traveled leveling off. The exact implications of these changes on what needs will be 20 years in the future is not clear.

Discussion:

- Rebuilding is a big issue – traffic, address capacity needs through alternatives other than additional lanes, rebuilding to be structurally adequate. There were four aspects to the Washington state rebuilding effort: not just (1) rebuild but (2) redesign, (3) what to do with the traffic while reconstructing, and (4) meeting water and air quality requirements. Ohio has found that lane additions through downtown areas are extremely high cost and high impact, so other options must be given substantial consideration.
- You should include the private sector in the statewide plan update process.
- Some cities are consolidating services, such as Kelso and Longview forming one maintenance department. Others trade off services (such as street sweeping). In Vancouver, the city, county, and MPO all share services.
- In Ohio, it is more of a mixing of funds rather than building. The biggest change is less of a parochial approach.

4. What steps will be need to be taken to assure adequate and predictable funding in your area between now and 2025? Vicky McLane, North Front Range MPO.

The current situation in Colorado is that the federal government has increased funds and decreased oversight, the Colorado DOT has increased funds and decreased oversight, so the MPO is left to function with fewer funds and little oversight.

Federal level issues:

- Reauthorization lacks predictability in timing and funding levels.
- Delegation rates are unpredictable
- Funds are earmarked
- Gas taxes are not indexed. According to the Brookings Institute, there has been a 14% decline in purchasing power of the gas tax funds.
- The federal government needs to take a stronger and more consistent role with states.
- The federal government tends to be too involved in state politics.

State level issues:

- Obligation limits
- Awful job revenue forecasts
- Indexing gas tax to inflation
- Developing partnerships with small communities

Local level issues:

- Need to cooperate with each other (circuit rider concept – contract to help each other or share staff)
- Need to cooperate on efforts to ensure adequate and predictable funding from the state (municipal leagues, county associations)
- Create in identifying funding solutions (may require legislative directives). This might include a regional transportation authority (one-cent sales tax) or public/private partnerships.

Discussion:

- The reason that most states don't index taxes to inflation is because it requires voters or politicians to evaluate whether good stewardship has taken place. But the federal gas tax should be indexed. Ohio approved an increase, indexed for X years. Once that reached sunset, they did nothing to amend nor renew the index. Local governments were successful in obtaining a share of the increase for roads.
- Its not the actual voter opinion per se, but the perception and potential for political death. One year the legislature can push and stomp, and the next year they can pass the same bill with little effort or attention.
- The TIP identifies funding for projects. Those with projects in the TIP can wait 6 years for funding. If they become impatient, they might do an end-run and get the legislature to earmark funding. So how do you balance out the fairness in this? The concept of being well-behaved with long waits or waiting your turn is the status quo. But this may change with developers willing to finance public/private partnerships.
- Don't forget that the money ultimately belongs to the people. "Give back" what meets their needs. We need to provide transit systems that meet the needs of everyone. We need balance, not just captured value or return on investments. We are providing a service, not trying to make money.

5. TRB has released its latest version of Critical Issues in Transportation at this meeting. What are some of the things that will need to be done to address these issues between now and 2025?

The committee members and friends are invited to email Jerry S. with their ideas of what needs to be done to be where we want to be in 2025. Here are Jerry's thoughts on the issue:

- **Congestion:** The professional transportation community has no one definition for congestion, however, it is increasingly apparent that perception is an important element in defining congestion. Nowhere is this more apparent than in small and medium-sized communities. For many drivers in small towns, the appearance their first traffic signal presages the "beginning of the end." Pass – through traffic is usually an integral part of congestion in small communities. As small-sized communities evolve into medium-sized communities the locally generated portion of the traffic contributes a larger share of the problem and the townspeople begin to struggle with issues of expanding their infrastructure to meet increased demands. With these challenges come the inevitable questions of how to address the issues: roadway expansions; bypasses; or multi-modal solutions. At the heart of the discussion is the question, "what is an acceptable level of congestion?"
- **Emergencies:** Dealing with emergencies of any kind in small and medium-sized communities presents challenges that are similar to those presented for dealing with transportation issues overall. There is a lack of funding, usually a shortage of expertise, and a large amount of information that applies to large urban areas, with no focus on smaller areas. Homeland security is an area of particular frustration where all Federal funds go to large urban areas and virtually no literature exists on addressing with the problem in small population areas. A large portion of emergency relief in small-population areas is often handled by volunteers and it is important that their role be accounted for in developing solutions.
- **Energy and Environment:** Small and medium-sized communities are not only concerned with conserving energy, but its availability. Transit systems in small communities generally address accessibility issues rather than congestion relief and may not even be energy efficient, but are extremely valuable in establishing alternative transportation options as the community grows. The preservation and enhancement of the environment within the influence area of a capital improvement

project can increase project costs severely, while resulting in sub-optimal transportation projects which in turn can contribute to undesirable land use patterns. Environmental quality is a highly desirable feature of small town life and long range planning that combines land use and transportation is a key to finding optimal solutions. Although agriculture and resource exploitation are separate issues, transportation projects to support these forms of economic development often become embroiled in controversy.

- **Equity:** Certainly no single definition exists on what is an appropriate level of equity in the provision of transportation services. In small and medium-sized communities this issue can be magnified by low density development and a strong self-sufficiency ethic. Small and medium-sized communities are rarely, if ever, able to garner enough funding to address major projects on their own and engineering oriented cost-benefit formulas can put these projects at a disadvantage in competing against urban projects. Often these projects do not get addressed until safety becomes a major issue, usually fatalities.
- **Finance:** The two most important issues on finance have already been mentioned, those of large projects and unfunded mandates. The first is undoubtedly easier to deal with, because the issues get dealt with when the problem becomes large enough. The issue of unfunded mandates is a daily onus on small and medium-sized communities that will only be relieved by finding cost-effective ways to deal with requirements and developing skilled staff.
- **Human Capital:** The most important solution to addressing the requirements of transportation planning in small and medium-sized communities is in human capital. Both attracting and retaining qualified people is a special challenge for these communities with their limited resources. On the positive side, the people that inhabit these jobs are usually attracted to the quality of life available in the communities and are dedicated professionals that develop high levels of skill in addressing needs.
- **Infrastructure:** While all large projects in small and medium-sized communities present funding challenges, replacing bridges and addressing concrete panel roadways that have settled are especially vexing on the highway side. Because of low densities, providing adequate and safe pedestrian facilities is also challenging. Even when funding is provided for transit systems, providing an infrastructure that provides an optimal operating environment is usually well beyond the means of the community.
- **Institutions:** While some states provide a regional planning forum for non-metropolitan areas, most do not. Even where they exist, issues of connecting regions with public transportation usually go unmet and are left to the marketplace. The current discussion on creating institutional structures for the 21st Century needs to include the needs of small and medium-sized communities.
- **Safety:** Concern over the United States not having the best national record for highway safety may serve to obscure the real issue, that of defining what is a satisfactory safety record and how can it be achieved. It is well known that most of the solutions to accident reduction and mitigation of the impacts come from outside the transportation planning community. However, it may be transportation engineers, planners, and researchers that best understand the problem. We must be concerned that those that best understand the problem and those that are creating the solutions are working together for the most effective and efficient solutions.