

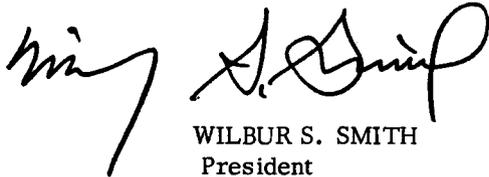
ENO FOUNDATION FOR TRANSPORTATION INC.

Saugatuck, Connecticut, U.S.A. 06880

PREFACE

The Eno Foundation recently held a conference of its Board of Consultants and prepared the report which follows as a summary of the proceedings. Two of the subjects discussed were design teams and public information problems. Because of their current significance, it was felt that this report might also be of interest to a wider audience.

A number of copies have been prepared for distribution to the Board of Consultants and a limited mailing list. We are hopeful that you will find the contents of some value and we would be pleased to receive any commentary you may wish to offer on the discussions reported here.



WILBUR S. SMITH
President

ENO FOUNDATION FOR TRANSPORTATION, INC.

REPORT ON THE 1970 BOARD OF CONSULTANTS CONFERENCE

This report is a summary of the discussions taking place at the Eno Foundation's Board of Consultants Conference held at the Foundation offices on April 28, 1970. Its organization generally follows the program of the meeting, listing the problems identified in discussion, as well as reporting ongoing actions and solutions in so far as these also were identified.

In addition to participation by more than a majority of members of the Board of Consultants and Board of Directors, three guests were invited to discuss legislative trends in three areas of transportation. Speaking on airports, highways, and transit respectively were: Colonel A. B. McMullen, Executive Vice President of the National Association of State Aviation Officials; Mr. Daniel J. Hanson, Deputy Executive Vice President of the American Road Builders Association; and Mr. Robert M. Coultas, Executive Vice President of the Institute for Rapid Transit.

LEGISLATIVE TRENDS

Actions: At the time of the conference many Congressional committee hearings were in progress. In the highway field, a number of measures were up for consideration on completing the Interstate System, extending the Highway Trust Fund, adding new programs under the Highway Trust Fund, and so on. A similar situation existed with regard to transit, where the principal pending measure was SB 3154 (Williams-Tower Bill). Like highway legislative proposals, most transit measures when passed would be administered through

the United States Department of Transportation.

More specific actions could be reported in airport and airways legislation. At the federal level, the principal measure was the pending Airport/Airways Trust Fund (subsequently passed) which provides an annual resource of 280 million dollars for airport funding. Other federal legislation would provide for a national airport plan and grants to metropolitan, regional, and state planning bodies.

At the state level, 43 states are making 178 million dollars available in 1970 for airport development, and 30 states already have legislation under which they assume some responsibility for administering federal aid airport funds. Under pending federal legislation those states which have not yet done so will be expected to set up a state agency like a highway department for airport development.

Another legislative item "on the horizon" is the possibility of subsidies to commuter airlines. These currently unsubsidized air services are regulated by 29 states, and may be the principal hope for adequate air service to smaller cities and towns.

Problems: Several problem areas were identified with respect to air transportation. First, the new federal trust fund, in taking its income from increased taxes on aviation gas and jet fuel, limits the potential of states to use the same sources to generate their matching funds. Second, the problems of government regulation in air transportation are difficult, particularly with respect to which activities should be under federal and which under state control.

Local carriers need the sympathetic ear of state control boards, which are more likely to provide adequate regulation and protection for these unsubsidized carriers. A third problem is the fact that many of the 6,000 private landing facilities could be closed and sold to developers in view of both rising land values and taxes. Since only five states grant tax relief to private airports new legislation is needed to keep these airports in operation.

Several problems were reported in highway transportation. Among them is the fact that 13.5 billion dollars would be needed to complete the Interstate System according to the 1968 needs study. Concurrent with this need, to be met by the Trust Fund or otherwise, is a tendency to make new programs eligible for Highway Trust Fund allocations.

Problems in the transit field were reported mainly as the underfunding of transit assistance. For example, out of 175 million dollars per year federal aid available, two-thirds has been allocated to support rail transit schemes in only five cities, and one-third has gone to smaller cities with bus systems. The total amount of federal funds appropriated for mass transportation this year is only one-thirtieth of the amount provided for highway construction.

Related to all of the above was the question of adopting a national transportation policy. Discussion on this point led back to the problem of defining "balanced transportation". The possibility was raised that a policy on total transportation would warrant an overall transportation trust fund which would permit switching funds between modes. It was pointed out that a study of such a concept was in progress.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

The balance of the morning session was given over to a review of the design team concept. The scene was set by a panel presentation of the role of different team participants. A brief summary follows.

One of the first points raised was that the team makeup should include more than the planner, architect, engineer, and administrator whose roles were specifically discussed. Economists and sociologists are among others who should be brought in to deal with the issues surrounding urban transportation facility planning. The planner's role was seen primarily as bringing a broader perspective--both geographic and functional--to the design process. The planner provides a special contribution in goal-setting, particularly in the area of community values. His skills can be useful in implementation too, through his knowledge of planning tools such as zoning and renewal processes, and through his awareness in meshing transport projects with other public works proposals and private development.

The traditional interest of architects has been in the field of spatial concepts, so the architect starts by trying to make things visually acceptable. He thinks of himself as the one who takes various items of mechanical, electrical, structural, and landscaping design and puts them all together. In a group studying a road through a city, then, he will be thinking of the relationship of the road's physical aspects to those of the environment. If he does that successfully, he will give to the completed project a sense of order, in which smaller physical spaces fit within a larger space.

Where the engineer fits into a design team depends on a great many circumstances. Sometimes it will depend upon the public official for whom the team is working. Frequently the engineer is also an administrator, or represents the primary source of the planning and/or construction funds, in which case he is likely to feel that the leadership role should be his. But the engineer-administrator, if such he is, needs the other members of the team to insure not only that the transport facility fits in with its environment but also that the environment is compatible with successful operation of the facility.

The public administrator's first objective in the design team is to get the job done to serve the public. He should insure that practical timing goals and phases are established. The administrator must also be concerned, recognizing ever increasing demands on limited taxpayer resources, that the facility design standards and resultant costs do not become over-excessive in the pursuit of design perfection. He must be watchful that designs conform to the needs of local conditions.

Organization: The design team approach can be applied to different problems in different forms. The most renowned examples, in Baltimore and Chicago, have been composed of consulting firms in various specialties taking on the assignment of developing acceptable freeway corridors. But design teams may also be set up within governmental structures as "in-house" teams for broad planning. An "in-house" design team can provide answers to city management on highway or airport planning, for instance. Once a general design has been

developed and agreed upon, the project can then be turned over to a consultant team for detailed design. Or a design team might serve to co-ordinate the planning and simultaneous development of major public works such as, highways, airports, seaports, and other master plan development items.

Design Team Problems: The mere formation of a design team to find solutions to complex problems can lead to difficulties in itself. Foremost among these is the question of leadership.

Discussion revealed that both the architect and engineer could justifiably claim the leadership role on principle. In practice, the real leadership may be provided by a political or other figure outside the team organization. Wherever it reposes, the leadership must be commensurate in quality with the professional talent developing the project. The leader needs to be knowledgeable or competent in a number of subject areas, including management and public relations. How such decision makers may acquire the necessary skills or may be adequately trained was seen as one of the more important questions needing answers.

Fears of overstandardization, stemming mostly from federal guidelines, indicated another problem area. The architect, for example, cannot work with a book of rules that would tend to hamper ingenuity or creativity. Local officials may resent the application of general standards to conditions of a local nature that may be more amenable to special or less costly solutions. Federal and state governments may need to recognize that conditions differ from one

urban area to another and that the answer in one area may not be the answer in another. On the other hand, however, too much emphasis on "home rule" can become an obstacle to co-ordinated planning.

Two other sources of potential difficulty were noted. First was the possibility that the involvement of too many diverse groups would lead to an endless round of meetings and discussions, and an inability of the group to reach agreement. Perhaps more significant was the likelihood, despite the quality of the team and its end product, that the project could become unacceptable because of inadequate public information.

Problem Solutions: The example of the Chicago Crosstown Expressway was cited as an illustration of the importance of public information programs in effecting successful project solutions. The study conducted over 30 meetings in affected communities, contacting directly from twelve to thirteen thousand citizens. Models and renderings of proposals were prepared, and local professional organizations and regional transportation planning groups supported the project. Giving the public adequate information was held to be the key to success.

Beyond the question of obtaining design solutions for a freeway corridor, the discussion also pointed out a possible need to look beyond the problem of merely providing highway capacity. The subject of inducing changes in travel patterns, notably with respect to changes in the workweek and staggered arrival and departure hours was discussed at some length. The successful experience of the Port of New York Authority in staggering work hours for 119,000 employees

in lower Manhattan was touched upon.

A broader influence of the design team was indicated by a description of the Italian government organization responsible for planning the national network of freeways, as well as helping to plan satellite cities, airports, seaports, and the expansion of existing facilities. The team for this organization consists of not only architects and engineers but economists, city planners and sociologists. Under its authority, major organizations may not engage in any project unless it fits the broad picture of intelligent land use and is aesthetically acceptable.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The afternoon program of the conference was devoted principally to public information matters. Activities in this area of the American Road Builders Association (ARBA), the Highway Users Federation for Safety and Mobility (HUFFSAM), and the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) were reviewed first.

The Road Information Program (TRIP) of ARBA was described as having the objective of creating a wider public understanding of highway needs and development. With a 1970 budget of \$100,000, it conducts a direct promotional campaign with printed materials and audio-visual programs aimed at radio and television audiences. Among the latter, TRIP is now producing a full length film which will show the vital role of highways in our way of life, emphasizing to the viewer the freedom of mobility that highways offer. The

mission is also accomplished through direct liaison with many other organizations and other highway public relations people. Work with National Highway Week publicity and the joint ARBA-AASHO Public Information Workshop are examples of liaison with other groups.

The formation of HUFFSAM by combining together the Auto Industries Highway Safety Conference, the Automotive Safety Foundation, and the National Highway Users Conference was next outlined. The Federation is carrying forward some of the ongoing programs of its three constituents; e.g., highway safety and orderly highway transportation development have been objectives of each of the three groups and continue as prime objectives. The field staff is organized into 14 regional offices, covering from two to five states each, and the headquarters staff is composed of the following six divisions: Highway Safety Division, Automotive Industries Division, Transportation Development Division, Legal and Economic Research Division, Public Relations Division, and Public Support Division.

The third presentation described the public relations programs of the Bay Area Rapid Transit District, which has been more continuously in the news than any other single public works project. The public information effort that preceded the 1962 bond issue vote created a ground swell of public support that still continues. Since that time, BART has relied heavily on person-to-person public relations, through local talks, making a motion picture every year, and conducting tours of construction. A full scale car model that has been taken around the Bay area and exhibited to perhaps 600,000 people

is another facet of the program. Some of the best public relations work has come from the contractors. During the construction of the Berkeley Subway-- which created a fair amount of dust--the contractor had a man washing store front windows along the street on a full-time basis. By all these measures, BART has created a solid floor of public endorsement under the project.

Other Programs: The importance of public information efforts had already been underscored by the morning discussion about Chicago's Crosstown Expressway. Another comment in the morning was made to the effect that it did not matter what kind of team prepares the plan or makes the proposal if the public is not thoroughly informed. Further emphasis was given by comments on the importance of the Port of New York Authority's Department of Community Affairs. Without this department and a speakers' bureau of 200 - 300 people to let people know what the Authority was doing and why, the Authority probably would not have accomplished what it has. Another example of enlisting public support was brought out in connection with BART's Berkeley Subway. In this case, before construction began, the citizens were given a choice between a less expensive but less aesthetically satisfying aerial structure and a costlier underground alternative. Since the expressed preference was for underground construction and it would have been poor public relations to take a strongly opposing position, the directors adopted the more expensive solution.

Public Information Problems: The over-riding problem was felt to be the adequacy of public information efforts related to transportation projects. Several meeting participants felt that, usually, too few facts were presented to the public

on various transportation issues, with the result that the public has been unable to make a reasoned response. The point was made with particular regard to a transportation bond issue referendum in Los Angeles as well as to the delays in developing a State Department of Transportation in Pennsylvania.

Also discussed was the question of how to increase public understanding of highway needs and the objectives of highway agencies. A suggestion was offered, for example, that highway organizations should directly respond to the prevalent public reaction that highway proponents are insensitive to many matters of public concern. Another comment was made that the role of state and federal highway agencies in contributing to environmental improvements (e.g., 12 percent of all 1969 federal aid money went towards roadside parks, billboard controls, beautification, safety, and planting) had not been sufficiently publicized. Related cautions were offered to the effect that information programs must be selectively aimed at the right audience and should be careful to avoid the error of underestimating the intelligence of the public.

Increasing public understanding of programs and objectives is one problem. An equal if not more serious problem may exist in the need for public education to improve the public capability of making direct judgements as well as in constructively influencing their legislative leaders. An example was given of a small city too small to contain among its population any expertise appropriate for design team evaluation, faced with a state highway proposal to direct an expressway through the community. The public in this instance needed more knowledge before it could evaluate the impacts of different alterna-

tives. It needed to know first how to obtain more knowledge; second, how to employ it; and third, how then to proceed toward resolving conflicts and making decisions.

Solutions: One answer to the first problem of increasing public understanding is for appropriate organizations to bring facts to the public about the importance of transportation to social life, to the economy, to the community, and to the nation. Legislative bodies also should be thoroughly informed so that they can act with full understanding on transportation legislation.

The answer about how to improve public ability in responsible decision-making was not found. A paradox was noted instead. On the one hand, the level of decision-making is moving upward, due to increasing need for efficiency and awareness of system interrelationships. Meanwhile, a current imperative of social change is to lower the level of decision-making, in order to bring back to the individual some sense of being in charge of his destiny. Both are valid trends, but they are in conflict.

It was suggested that the best hope for an answer under these evidently real circumstances may lie in better communications. One way of improving communications may be indicated by the establishment of citizens advisory groups. One such body, composed of about 20 individuals and serving the United States Department of Transportation, was recently involved in the Everglades Airport decision. Groups like these show that more is being done to involve the public in transportation matters.

THE ROLE OF THE ENO FOUNDATION

Deliberations on the role of the Eno Foundation developed from the background of these preceding sessions, from a brief report on recent activities of the Foundation, and from a group of questions raised at the conclusion of the previous year's conference. Among the latter were the following: Should the Foundation sponsor a symposium? Does the Foundation have a role in an educating process directed toward improvements in urban society? At what groups should the Foundation direct its efforts? Comments in answer to these questions mostly concerned the audience that should be reached, and how TRAFFIC QUARTERLY might serve in this regard.

The question of sponsoring symposia was received rather unsympathetically. Because there are already a great number of such meetings and because educational institutions or associations are usually better equipped to conduct them, this did not appear a productive area for the Foundation's interest. Discussion evinced three groups that could be the targets of Foundation activities. First identified were the professions that are concerned with urban problems and that are trying to help solve them. Another group held to be the important element was the "establishment" or power structure in urban communities. The third group singled out was that very small part of the public who could be called "thought-leaders," exemplified, for instance, by the members of civic advisory organizations associated with transportation agencies.

TRAFFIC QUARTERLY was considered the principal means of reaching all these groups through its presentation of articles of both a technical and non-

technical nature from authoritative sources. Additionally, it was suggested that the Quarterly should provide space for new ideas to be expressed and discussed. TRAFFIC QUARTERLY could serve as a forum in which broad thinking by talented and articulate students might be presented, for instance.

The sponsorship of the Board of Consultants meeting itself was held to be a valuable contribution on the part of the Foundation. As one member of the Board put it: "The Eno Foundation is providing a real forum which is indispensable. Talking among ourselves is a virtue." Perhaps this brief remark best provides a statement for part of the Foundation's role as well as a summary of the conference values.