

*New
Mexico
FIRST*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Integrated Regional Transportation”

Twentieth New Mexico First Town Hall • Gallup, New Mexico • October 23-26, 1997

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was the consensus of the Town Hall that funding of the transportation infrastructure is inadequate, that an integrated regional transportation system does not exist, and that planning for such a system needs to be better integrated. Recommendations were split into two sections for ease of understanding, “Funding” and “Developing an Integrated Regional Transportation System”:

FUNDING

Enhanced Funding:

- Funds generated for transportation should be dedicated for transportation. This should be established by Constitutional amendment
- Establish toll roads where appropriate
- Increase the licensing fees for motor vehicles
- Allow for regional authorities to tax
- Increase user fees
- Increase registration fees
- The state tax on gasoline should be fully dedicated to transportation and increased if needed
- Encourage the pooling of funds across jurisdictional lines
- Users and beneficiaries of enhanced infrastructure should pay for that infrastructure
- Close all fuel tax loopholes
- Eliminate \$50,000 cap on spending for public transit

Reallocation of Funding:

- The motor vehicle excise tax should be redirected from the General Fund to transportation
- Place higher priority on pavement maintenance and preservation as opposed to major corridor improvements or expansion

Distribution of Funds:

- Funding allocated by the legislature should be tied to long range planning
- The funding formula for school buses should be more expeditiously addressed to help solve the needs of all school districts

DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATED REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

- The Regional Transit Authority Bill should be passed by the legislature
- Planning and implementation needs to be more strategic (long range), and state-wide
- Institutional reform as well as realignment of Functional Transportation Districts are needed and should include the SHTD, Economic Development District, enforcement, public regulators, commission, motor transportation, and regional planning to be consistent with each other and reflect common functional and demographic characteristics
- Clearly define the demarcation of authority and responsibility between state and local governments
- Utilize the Western Governor’s Association and National Governor’s Association to exert influence on federal policy, laws and regulations
- Existing resources should be used more efficiently
- Integrate the planning activities of the various components of the transportation system
- Expand public transit systems, particularly for school transportation and between rural/urban areas
- Expand regional airports and increase number of flights
- Develop an urban transit system in Albuquerque
- Develop and encourage incentives for ride sharing
- Strengthen RPO planning and implementation process to achieve integrated plans
- Strengthen private sector involvement

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- Include all private, regional, local and tribal projects in State Transportation Improvement Plan as information
- Realign some state highway districts and RPOs to be consistent with each other and to reflect common functional/demographic characteristics
- Enhance the efficiency of freight movement
- Integrate land use and transportation planning
- Idle time for school buses should be evaluated for other public uses
- Collaborations with the private sector for the coordinated use of hotel and airport vans should be developed
- SHTD continue to improve its efficiency in delivering road projects to maximize available funding
- Develop broad network of proponents/advocates who promote understanding of transportation issues and options state wide through federal, tribal, state and local government and Legislative forums
- Review and enforce the weight limits imposed on interstate trucks
- Promote integration of advanced technologies to increase efficiency
- Utilize market analysis and cost/benefit analysis for transportation decisions
- Seek increased citizen and local input to the transportation planning and prioritization process
- The Highway Commission should be changed to Transportation Commission by Constitutional amendment
- Study school bus routes on unimproved roads for safety issues

The Town Hall strongly believes that there is inadequate planning for the lifecycle cost of the transportation infrastructure. This is true not only on a project by project basis but on a system basis as well. Private industry has implemented such analysis more effectively than the public sector. The Town Hall urges that professionals in both areas educate the public and elected officials on the need for this initiative.

Impediments to creating an integrated regional transportation system were identified:

- There is more than one type of region in New Mexico
- The number and relationships between jurisdictional and political layers in the process impede effective planning
- The state and MPO long range plans have been incompatible because state planning is policy based and MPO planning is project based
- Inadequate coordination between the state and tribes
- There are insufficient resources to meet the needs
- There is insufficient coordination among the various components of the transportation system to create an effective intermodal system
- While local input on transportation is important, pushing decision-making down to the local level makes integration more difficult
- Transportation/infrastructure priorities are frequently changed politically
- The linkage between airports and other modes of transportation is not adequately planned in Albuquerque and elsewhere
- Adequate competition does not exist for some modes of transportation
- Poor public understanding of transportation decision making processes limits constructive participation

CONCLUSION

The participants of the Twentieth Town Hall on Integrated Regional Transportation identified strengths and weaknesses of New Mexico's transportation system, and discussed issues that will affect the future success or failure of our state to compete in the 21st century, while maintaining the quality of life and lifestyle choices that distinguish New Mexico from other states. The importance of the recommendations provided in this report cannot be overstated. The need exists for all of the policy makers and organizational entities with influence over the transportation system in New Mexico to begin to work closely together to streamline and integrate the complex transportation system.

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