

# CROSS JURISDICTIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REVIEW OF CASE STUDIES

Report to TAC Multi-Modal Council  
prepared by  
David Kriger, Principal, DELCAN Corporation, Ottawa  
April 1998

---

## 1. *Object*

“The TAC Multi-Modal Council (MMC) has identified *Cross Jurisdictional Transportation Planning* as a high priority issues facing the Canadian transportation community.” At the MMC meeting of 15 June 1997, the issue was described and considered. Among a list of four possible options for action, MMC decided to proceed with the first.

The object of Option 1 was to review case studies of successful Canadian and American planning methods that have achieved the desired degree of cross jurisdictional and multi-modal transportation planning. The key findings of these are summarized in this report.

Three points outline the need for cross jurisdictional transportation planning:

1. ***Cross jurisdictional planning talks about all users of an urban transportation system.*** It should be noted that this report focuses upon planning in urban areas. However, the interest in this issue goes beyond the traditional consideration of urban planning: The typical focus of most urban transportation plans is the movement of people within an urban area during peak commuter travel periods. Rather, the report considers the movement of passengers and goods, urban and intercity travel, peak and off-peak trips, and movements by private carriers and publicly-owned systems (as well as the private vehicle).
2. ***There is a economic development orientation.*** Perhaps most important, the perspective of the impacts of transportation upon urban, regional, provincial, national and international economic development is considered, in addition to the more traditional focus upon urban land use. A related perspective is that urban transportation is increasingly seen in terms of its impacts on private sector growth, in addition to its traditional consideration as a public good.
3. ***Since many jurisdictions must be involved, a cross jurisdictional transportation planning process is needed.*** The various modes, carriers and services that are considered in this broader definition come under several jurisdictions. Therefore, in order to address the varied needs of these many jurisdictions, a process is required for cross jurisdictional transportation planning. Since few such processes exist in Canada, the examination of successful processes elsewhere would be enlightening.

## 2. *Sources*

Transport Canada and the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario provided several relevant reports and case studies, for Vancouver and the Greater Toronto Area, respectively. These reports represent initiatives by these two governments in cross jurisdictional transportation planning. The two initiatives reflect the perspectives of the different jurisdictions (federal and provincial government). While both complement and expand upon urban transportation plans and consider economic development explicitly, the Transport Canada initiative incorporates more explicitly the interests of the business community.

The assistance of Transport Canada (Mr. David Stambrook) and the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (Messrs. David Duncan and Julius Gorys) in providing these reports is gratefully acknowledged. The comments that follow, however, reflect the opinions of the author of this report.

## 3. *Major Findings*

The following points illustrate the main features of cross jurisdictional transportation planning as applied in Vancouver and Toronto:

1. ***Much of the initiative for cross-jurisdictional transportation planning comes from private industry.*** As exemplified by the Vancouver initiatives, these were:

- Tourism
- Intercity passenger and freight carriers
- Ports, airports and other intercity terminals
- Economic development authorities
- Business interests (including labour) that rely heavily upon transportation (notably, the producers of raw and finished agricultural, mineral and forestry products).

Generally, these are not considered explicitly in an urban transportation plan, except in terms of the number of jobs that they generate, the population that is needed to support these jobs and the land uses that are associated with them. Moreover, urban transportation plans may be required by provincial law, or are generated by the political or public response to a particular planning issue – not by private industry.

2. ***Each of these private interests views transportation as a means to an economic end.*** Therefore:

- ‘Who’ provides the infrastructure is less important than ensuring that it is provided.

- The transportation system must be at once multi-modal (i.e., accommodate the travel needs of all types of passengers and goods) and seamless (i.e., ensure that passengers and goods can move unimpeded between origin and destination).
3. ***Urban transportation plans typically are prepared by the authorities responsible for municipal services.*** Generally, these are Provincial governments, the municipal and/or regional governments and local transit operators. This reflects both jurisdictional responsibilities and the focus of these plans on addressing urban transportation issues (i.e., land use and passenger transportation).
4. ***A common consequence is that terminals and other intercity facilities tend to be considered only in the context of their urban impacts.*** Examples include:
- Land use potential of railway lands and other terminals
  - Employment centres surrounding airports (e.g., the second largest concentration of jobs in the Greater Toronto Area, after downtown Toronto, is in the vicinity of Toronto's Airport)
  - The possible use of intercity corridors for urban public transport (e.g., introduction of commuter rail services on existing freight lines, use of rail corridors and tunnels for Vancouver's SkyTrain, etc.).

Passenger traffic generated by these terminals is measured commonly only in terms potential impact on urban roads during peak commuter travel times.

5. ***Goods movement tends not to be considered as thoroughly in urban transportation plans.*** A notable exception is the MTO's recent transportation planning efforts for the GTA. These made special recognition of the importance of goods movement to the regional, provincial and national economies. For example, the 1997 *Strategic Goods Movement Corridor Analysis* defined a strategic goods movement road network in the GTA (and adjacent Hamilton-Wentworth), as a means of increasing the profile and priorities of improvements to roads that are essential to the efficient movement of goods in, to, from and through the region.
6. ***Where it is considered, goods movement has been superimposed upon urban transportation plans.*** For example, Transport Canada's 1997 *Greater Vancouver Transportation Development Strategy* evaluated and ranked the road improvements that were proposed in the Greater Vancouver Regional District's (GVRD's) *Transport 2021* urban

transportation plan. Transport Canada's work qualitatively assessed each proposed improvement according to six criteria:

- a. Strategic economic activity
- b. High economic growth potential
- c. Existing congestion problem
- d. Critical gap / link
- e. Enhance Vancouver Gateway (i.e., Vancouver's role as a provincial, national and international port of entry / exit)
- f. Protect investment

It should be noted that this evaluation was an *example* only. It was intended to demonstrate the different perspectives that must be considered in the development of urban transportation plans. These perspectives can be defined in many ways: urban *and* intercity; passengers *and* goods; and (perhaps most important) tied to economic development rather than just land use.

Similarly, MTO's concept of 'strategic goods movement corridors' defined transportation needs from the perspective of goods carriers. This also can be juxtaposed against urban passenger transportation needs.

An interesting feature of MTO's work was the identification of 'Freight Centres.' These were observed concentrations of goods movement generators (both origins and destinations), the logic being that these tended to be near or on roads that had high truck counts (and, therefore, which would benefit most from a strategic goods movement network). The Freight Centres served as the analytical basis, from which travel characteristics and demands were identified. The key point, perhaps, is that the whole analysis was based upon observed conditions, without bias.

7. ***Tourism is a key user of transportation infrastructure. However, like goods movement, tourism is not well represented in urban transportation plans.*** The economic importance of tourism is well recognized across the country. However, these tend not to be considered in urban transportation plans. For example, a 1997 Transport Canada report noted that the GVRD *Transport 2021* transportation plan "[provides] a framework for the discussion of transportation issues, but no explicit statements on the needs of the tourism sector were discovered."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Infrastructure Requirements in Support of Tourism: A Review of Best Practices*, prepared for Transport Canada by Cascadia Planning Group, July 1997. Page vi.

8. ***The American ISTEA experience provides some models for Canadian cross jurisdictional transportation planning.*** Related to the aforementioned tourism report, a Transport Canada initiative proposes to develop a structure for building consensus among transportation interests in Vancouver. The American experience with ISTEA (the 1991 *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act*) and MPOs (Metropolitan Planning Organizations) is referenced both the goods movement and tourism work which was conducted for Transport Canada in Vancouver.

ISTEA is the Federal legislation governing urban transportation planning and, as important, the *funding* of urban transportation improvements. MPOs are the regional agencies responsible for urban transportation planning. There are over 300 MPOs in the United States, almost none which have regional governing authority. The MPOs must develop transportation plans as a pre-condition of Federal funding for transportation projects. However, this requires the development of a consensus among all interests -- including state DOTs (which generally have jurisdiction over highways) and local municipalities (which have jurisdiction over land use). In this sense, MPOs act more like GVRD's planning function, which requires a consensus among its constituent municipalities, than (for example) like the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, which is a fourth level of government and which has jurisdiction over many roads and over land use planning.

Among other elements, ISTEA requires that urban transportation plans consider multi-modal needs (including goods movement) and economic development plans (including tourism). Taking these requirements into account, as well as the consensus-building structure of MPOs, ISTEA provides a sound, 'nearby' model of cross jurisdictional transportation planning. However, before this model can be adapted to Canadian needs, it is important to note three important distinctions that, in my experience, cannot be replicated in Canada in the absence of extreme legislative change:

1. The US Federal government's role as the primary funder of urban transportation improvements (under the initial legislation, this was 80% of the capital costs for roads and for mass transit). In other words, the legislation is supported by 'a big stick.' No parallel exists in Canada.
- The track record of MPOs in addressing transportation planning needs is mixed. MPOs predate ISTEA by several years. However, some have been more successful than others in addressing common needs. This has been demonstrated in several studies over the years (in one of which I participated). For example, Portland, Oregon is commonly cited as a city with a high 'quality of life,' due in no small part to the effectiveness of its MPO but also to citizen involvement and the political

landscape. Although the role of lower-tier *versus* upper-tier municipalities is at the forefront of municipal governance issues in many provinces, the issues tend to focus upon costs of service delivery, representativeness, etc. -- but, in my experience, less upon whether the job is being done or not.

- Notwithstanding the importance of economic development in evaluating transportation needs, the linkage between land use and transportation plans remains at the core of urban transportation planning (after all, these are the basic building blocks of a city). However, land use is strictly a local issue in the United States, whereas transportation is funded by the Federal government. Therefore, the two tend to be poorly linked. Moreover, ISTEA requires that urban transportation plans be consistent and coordinated with land use plans -- however, the wording is loose (some say deliberately so). It follows that the implementation of this requirement tends also to be subject to considerable interpretation. This necessarily impacts the effectiveness of multi-modal plans, economic development plans, etc. In comparison, Canadian cities generally have very strong linkages between land use and transportation plans.

9. ***A key problem in addressing goods movement, tourism, etc., in urban areas is the relative lack of data and analytical tools.*** For example, data on goods movement -- i.e., road-based -- have been captured in most Canadian cities, but the inherent difficulties in this process tend to limit the applicability of the data. Notwithstanding Federal and Provincial data sources (e.g., the MTO's Commercial Vehicle Surveys), the many small and independent truck operators are difficult to capture in a representative manner. Also, the competitive nature of goods movement generates some reluctance in releasing records that could be useful to planning for the interests of truckers.

With respect to tourism, travel survey data often address the economic aspects of the trip (carrier used, etc.) and can be quite comprehensive. However, a key lack in intercity passenger and goods movement is a comprehensive database that describes actual travel activity. In other words, the surveys and data that exist tend to have been collected entirely within specific jurisdictions and for specific purposes. Given that the needs transcend boundaries, the 'picture' is incomplete. A notable example is the complete lack of a national database on passenger travel by auto -- whether by commuters, tourists, business travellers, etc. (Here, the US *National Passenger Transportation* surveys provide a useful model.) This would require the participation of all provinces and territories, since most roads are under their jurisdictions.

## 5. *Summary and Conclusions*

The Vancouver and Toronto case studies referenced in this report provide an excellent basis of action-oriented, positive approaches to addressing cross jurisdictional transportation planning needs.

Broadly speaking, their key message is that there is a need to incorporate the economic development perspective in urban transportation planning. The two sets of initiatives provide examples of how this can be, and has been, done.

However, I believe that the TAC Multi-Modal Council may also want to consider further actions to complement and build upon the Vancouver and Toronto efforts:

1. The aforementioned Transport Canada proposal to develop a consensus-building method in Vancouver will provide an important Canadian prototype, and an essential step forward. However, the track record of extra-governmental, consensus-building structures elsewhere (including, but not limited to, the United States) should be considered in light of Canadian institutional set-ups and enabling legislation. The intent is to build upon the proposed Vancouver prototype, by laying some of the 'ground work' that would be required to replicate the prototype elsewhere. This could take the form of a Multi-Modal Council research project, to examine 'best practices' in consensus-building transportation planning structures elsewhere. A key element will be the identification of the appropriate 'voices' for the various goods movement and tourism interests.
2. A 1997 Transport Canada report, *Best Practices for Intermodal Passenger Transportation*, reviewed tactical means of removing obstacles in the movement of intercity passengers by several modes. The review examined 'best practices' in Canada, the USA, the Netherlands and Australia. Most of the cited best practices considered the intercity connection.

Parallel initiative might build upon this basis by considering best practices for:

- Integrating intercity and urban public transportation at key urban nodes (for example, how Union Station in downtown Toronto works as a local, regional and intercity hub).
  - Integrating service and fare structures among urban and intercity carriers. (Some of this was addressed in the aforementioned Transport Canada report. However, a review of implementation needs and obstacles would provide useful background.)
3. There is a basic need for a common and comprehensive national database for transportation. The principal argument for these data is to establish the *market* for transportation services

and infrastructure -- not just the design inputs for a new facility (which is the more traditional role). The TAC Data and Applications Standing Committee currently is considering database needs. It is important, therefore, that the perspectives of cross jurisdictional transportation planning -- specifically, goods movement and tourism -- be incorporated into the design and administration of any resultant efforts. Moreover, the support of all levels of government, as well as private passenger and goods intercity carriers (as exemplified by the MMC membership), is a necessary ingredient for moving this initiative forward. One starting point could be the development of an inventory of existing goods movement and tourism datasets.

H:\DATATEMP\DAVE\OPT1-WP.DOC  
6 April 1998