

INTEGRATED PLANNING WORK GROUP

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What is “Integrated Planning”?

Integrated Planning is a collaborative process that combines transportation planning across all modes and options with land use and human and natural resource plans.

Looking at transportation as a system requires an assessment of the options available to planners and decision-makers for addressing accessibility, safety, mobility, social, economic and ecological needs in a holistic fashion by using integrated institutional arrangements and more collaborative and better-coordinated decision-support processes.*

Further, integrating transportation systems planning, finance and programming processes with project planning and development processes would help to ensure the best possible projects, implemented in a timely manner that optimize across social, environmental and economic goals.

Integrated planning requires the development of relevant performance measures to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of implemented solutions and application of the knowledge acquired from this activity to future planning efforts.

Challenges to Integration for Transportation Planning:

Transportation planning processes are not effectively linked to other planning efforts. A holistic approach to improving the transportation system (achieve a “transportation-as-a-system” perspective) has yet to take hold in common transportation planning practice. Furthermore, growth pressures inextricably link transportation with land use, but planning across environmental, social and economic objectives occurs separately.

Institutional structures do not promote integration.

Transportation planning, finance, project development, construction and operations functions have been compartmentalized between and within multiple agencies, making it difficult for decision-makers to form plans, programs and projects that are optimal for the system as a whole.

Public involvement processes can be improved.

Visioning components incorporating extensive public input, while growing in popularity, are not yet commonplace.

Modeling and other analysis tools need refinements.

Advancements are needed to develop models and tools (IT) that help communities and agencies better understand the interactions between land use, transportation demand, transportation capacity, environmental resources and ecosystems and quality of life issues.

Challenges to Integrated Planning from the Natural/Cultural Resource Perspective:

Regional scale resource analysis and protection. Current environmental resource planning and conservation processes tend to focus on site-specific needs rather than on project interactions on resources in a geographic area.

Comprehensive and accessible resource inventories.

The lack of a landscape-scale, regional perspective contributes to incomplete inventories of natural and cultural resources.

Environmental considerations in local land planning.

Local land planning is separate from but has a major effect on transportation planning. Cultural and natural resource information and goals are often not adequately reflected.

* Surface and airport planning processes are substantially different in many aspects and it is recognized that no single approach to integration will fully meet the needs of both processes.

Strategies:

Use each other's planning outputs.

Transportation agencies must increase their fundamental understanding of resource planning processes to ensure a more collaborative planning process and to provide for early consideration of the effects of alternative transportation solutions on environmental, community and cultural resources. Resource agencies must be able to participate in developing transportation plans and programs.

Develop innovative institutional mechanisms.

A multitude of federal, state and local government agencies have a stake in the outcomes of transportation plans, programs and projects. Integrated planning requires strong and effective leadership and new collaborative processes.

Take advantage of state-of-the-art modeling techniques and technology.

Move toward development, deployment and use of a range of tools and advanced information systems that bring together and analyze available transportation, social, economic and environmental data and information, which are consolidated and available to stakeholders and that are used to feed back into and improve the transportation decision-making process.

Ensure an effective and transparent decision-making process.

The outcomes of effective decision-making processes are project decisions that optimize across multiple objectives, including social equity, economic development, fiscal responsibility, mobility, safety, accessibility, environmental quality and community quality of life. These processes make use of all appropriate modal, land use or technology options to provide timely and workable transportation solutions.

Read the Integrated Planning Baseline Report online at:
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/stewardshipeol/index.htm>.

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