



Project Summary

Texas Department of Transportation

0-5025: Promoting Local Participation on Transportation Improvement Projects

Background

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) faces a major challenge in its mission to provide the transportation system Texas needs. Over the next 25 years Texas' population is projected to increase 64 percent, and road use will grow by 214 percent. However, TxDOT will be able to increase state highway capacity by only 6 percent during that period. A statewide analysis of transportation needs and a projection of expected funding show a shortfall of \$86 billion. TxDOT must adopt new or modified ways to meet state highway system needs and local requests for improvements.

TxDOT is working closely with local and regional leaders to solve transportation problems. This includes both use of new funding tools created by the state legislature (e.g., pass-through toll financing, Regional Mobility Authorities, the Texas Metropolitan and Urban Mobility Plans) and creative partnering between TxDOT, local and regional governments and private organizations.

The goals of this research project were: (1) to identify and provide estimation procedures to quantify economic and other benefits that derive from major transportation improvements, and (2) to create guidelines for developing and promoting partnerships with local and regional leaders.

What the Researchers Did

Researchers determined factors that prompt local governmental agencies and private entities to participate financially in state transportation projects. They also developed tools to help TxDOT attract increased local funding into its projects. The research included a workshop utilizing transportation agency representatives who had participated in transportation partnerships with local entities. The workshop produced transferable lessons learned that could help TxDOT pursue partnerships with local entities.

The partnership research relied on examples of local agency and private sector financial participation in state departments of transportation (DOTs) projects, both within Texas and other states. The research also included identification of benefits and motivations driving the local participation and, where available, background on how the local participation was increased.

Research Performed by:

Texas Transportation Institute (TTI),
The Texas A&M University System

Center for Transportation Research (CTR),
The University of Texas at Austin

Research Supervisor:

Brian Bochner, TTI

Researchers:

Josias Zietsman, TTI

Juan Carlos Villa, TTI

David Luskin, CTR

Ian Hallett, CTR

C. Michael Walton, CTR

Project Completed:

8-31-06

In addition to a research report, the researchers produced several tools to aid TxDOT staff in developing partnerships with local entities. These include:

- *Guidebook for Economic Benefit Estimation Methods* – methods for identifying and estimating economic benefits; guidelines for assembling a project prospectus (or its separate abridged version).
- *Guidelines for Transportation Project Partnering: Promoting Local Participation on Transportation Improvement Projects* – guidelines for transportation project partnering and estimation of non-economic benefits and impacts.
- *Sample Benefit Prospectus* – sample structure and contents covering economic benefits of transportation projects.

A draft PowerPoint presentation and draft brochures provide material that can be used in conjunction with other materials being developed by TxDOT's Government and Business Enterprises Division (GBE).

What They Found

The researchers concluded that partnerships between state DOTs and local entities are occurring in Texas and other states on all sizes of projects and with many types of funding and responsibility sharing. TxDOT partnering is currently focused on comprehensive development agreements and regional mobility authorities, but other types of partnering can be used for specific projects. Indeed, this type of partnering is already occurring on many TxDOT projects, but could be substantially increased to increase the local funding component. Opportunities for other sources for local funding were also identified.

Partnering with local governments and private organizations on transportation projects is most successful when the partnership will build a locally desired project. If local entities have a project they want to see implemented, they are more likely to act to help the project become a reality. The researchers also found that economic benefits are an important ingredient in decisions by local entities to consider partnering, although other benefits may also be attractive.

The researchers concluded that although several different tools for analyzing economic benefits are available, only a few are applicable and can utilize the types of data that will likely be available. Those tools are described in the *Guidebook* and *Guidelines*.

What This Means

This project demonstrated that there are many economic and other benefits that can result from transportation projects. This project provides TxDOT staff with tools that will enable them to demonstrate to local agencies and private organizations that partnering on projects can help deliver those benefits earlier. Partnering will help TxDOT leverage its available funds over more projects.

For More Information:

Research Engineer - Duncan Stewart, TxDOT, 512-465-7403
Project Director - Mark Longenbaugh, TxDOT, 915-790-4200
Research Supervisor - Brian Bochner, TTI, 979-458-3516

Technical reports when published are available at:
<http://library.ctr.utexas.edu/index.htm>



Research and Technology
Implementation Office
P.O. Box 5080
Austin, Texas 78763-5080
512-465-7403

This research was performed in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors, who are responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official view or policies of the FHWA or TxDOT. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation, nor is it intended for construction, bidding, or permit purposes. Trade names were used solely for information and not for product endorsement.