

**Local Perspectives On  
State-Local Highway  
Consultation And  
Cooperation:  
Survey Responses From  
State Associations Of Local Officials**



**Advisory Commission on  
Intergovernmental Relations**

**1111-20th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20575**

**SR-4  
July 1987**

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# Acknowledgments

This staff report is part of a larger study of the feasibility of devolving federally aided, non-Interstate highway programs and revenue bases to the states and of state-local relations in the field of road and highway planning, financing, and construction. The report was prepared primarily by John Kincaid and Max B. Sawicky. Jane F. Roberts, Susannah E. Calkins, and Mark D. Menchik provided significant assistance in developing the survey instrument, administering the survey, and reviewing drafts of the report. Joan Casey and Lena Huang also reviewed drafts of the report. Anita J. McPhaul and Lori A. O'Bier furnished essential secretarial services.

**John Shannon**  
**Executive Director**

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# Executive Summary

In April and May 1987, the Commission conducted a mail survey of the directors of state associations of towns and townships, municipal leagues, counties, and regional councils in the fifty states. The survey inquired about state-local cooperation and consultation on matters of highway planning, funding, and construction, and about the possible effects on localities of a transfer of federally aided, non-Interstate highway responsibilities and revenue bases to the states.

The findings of this study cannot be regarded as conclusive because they are based on a survey of state associations of local officials, not local officials themselves, and because the respondent population is small. However, the survey accomplished its main objective, namely, to obtain a general idea of the degree and quality of state-local cooperation and consultation on road and highway matters from persons in the states likely to be informed on these matters and to have a state-wide overview of local attitudes and experiences. The weight of the responses suggests that, for the most part, association directors believe: *(1) that there is a sufficient and satisfactory level of state-local cooperation and consultation on road and highway matters around the country, and (2) that local roads and highways are not likely to be worse off, and may sometimes be better off, in terms of state highway spending, under a major highway "turnback."*

Responses from 49 states and slightly more than 75 percent (111) of the association directors indicate the following:

Respondents generally rate state-local cooperation on road and highway matters as being good-to-fair, and believe that such cooperation has improved slightly or remained about the same during the past five years.

Respondents are generally satisfied with state-local consultation procedures on highway matters, though some respondents, particularly town and township association directors, would prefer more consultation. State officials ordinarily consult with local officials often enough on high-

way matters, and usually notify local officials before initiating projects in their areas.

State officials involve local officials "somewhat actively" in planning highway projects. Local officials can usually influence state officials to modify highway projects that affect their jurisdictions. Compared to state-local consultation, the respondents believe that there is relatively little federal-local consultation. (Both local officials and federal officials ordinarily work through state officials.)

A transfer of federally aided, non-Interstate highway programs and revenue bases to the states would not, in the view of most respondents, result in less overall state highway spending. Under such a devolution of responsibilities, respondents believe that urban, suburban, and rural roads and highways would often fare better but rarely worse than they do now.

# Introduction

On March 20, 1987, the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations approved three recommendations pertaining to highway financing. The recommendations called for (1) stabilizing federal highway financing as an immediate goal, (2) improving state-local cooperation in highway planning and financing as an intermediate goal, and (3) devolving all non-Interstate, federally aided highway programs and revenue bases to the states as a long-range goal. The last recommendation was approved with the understanding that effective devolution would require state and local governments to address important issues of state-local relations in highway planning, financing, and construction. National public interest groups representing local officials expressed concern to the Commission that state governments would not be fully responsive to local road and highway needs after devolution.

As a first step in exploring the feasibility of implementing the devolution recommendation, the Commission instructed the staff to conduct a preliminary investigation of state-local relations and of the degree and quality of state-local consultation and cooperation in highway planning, financing, and construction, and to report to the Commission at its June 1987 meeting. This report contains the results of a survey of directors of state associations of local officials.

## Survey Procedures

In order to execute a timely and cost-effective reconnaissance of state-local highway relations, the staff conducted a mail survey of the directors of (1) all 13 state associations of towns and townships, (2) all 49 state municipal leagues, (3) all 47 state associations of counties, and (4) all 38 state associations of regional councils. For the purposes of an initial reconnaissance, it was felt that these association executives would be able to reflect adequately the general views of the various kinds of local officials in the states. Association directors are likely to be informed on matters of importance to their constituents, to be in regular contact with the local officials, and to have a statewide over-

view of local attitudes and experiences.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, by soliciting views from four types of associations, we sought to capture any diversity of views that might exist within states and between different kinds of local officials.

In constructing the questionnaire, the staff sought to word questions in a neutral manner, ask questions about various aspects of state-local relations in highway matters, and keep the questionnaire brief enough to elicit responses from busy officials. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in *Appendix A*.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections dealing with matters of (1) state-local cooperation on federally aided roads and highways, (2) state-local cooperation on state roads and highways, and (3) highway turnbacks. Six questions in Section 1 and six questions in Section 2 were constructed to parallel each other. That is, each parallel question was worded identically, except for its reference to state or federally aided roads and highways. In addition, there was parallel wording between questions 3 and 10, and 7 and 11 on the questionnaire. Hence, many of the tables in this report show the responses to two questions. In each case, these are parallel questions.

On April 15, 1987, 147 questionnaires were mailed to prospective respondents in the above four categories of associations. On May 14, the questionnaire was mailed again to those who had not yet responded to the first mailing.

## Response Rates<sup>2</sup>

The final response rate in all categories was very good for a mail survey. Usable responses were received from 69.2 percent (9) of the town and township directors, 67.3 percent (33) of the municipal league directors, 76.6 percent (36) of the county association directors, and 86.8 percent (33) of the regional council association directors—a total of 111 responses. The total response rate for the four categories of respondents was 75.5 percent. In addition, seven questionnaires were returned either incomplete or with narrative responses that could not be tabulated statistically.

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<sup>1</sup>In two cases, directors asked local officials to complete the questionnaire. In these two instances, results were averaged to achieve one respondent result so as to maintain comparability with the other 109 responses.

<sup>2</sup>Regions were defined in accordance with official Census categories as follows: *Northeast*—Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; *Midwest*—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota; *South*—Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana; *West*—Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii.

Responses were received from associations in 49 states. Some 15.3 percent of the responses came from the Northeast, 31.5 percent from the Midwest, 30.6 percent from the South, and 21.6 percent from the West. Given the number of states in each of these four regions, the responses provide for good representation from all regions of the nation.

The results of this study are not intended to be definitive. Statistically, one cannot generalize from this survey to local officials. The purpose of the survey was to gauge the climate of state-local consultation and cooperation on highway matters by soliciting the views of state association directors, a group likely to be informed and concerned about these matters. Also, given the small number of respondents in terms of the universe of local officials, the tables that partition the responses among different associations and regions cannot be regarded as conclusive.



# Findings

## Highway Issues are Equally Important as Other Issues

For the most part, respondents in all four categories regard road and highway issues in their state as being about as equally important as other issues, such as education, welfare, criminal justice, and economic development (see *Table 1*). However, sizable proportions of respondents (19-44 percent) regarded highway issues as being more important. Township and regional council association directors were more likely than other respondents to regard road and highway issues as being more important than other issues. Municipal league and

*Table 1\**

**2. In general, are road and highway issues more or less important in your state than other issues such as education, welfare, criminal justice, and economic development?**

	<b>Township Assoc.</b>	<b>Municipal Leagues</b>	<b>County Assoc.</b>	<b>Regional Council Assoc.</b>
Much more	11.1	3.1	5.6	3.0
More	33.3	21.9	13.9	36.4
Equally	44.4	50.0	55.6	51.5
Less	11.1	25.0	25.0	9.1
Much less	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
N**	9	32	36	33
	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Midwest</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
Much more	5.9	0.0	9.1	0.0
More	35.3	14.3	27.3	29.2
Equally	47.1	57.1	48.5	54.2
Less	11.8	28.6	15.2	16.7
Much less	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
N	17	35	33	24

\* All tables in this report show percentage results. \*\*N = Number of respondents for the question.

county association directors were more likely to regard these issues as being less important than other issues.

The importance of highway issues varied somewhat by region. Respondents from the Midwest were slightly more likely to regard highway issues as being less important than other issues, while respondents from the Northeast were slightly more likely to regard highway issues as being more important than other issues.

## State Officials Consult with Local Officials Often Enough

For both federally aided roads and highways and state roads and highways, most respondents reported that state officials consult often enough with local officials on the planning and construction of roads and highways in local jurisdictions (see *Table 2*). The only exception was town and township association directors. Slightly more than half (55.5 percent) of these respondents said that state officials consult “not very often” or “not at all” with local officials on federally aided roads

*Table 2*

**12. Do state officials consult with local officials on the planning and construction of state roads and highways in their jurisdictions?**

**3. Do state officials consult with local officials on the planning and construction of federally aided roads and highways in their jurisdictions?**

	<b>Township Assoc.</b>		<b>Municipal Leagues</b>		<b>County Assoc.</b>		<b>Regional Council Assoc.</b>	
	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>
	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>
Very often	22.2	0.0	15.6	12.5	19.4	11.1	39.4	24.2
Often enough	22.2	44.4	59.4	53.1	47.2	58.3	36.4	48.5
Not very often	55.6	33.3	21.9	34.4	30.6	27.8	21.2	27.3
Not at all	0.0	22.2	3.1	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0
Too often	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	3.0	0.0
N	9	9	32	32	36	36	33	33
	<b>Northeast</b>		<b>Midwest</b>		<b>South</b>		<b>West</b>	
	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>
	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>
Very often	29.4	11.8	22.9	14.3	26.5	11.8	21.7	21.7
Often enough	35.3	41.2	45.7	62.9	47.1	50.0	52.2	47.8
Not very often	35.3	47.1	28.6	17.1	23.5	38.2	21.7	26.1
Not at all	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.7	2.9	0.0	0.0	4.3
Too often	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0
N	17	17	35	35	34	34	23	23



and highways, and “not very often” on state roads and highways. However, directors of town and township associations, municipal leagues, and regional council associations reported that there is slightly more state-local consultation on state roads and highways than on federally aided roads and highways.

By region, 53 percent of the respondents in the Northeast said that state-local consultation on federally aided highways occurs very often or often enough. In the other three regions, 62-77 percent of the respondents said that state-local consultation occurs very often or often enough. On state roads and highways, however, 65-74 percent of the respondents in all four regions said that state-local consultation occurs very often or often enough.

### Federal Officials Do Not Often Consult with Local Officials on Highway Matters

Compared to state officials, federal officials consult considerably less often with local officials on the planning and construction of federally aided roads and highways in local jurisdictions. All of the township association directors, 69.7 percent of the regional council association directors, 69.7 percent of the municipal league directors, and 61.2 percent of the county association directors reported that federal officials consult not very often or not at all with local officials (see *Table 3*).

Table 3

#### 10. Do federal officials consult with local officials on the planning and construction of federally aided roads and highways in their jurisdictions?

	Township Assoc.	Municipal Leagues	County Assoc.	Regional Council Assoc.
Very often	0.0	3.0	5.6	3.0
Often enough	0.0	12.1	25.0	21.2
Not very often	66.7	42.4	55.6	54.5
Not at all	33.3	27.3	5.6	15.2
Too often	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	0.0	15.2	8.3	6.1
N	9	33	36	33
	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Very often	0.0	5.7	5.9	0.0
Often enough	0.0	25.7	17.6	20.8
Not very often	70.6	48.6	41.2	58.3
Not at all	17.6	17.1	17.6	16.7
Too often	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	11.8	2.9	17.6	4.2
N	17	35	34	24

Regionally, no respondents in the Northeast reported consultation with federal officials very often or often enough. Respondents in the South (31.4 percent) and Midwest (23.5 percent) were more likely than other respondents to report consultation with federal officials very often or often enough.

The answers to this question are not surprising, however, because federal officials are not required by current law or regulations to consult directly with local officials. Generally, federal officials work through state departments of highways and transportation.

## States Frequently Require Regional But Not Necessarily Local Approval of Highway Projects

More than 70 percent of the regional council directors reported that their state always or sometimes requires local approval before construction of specific state or federally aided roads and highways in a local jurisdiction. Township directors were the least likely to report a state requirement of local approval (see *Table 4*). Municipal league and county association directors were more likely than township directors, but less likely than regional council directors, to report a state re-

*Table 4*

**13. Does your state require local approval (e.g., of location or width) before construction of specific state roads and highways?**

**4. Does your state require local approval (e.g., of location or width) before construction of specific federally aided roads and highways?**

	<b>Township Assoc.</b>		<b>Municipal Leagues</b>		<b>County Assoc.</b>		<b>Regional Council Assoc.</b>	
	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>
	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>
Always	0.0	33.3	9.1	9.1	8.6	19.4	29.0	24.2
Sometimes	11.1	0.0	48.5	42.4	34.3	27.8	41.9	48.5
Rarely	44.4	44.4	12.1	15.2	25.7	19.4	12.9	9.1
Never	33.3	11.1	27.3	18.2	14.3	16.7	3.2	3.0
Don't know	11.1	11.1	3.0	15.2	17.1	16.7	12.9	15.2
N	9	9	33	33	35	36	31	33
	<b>Northeast</b>		<b>Midwest</b>		<b>South</b>		<b>West</b>	
	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Fed.</b>
	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>
Always	0.0	5.9	20.6	28.6	15.2	17.6	13.0	16.7
Sometimes	35.3	29.4	35.3	37.1	39.4	38.2	47.8	37.5
Rarely	23.5	29.4	20.6	8.6	15.2	17.6	21.7	20.8
Never	11.8	5.9	11.8	5.7	21.2	14.7	17.4	20.8
Don't know	29.4	29.4	11.8	20.0	9.1	11.8	0.0	4.2
N	17	17	34	35	33	34	23	24

quirement of local approval. By region, respondents from the Northeast were much less likely than respondents from the other regions to report a state requirement of local approval.

The answers to this question appear to conform generally to actual practices. While few states require formal local approval before construction of specific roads and highways, informal approval on the part of regional organizations especially, if not specific local governments, is often built into the decision-making process.

## States Generally Notify Local Officials Before Initiating Projects

By wide margins, respondents in all four categories reported that their state formally notifies—always or sometimes—local officials before the state initiates the process of construction, widening, or other work on state and federally aided highways that might affect local circulation patterns (see *Table 5*). Again, regional council association directors were more likely to report such notification as always being given,

*Table 5*

**14. Does your state formally notify local officials before it initiates the process of construction, widening, or other work on state roads and highways that might affect local circulation patterns?**

**5. Does your state formally notify local officials before it initiates the process of construction, widening, or other work on federally aided roads and highways that might affect local circulation patterns?**

	Township Assoc.		Municipal Leagues		County Assoc.		Regional Council Assoc.	
	State	Fed.	State	Fed.	State	Fed.	State	Fed.
	14	5	14	5	14	5	14	5
Always	44.4	55.6	62.5	51.5	47.2	33.3	66.7	78.1
Sometimes	44.4	22.2	28.1	24.2	27.8	52.8	27.3	18.8
Rarely	11.1	11.1	6.3	6.1	13.9	5.6	3.0	0.0
Never	0.0	0.0	3.1	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	0.0	11.1	0.0	15.2	11.1	8.3	3.0	3.1
N	9	9	32	33	36	36	33	32
	Northeast		Midwest		South		West	
	State	Fed.	State	Fed.	State	Fed.	State	Fed.
	14	5	14	5	14	5	14	5
Always	64.7	64.7	62.9	54.3	52.9	45.5	52.2	58.3
Sometimes	23.5	23.5	22.9	28.6	32.4	39.4	34.8	29.2
Rarely	0.0	0.0	5.7	2.9	11.8	6.1	13.0	8.3
Never	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	3.0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	11.8	11.8	8.6	14.3	0.0	6.1	0.0	4.2
N	17	17	35	35	34	33	23	24

but in this case, township association directors also reported such notification as always being given—55.6 percent on federally aided highways and 44.4 percent on state roads and highways. There were no significant differences among regions.

## State Officials Involve Local Officials Somewhat Actively in Planning

For both state and federally aided roads and highways, 50 percent or more of the municipal league, county, and regional council association directors reported that state officials “very often” or “often” actively involve local officials in the planning of roads and highways (see *Table 6*). However, only 33-44 percent of the township association directors reported such active involvement, while regional council association directors were the most likely (63-67 percent) to report active involvement. There were no major regional differences, although respondents from the West reported somewhat less active local involvement than did other respondents.

*Table 6*

### 15. Do state officials actively involve local officials in the planning of state roads and highways?

#### 6. Do state officials actively involve local officials in the planning of federally aided roads and highways?

	<u>Township Assoc.</u>		<u>Municipal Leagues</u>		<u>County Assoc.</u>		<u>Regional Council Assoc.</u>	
	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>
	15	6	15	6	15	6	15	6
Very often	33.3	11.1	18.2	28.1	14.3	11.1	27.3	30.3
Often	0.0	33.3	39.4	34.4	40.0	41.7	39.4	33.3
Not very often	66.7	55.6	42.4	28.1	40.0	44.4	30.3	36.4
Not at all	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.4	5.7	2.8	3.0	0.0
Too often	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
N	9	9	33	32	35	36	33	33
	<u>Northeast</u>		<u>Midwest</u>		<u>South</u>		<u>West</u>	
	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>
	15	6	15	6	15	6	15	6
Very often	23.5	23.5	20.6	22.9	20.6	20.6	20.8	21.7
Often	41.2	35.3	38.2	45.7	41.2	32.4	25.0	30.4
Not very often	35.3	41.2	38.2	28.6	38.2	41.2	45.8	43.5
Not at all	0.0	0.0	2.9	2.9	0.0	5.9	8.3	4.3
Too often	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
N	17	17	34	35	34	34	24	23

## Local Officials Can Usually Influence State Officials to Modify Projects

More than half (73 and 88 percent) of the municipal league, 60 and 61 percent of the county association, and 79 and 83 percent of the regional council association directors reported that if local officials wish to modify a state or federally aided road or highway plan or project that affects their area, they are very likely or somewhat likely to be able to convince state highway officials to make the changes they desire (see *Table 7*). Only 44 and 56 percent of the township directors, however, felt that they could have such an influence on state officials. Regional council directors expressed the most likelihood (87.9 percent) of being able to have such an influence with regard to federally aided highways, while municipal league directors expressed the most likelihood of being able to influence state road and highway plans. Municipal league and county association directors felt that they could have somewhat more influence over state, than federally aided, plans or projects.

*Table 7*

**16. If local officials wish to modify a state road or highway plan or project that affects their area, how likely are they to be able to convince state highway officials to make the changes they desire?**

**7. If local officials wish to modify a federally aided road or highway plan or project that affects their area, how likely are they to be able to convince state highway officials to make the changes they desire?**

	<u>Township Assoc.</u>		<u>Municipal Leagues</u>		<u>County Assoc.</u>		<u>Regional Council Assoc.</u>	
	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>
	16	7	16	7	16	7	16	7
Very likely	0.0	11.1	15.2	6.1	8.3	8.6	20.0	12.1
Somewhat	44.4	44.4	72.7	66.7	52.8	51.4	63.3	66.7
Hardly	55.6	44.4	12.1	24.2	27.8	28.6	13.3	21.2
Not at all	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0
Don't know	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	11.1	8.6	3.3	0.0
N	9	9	33	33	36	35	30	33
	<u>Northeast</u>		<u>Midwest</u>		<u>South</u>		<u>West</u>	
	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>
	16	7	16	7	16	7	16	7
Very likely	11.8	0.0	14.3	14.7	12.9	8.8	12.5	8.3
Somewhat	76.5	58.8	48.6	55.9	67.7	64.7	58.3	58.3
Hardly	5.9	29.4	25.7	23.5	19.4	26.5	29.2	29.2
Not at all	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2
Don't know	5.9	11.8	11.4	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
N	17	17	35	34	31	34	24	24

Regionally, respondents from the Northeast were the least likely to report that they would be able to convince state officials to modify a

federally aided highway plan or project but most likely to report that they would be able to convince state officials to modify a state highway plan or project. Respondents from the Northeast, South, and West felt that they could have somewhat more influence over state highway plans than federally aided highway plans.

### **Local Officials are Less Likely to be Able To Convince Federal Officials to Modify Projects**

Only 34.4 percent of the municipal league directors, 30.3 percent of the regional council association directors, 28.6 percent of the county association directors, and 22.2 percent of the township association directors reported that they would be very likely or somewhat likely to be able to convince federal officials to make desired changes in a federally aided road or highway plan or project affecting their area (see *Table 8*).

*Table 8*

**11. If local officials wish to modify a federally aided road or highway plan or project that affects their area, how likely are they to be able to convince federal highway officials to make the changes they desire?**

	<b>Township Assoc.</b>	<b>Municipal Leagues</b>	<b>County Assoc.</b>	<b>Regional Council Assoc.</b>
Very likely	0.0	3.1	2.9	0.0
Somewhat	22.2	31.3	25.7	30.3
Hardly	44.4	50.0	37.1	27.3
Not at all	0.0	6.3	11.4	9.1
Don't know	33.3	9.4	22.9	33.3
N	9	32	35	33
	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Midwest</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
Very likely	0.0	2.9	0.0	4.3
Somewhat	12.5	40.0	20.6	30.4
Hardly	43.8	31.4	47.1	34.8
Not at all	12.5	0.0	5.9	21.7
Don't know	31.3	25.7	26.5	8.7
N	16	35	34	23

Responses varied somewhat by region. More respondents in the Midwest and West reported being very likely or somewhat likely to be able to convince federal highway officials to make desired changes in a federally aided road or highway plan or project affecting their area.

Another pertinent finding, however, is that this question drew the largest proportion of "don't know" responses of any question. This result may be due to the fact that federal officials are not required by current laws or regulations to consult directly with local officials. Generally, local officials, like federal officials, are more likely to work out desired changes with state officials.

## Local Officials are Somewhat-to-Very Satisfied with State-Local Consultation Procedures

More than half (67-73 percent) of the respondents in all four categories are very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their state's implementation of federal requirements for local consultation in federally aided road and highway matters (see *Table 9*). Regional council association directors (72.7 percent) expressed the most satisfaction. Similarly, 63-73 percent of the municipal league, county, and regional council association directors said that they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their state's procedures for local consultation in state road

*Table 9*

- 17. Are you satisfied with your state's procedures for local consultation in state road and highway matters?**
- 8. Are you satisfied with your state's implementation of federal requirements for local consultation in federally aided road and highway matters?**

	<u>Township Assoc.</u>		<u>Municipal Leagues</u>		<u>County Assoc.</u>		<u>Regional Council Assoc.</u>	
	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>
	17	8	17	8	17	8	17	8
Very	22.2	11.1	24.2	15.2	8.6	11.4	27.3	33.3
Somewhat	11.1	55.6	48.5	51.5	54.3	45.7	45.5	39.4
Not very	66.7	22.2	27.3	9.1	25.7	28.6	21.2	21.2
Not at all	0.0	11.1	0.0	3.0	2.9	5.7	3.0	0.0
Don't know	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.2	8.6	8.6	3.0	6.1
N	9	9	33	33	35	35	33	33
	<u>Northeast</u>		<u>Midwest</u>		<u>South</u>		<u>West</u>	
	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>
	17	8	17	8	17	8	17	8
Very often	25.0	18.8	22.9	25.7	17.6	11.8	16.7	20.8
Somewhat	43.8	50.0	42.9	45.7	50.0	44.1	45.8	45.8
Not very	25.0	12.5	28.6	22.9	26.5	26.5	33.3	12.5
Not at all	0.0	6.3	0.0	0.0	2.9	2.9	4.2	8.3
Don't know	6.3	12.5	5.7	5.7	2.9	14.7	0.0	12.5
N	16	16	35	35	34	34	24	24

and highway matters. In this case, however, only one-third of the town and township association directors reported such satisfaction. Municipal league directors expressed slightly more satisfaction with state-local consultation on state highway matters than on federally aided highway matters. The reverse was true for township directors; they were more satisfied with state implementation of federal requirements for local consultation in federally aided road and highway matters.

There were no major regional differences, though respondents from the South were slightly more likely than other respondents to express dissatisfaction.

## Many Local Officials Would Prefer More Consultation

The majority of municipal league directors (57.5 percent) and regional council association directors (75.0 percent) believe that federal regulations require too much or just about enough state-local consultation on federally aided road and highway planning and construction (see *Table 10*). Only 33.3 percent of the township association directors and 41.7 percent of the county association directors believe that federal regulations require too much or just about enough state-local consultation.

*Table 10*

- 18. Do state procedures require too much, too little, or just about enough state-local consultation on state road and highway planning and construction?**
- 9. Do federal regulations require too much, too little, or just about enough state-local consultation on federally aided road and highway planning and construction?**

	<u>Township Assoc.</u>		<u>Municipal Leagues</u>		<u>County Assoc.</u>		<u>Regional Council Assoc.</u>	
	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>
	18	9	18	9	18	9	18	9
Too much	0.0	22.2	0.0	3.0	2.8	5.6	0.0	3.1
About enough	33.3	11.1	60.6	54.5	47.2	36.1	60.6	71.9
Too little	66.7	44.4	36.4	18.2	38.9	41.7	39.4	18.8
Don't know	0.0	22.2	3.0	24.2	11.1	16.7	0.0	6.
N	9	9	33	33	36	36	33	32
	<u>Northeast</u>		<u>Midwest</u>		<u>South</u>		<u>West</u>	
	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Fed.</u>
	18	9	18	9	18	9	18	9
Too much	5.9	0.0	0.0	8.6	0.0	3.0	0.0	8.3
About enough	47.1	58.8	57.1	51.4	55.9	48.5	50.0	41.7
Too little	41.2	23.5	34.3	22.9	41.2	30.3	50.0	37.5
Don't know	5.9	17.6	8.6	17.1	2.9	18.2	0.0	12.5
N	17	17	35	35	34	33	24	24

Virtually the same responses were given for state procedures for state-local consultation on state highway matters, except that regional council association directors were less likely to report that state procedures provide for too much or just about enough state-local consultation on state highway matters as opposed to federally aided highway matters. There were no major regional differences, though respon-



dents from the West were slightly more likely than other respondents to report that there is too little consultation in their state.

## State-Local Highway Cooperation Is Rated Good-to-Fair

Overwhelmingly, respondents in all four categories rated state-local highway cooperation as being good-to-fair (see *Table 11*). Moreover, except for township directors, 52-61 percent of the other respondents rated cooperation as being good-to-excellent. Township association directors and municipal league directors were more likely to rate cooperation as only fair, while county association and regional council association directors were more likely to rate cooperation as being good-to-excellent. Only 11.1 percent of the township directors, 9.1 percent of the municipal league directors, 11.4 percent of the county association directors, and 9.1 percent of the regional council directors rated state-local highway cooperation as being poor.

*Table 11*

**19. Overall, how would you rate the level of cooperation that occurs in your state between local officials and state officials on road and highway planning and construction?**

	Township Assoc.	Municipal Leagues	County Assoc.	Regional Council Assoc.
Excellent	0.0	12.1	8.6	9.1
Good	33.3	39.4	45.7	51.5
Fair	55.6	39.4	28.6	30.3
Poor	11.1	9.1	11.4	9.1
Don't know	0.0	0.0	5.7	0.0
N	9	33	35	33
	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Excellent	11.8	2.9	8.8	16.7
Good	41.2	50.0	44.1	37.5
Fair	41.2	35.3	35.3	29.2
Poor	5.9	5.9	11.8	16.7
Don't know	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0
N	17	34	34	24

Regionally, 53-54 percent of the respondents from all four regions rated state-local highway cooperation as being good-to-excellent. Respondents from the South and West (12-17 percent) were somewhat more likely to rate state-local highway cooperation as being poor, though respondents from the West (16.7 percent) were also more likely to rate state-local cooperation as being excellent.

## Level of State-Local Highway Cooperation Has Improved Slightly During the Past Five Years

One third or more (33-46 percent) of the township, municipal league, county, and regional council association directors reported that the level of state-local road and highway cooperation had generally improved in their state during the past five years (see *Table 12*). Another 42-53 percent of the respondents in all four categories reported that the level of state-local cooperation had stayed about the same during the past five years. Only small percentages of respondents reported a deterioration—the two largest being 15.2 percent of the municipal league directors and 11.1 percent of the township association directors.

*Table 12*

**20. During the past five years, has the level of state-local road and highway cooperation in your state generally:**

	Township Assoc.	Municipal Leagues	County Assoc.	Regional Council Assoc.
Improved	33.3	42.4	36.1	45.5
Stayed the same	44.4	42.4	52.8	42.4
Deteriorated	11.1	15.2	2.8	3.0
Don't know	11.1	0.0	8.3	9.1
N	9	33	36	33
	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Improved	47.1	45.7	32.4	41.7
Stayed the same	35.3	40.0	55.9	50.0
Deteriorated	11.8	5.7	5.9	4.2
Don't know	5.9	8.6	5.9	4.2
N	17	35	34	24

There were no significant differences in responses by region. Respondents from the Northeast, Midwest, and West were slightly more likely to report an improvement in the level of state-local cooperation. Respondents (11.8 percent) from the Northeast, however, were also more likely to report a deterioration. Fully 55.9 percent of the respondents from the South reported that the level of cooperation had remained about the same during the past five years, while a third reported an improvement.

## Transfer of Federally Aided Highway Programs To States Would Not Result in Less Overall State Highway Spending

Fully 66.6 percent of the town and township association directors, 55.5 percent of the county association directors, 54.5 percent of the mu-

municipal league directors, and 42.5 percent of the regional association directors believe that a transfer of federally aided highway programs and revenue bases to the states would result in "much more" or "somewhat more" overall state highway spending (see *Table 13*). Only relatively small percentages of respondents believe that such a transfer would result in somewhat less or much less state spending—21.3 percent of the municipal league directors, 18.2 percent of the regional council association directors, 16.7 percent of the county association directors, and 11.1 percent of the township association directors. Very few respondents (3-6 percent) think that their state would spend much less on highways under a turnback.

*Table 13*

**21. If the federal government were to turn over to the states both responsibilities and revenues for all federally aided roads and highways except the Interstate network, and if the states were given access to the federal gas tax base to finance those roads and highways, how do you think that your state's overall highway spending—in the long run—would compare to the present funding level?**

	<b>Township Assoc.</b>	<b>Municipal Leagues</b>	<b>County Assoc.</b>	<b>Regional Council Assoc.</b>
Much more	33.3	12.1	11.1	6.1
Somewhat more	33.3	42.4	44.4	36.4
About the same	22.2	24.2	25.0	33.3
Somewhat less	11.1	15.2	13.9	18.2
Much less	0.0	6.1	2.8	0.0
Don't know	0.0	0.0	2.8	6.1
N	9	33	36	33
	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Midwest</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
Much more	29.4	11.4	8.8	4.2
Somewhat more	23.5	40.0	52.9	37.5
About the same	29.4	28.6	29.4	16.7
Somewhat less	11.8	14.3	8.8	29.2
Much less	0.0	2.9	0.0	8.3
Don't know	5.9	2.9	0.0	4.2
N	17	35	34	24

There were some noticeable differences in responses by region. Respondents from the West (37.5 percent) were much more likely than other respondents to report that overall state spending on roads and highways would be somewhat less or much less under a state assumption of federal program and revenue responsibilities. Respondents from the Midwest and South were more likely to report that there would be somewhat more state spending. Respondents in the North-

east (29.4 percent) were the most likely to report that there would be much more state spending.

## **Local Areas Would Often Do Better but Rarely Do Worse Under a Highway "Turnback"**

**Urban Areas.** More than half (55.6 percent) of the town and township directors, 48.4 percent of the municipal league directors, 41.7 percent of the county association directors, and 38.7 percent of the regional council association directors believe urban roads and highways would fare better under a major turnback (see *Table 14*). Only 15.2 percent of the municipal league directors, 13.9 percent of the county association directors, and 12.9 percent of the regional council association directors reported that urban roads and highways would likely fare worse. No township respondent said that urban roads and highways would fare worse. The remaining respondents (31-48 percent) believe that urban roads and highways would fare about the same as they do now.

*Table 14*

**22a. Under such a "turnback" how do you think that roads and highways of particular importance to different kinds of local areas would fare? In the long run, would they be better, worse, or about the same as they are under present federal aid arrangements?**

<b>Urban Road Conditions</b>	<b>Township Assoc.</b>	<b>Municipal Leagues</b>	<b>County Assoc.</b>	<b>Regional Council Assoc.</b>
Better	55.6	48.5	41.7	38.7
About the same	44.4	30.3	36.1	48.4
Worse	0.0	15.2	13.9	12.9
Not sure	0.0	6.1	8.3	0.0
N	9	33	36	31
	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Midwest</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
Better	68.8	38.2	35.3	45.8
About the same	25.0	47.1	44.1	29.2
Worse	0.0	11.8	14.7	20.8
Not sure	6.3	2.9	5.9	4.2
N	16	34	34	24

There were noticeable differences by region. Respondents in the Northeast (68.8 percent) were the most likely to believe that urban roads and highways would fare better. Respondents in the West (20.8 percent) were the most likely to believe that urban roads and highways would fare worse.

**Suburban Areas.** Majorities of respondents (52-67 percent) in all four categories believe that suburban roads and highways would fare about

the same under a turnback as they do now (see *Table 15*). Only 15.2 percent of the municipal league directors, 11.1 percent of the county association directors, and 6.5 percent of the regional council association directors reported that suburban roads and highways would fare worse. Larger proportions of respondents (27-36 percent) believe that suburban roads and highways would fare better.

Regionally, respondents in the Northeast (85.3 percent) and South (61.8 percent) were more likely to believe that suburban roads and highways would fare about the same as they do now. Respondents from the Midwest (38.2 percent) and West (33.3 percent) were more likely to believe that suburban roads and highways would fare better. At the same time, respondents from the West (20.8 percent) were also more likely to believe that suburban roads and highways would fare worse.

*Table 15*  
**22b. Under such a "turnback" how do you think that roads and highways of particular importance to different kinds of local areas would fare?**

**In the long run, would they be better, worse, or about the same as they are under present federal aid arrangements?**

<b>Suburban Road Conditions</b>	<b>Township Assoc.</b>	<b>Municipal Leagues</b>	<b>County Assoc.</b>	<b>Regional Council Assoc.</b>
Better	33.3	27.3	27.8	35.5
About the same	66.7	51.5	52.8	58.1
Worse	0.0	15.2	11.1	6.5
Not sure	0.0	6.1	8.3	0.0
N	9	33	36	31
	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Midwest</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
Better	12.5	38.2	29.4	33.3
About the same	81.3	44.1	61.8	41.7
Worse	0.0	14.7	2.9	20.8
Not sure	6.3	2.9	5.9	4.2
N	16	34	34	24

**Rural Areas.** Of all areas, respondents were more likely to believe that rural roads and highways would fare worse under a turnback—41.9 percent of the regional council association directors, 33.3 percent of the municipal league directors, 25.0 percent of the county association directors, and 22.2 percent of the township association directors (see *Table 16*). Nevertheless, 77.7 percent of the township association directors, 66.7 percent of the county association directors, 57.6 percent of the municipal league directors, and 54.8 percent of the regional council association directors reported that rural roads and highways would

likely fare better or about the same under a major highway turnback. Furthermore, 44.4 percent of the township and 38.9 percent of county association directors reported that rural roads and highways would likely fare better under a major turnback.

Regionally, respondents in the West (54.2 percent) and the Northeast (37.5 percent) were more likely to believe that rural roads and highways would fare worse under a major highway turnback. Respondents in the Midwest (41.2 percent) and South (26.5 percent) were more likely to believe that rural roads and highways would fare better.

Table 16

**22c. Under such a "turnback" how do you think that roads and highways of particular importance to different kinds of local areas would fare?**

**In the long run, would they be better, worse, or about the same as they are under present federal aid arrangements?**

<b>Rural Road Conditions</b>	<b>Township Assoc.</b>	<b>Municipal Leagues</b>	<b>County Assoc.</b>	<b>Regional Council Assoc.</b>
Better	44.4	9.1	38.9	16.1
About the same	33.3	48.5	27.8	38.7
Worse	22.2	33.3	25.0	41.9
Not sure	0.0	9.1	8.3	3.2
N	9	33	36	31
	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Midwest</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
Better	12.5	41.2	26.5	4.2
About the same	43.8	29.4	47.1	33.3
Worse	37.5	23.5	20.6	54.2
Not sure	6.3	5.9	5.9	8.3
N	16	34	34	24

## Narrative Comments

Narrative comments were provided by 73 percent of the respondents to an open-ended question about whether there are any major points of disagreement or conflict on road and highway matters in the respondents' states. Overall, the respondents' narrative comments did not indicate major conflict or disagreement regarding matters of state-local highway cooperation and consultation. Many comments dealt with specific issues or matters specific to particular states; consequently, it is virtually impossible to draw general conclusions. However, because respondents raised some important issues and points of interest, a listing of the narrative comments is presented in *Appendix B*.

# Conclusion

While not definitive, the results of this survey of directors of state associations of local officials suggests that there is, for the most part, a satisfactory climate of state-local cooperation and consultation on matters of road and highway planning, financing, and construction. This can be seen graphically in *Figure 1*, which summarizes results from each question. On each question, however, minorities of respondents did indicate that consultation and cooperation are inadequate or unsatisfactory, though rarely very inadequate or very unsatisfactory. Perhaps future research could identify those areas where state-local highway cooperation is problematic.

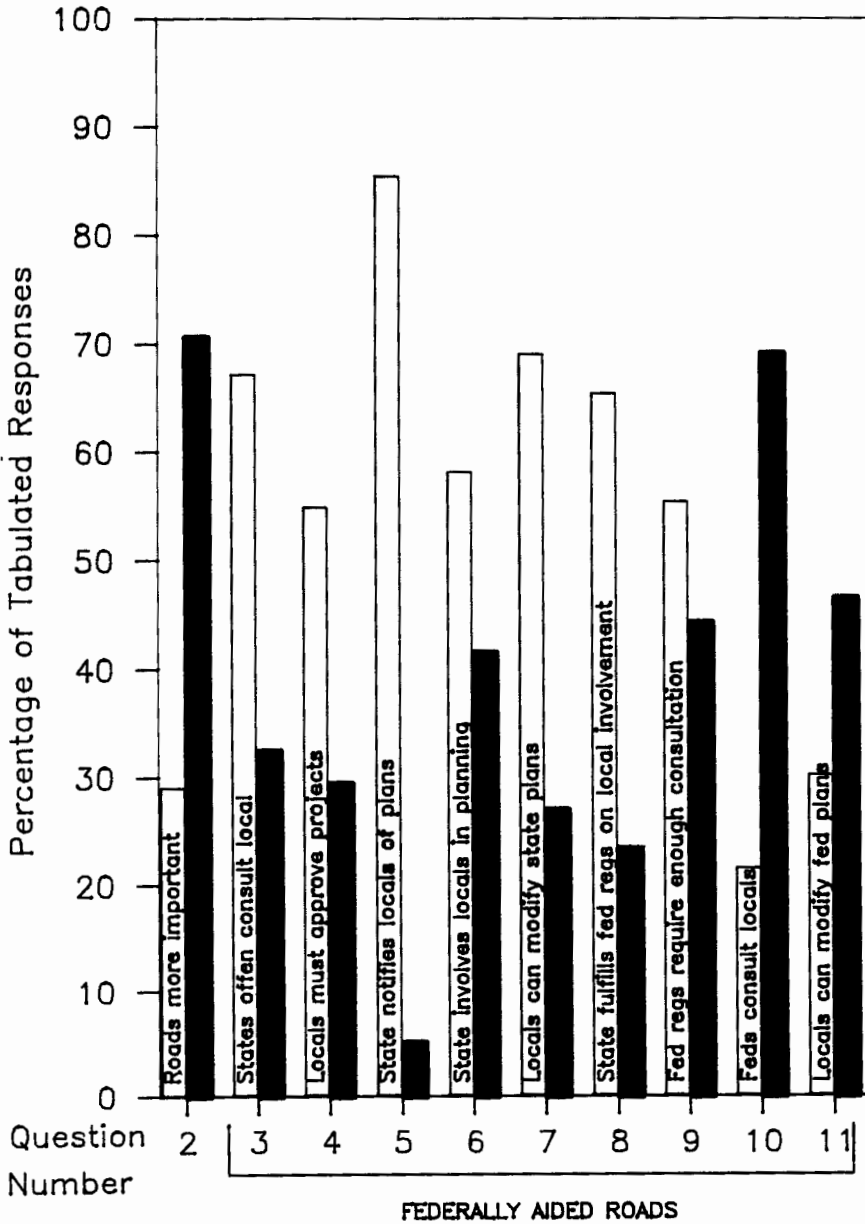
Generally, regional council association directors were the most likely to report high levels of adequate and satisfactory state-local consultation on highway matters, while township association directors were the least likely to report high levels of adequate and satisfactory consultation. On the turnback questions, however, township association directors were the most likely to believe that there would be more state spending and that urban, suburban, and rural roads would fare better under the devolution proposal presented in the questionnaire.

The results also indicate that the vast majority of respondents do not believe that a major turnback of federally aided, non-Interstate highway programs and revenue bases would result in less overall state spending on roads and highways. Similarly, respondents believe that urban, suburban, and rural roads would not fare worse under a turnback than they do under existing arrangements. The only hint of danger was with rural roads, though even here, 60 percent of all of the respondents, and 78 percent of the township respondents and 65 percent of the county respondents believe that rural roads would fare better or about the same under a turnback.

In sum, a generally good foundation for state-local highway consultation and cooperation appears to be present in most areas of the nation. Although there are issues of state-local relations to be dealt with in the implementation of any transfer of federal-aid highway programs to the states—and some of those issues are outlined in the respondents' narrative comments—it would appear that in most states, those issues can be addressed within a generally cooperative environment.

Figure 1

# Responses to ACIR State—

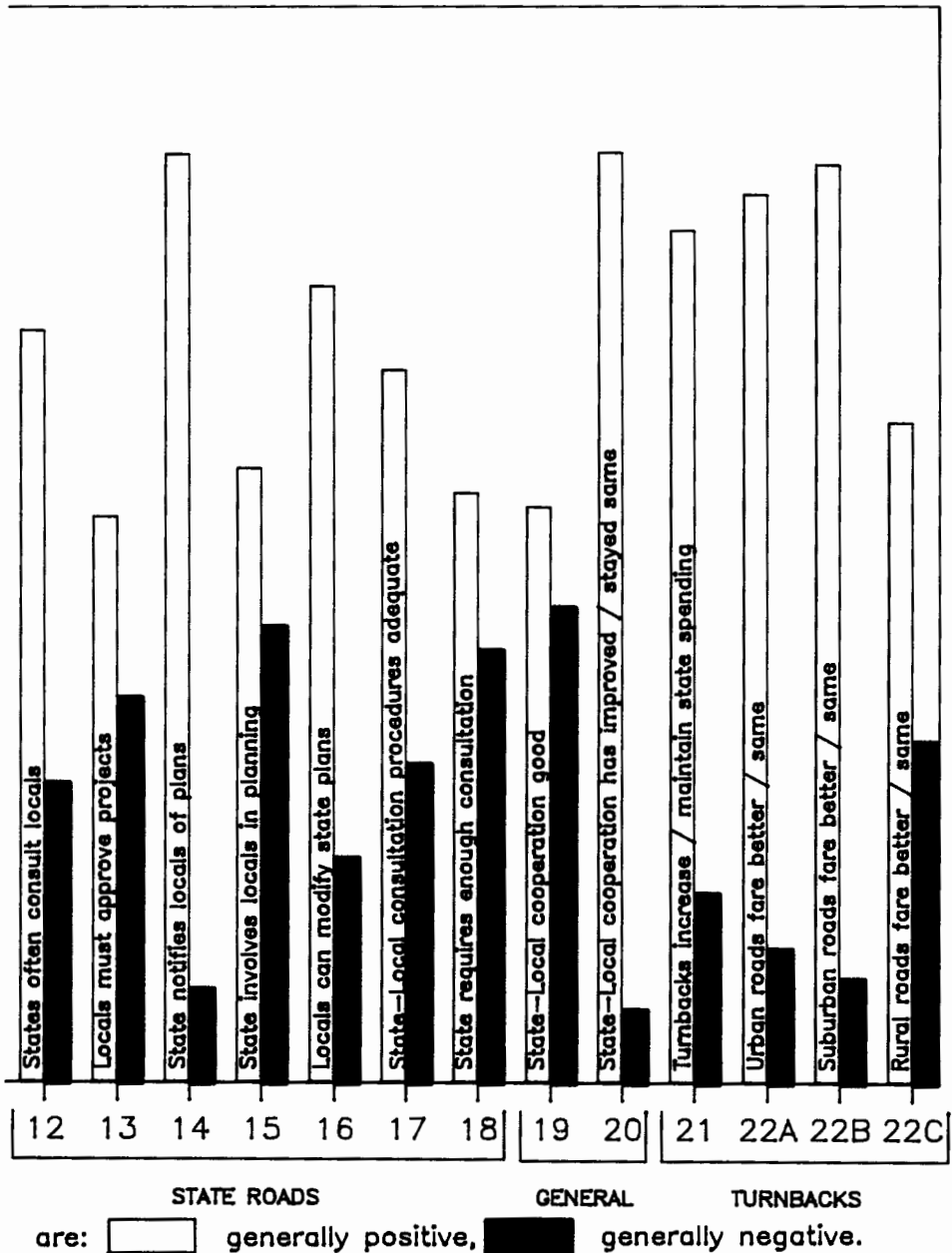


FEDERALLY AIDED ROADS

Respondent views of state-local comity on transportation



# Local Highway Survey





*Appendix A*

# **Questionnaire**



# QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of your state: \_\_\_\_\_

## FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW, PLEASE CIRCLE THE RESPONSE THAT BEST REPRESENTS YOUR VIEW

2. In general, are road and highway issues more or less important in your state than other issues such as education, welfare, criminal justice, and economic development?

- 1) Much more    2) More    3) Equally    4) Less    5) Much less

### FEDERALLY AIDED ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

3. Do state officials consult with local officials on the planning and construction of federally aided roads and highways in their jurisdictions?

- 1) Very often    2) Often enough    3) Not very often    4) Not at all    5) Too often

4. Does your state require local approval (e.g., of location or width) before construction of specific federally aided roads and highways?

- 1) Always    2) Sometimes    3) Rarely    4) Never    5) Don't know

5. Does your state formally notify local officials before it initiates the process of construction, widening, or other work on federally aided roads and highways that might affect local circulation patterns?

- 1) Always    2) Sometimes    3) Rarely    4) Never    5) Don't know

6. Do state officials actively involve local officials in the planning of federally aided roads and highways?

- 1) Very often    2) Often enough    3) Not very often    4) Not at all    5) Too often

7. If local officials wish to modify a federally aided road or highway plan or project that affects their area, how likely are they to be able to convince state highway officials to make the changes they desire?

- 1) Very likely    2) Somewhat    3) Hardly    4) Not at all    5) Don't know

8. Are you satisfied with your state's implementation of federal requirements for local consultation in federally aided road and highway matters?

- 1) Very    2) Somewhat    3) Not very    4) Not at all    5) Don't know

9. Do federal regulations require too much, too little, or just about enough state-local consultation on federally aided road and highway planning and construction?

- 1) Too much    2) About enough    3) Too little    4) Don't know

10. Do *federal* officials consult with local officials on the planning and construction of federally aided roads and highways in their jurisdictions?

- 1) Very often    2) Often enough    3) Not very often    4) Not at all    5) Too often

11. If local officials wish to modify a federally aided road or highway plan or project that affects their area, how likely are they to be able to convince *federal* highway officials to make the changes they desire?

- 1) Very likely    2) Somewhat    3) Hardly    4) Not at all    5) Don't know

## STATE ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

12. Do state officials consult with local officials on the planning and construction of state roads and highways in their jurisdictions?

- 1) Very often    2) Often enough    3) Not very often    4) Not at all    5) Too often

13. Does your state require local approval (e.g., of location or width) before construction of specific state roads and highways?

- 1) Always    2) Sometimes    3) Rarely    4) Never    5) Don't know

14. Does your state formally notify local officials before it initiates the process of construction, widening, or other work on state roads and highways that might affect local circulation patterns?

- 1) Always    2) Sometimes    3) Rarely    4) Never    5) Don't know

15. Do state officials actively involve local officials in the planning of state roads and highways?

- 1) Very often    2) Often    3) Not very often    4) Not at all    5) Too often

16. If local officials wish to modify a state road or highway plan or project that affects their area, how likely are they to be able to convince state highway officials to make the changes they desire?

- 1) Very likely    2) Somewhat    3) Hardly    4) Not at all    5) Don't know

17. Are you satisfied with your state's procedures for local consultation in state road and highway matters?

- 1) Very    2) Somewhat    3) Not very    4) Not at all    5) Don't know

18. Do state procedures require too much, too little, or just about enough state-local consultation on state road and highway planning and construction?

- 1) Too much    2) About enough    3) Too little    4) Don't know

19. Overall, how would you rate the level of cooperation that occurs in your state between local officials and state officials on road and highway planning and construction?

- 1) Excellent    2) Good    3) Fair    4) Poor    5) Don't know

20. During the past five years, has the level of state-local road and highway cooperation in your state generally

- 1) Improved    2) Stayed the same    3) Deteriorated    4) Don't know

## PROPOSED FEDERAL TURNBACKS

21. If the federal government were to turn over to the states both responsibilities and revenues for all federally aided roads and highways except the Interstate network, and if the states were given access to the federal gas tax base to finance those roads and highways, how do you think that your state's overall highway spending--in the long run--would compare to the present funding level?

- 1) Much more    2) Somewhat more    3) About the same    4) Somewhat less    5) Much less

22. Under such a "turnback" how do you think that roads and highways of particular importance to different kinds of local areas would fare? In the long run, would they be better, worse, or about the same as they are under present federal aid arrangements?

- |                    |           |                   |          |             |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|-------------|
| A) Urban areas:    | 1) Better | 2) About the same | 3) Worse | 4) Not sure |
| B) Suburban areas: | 1) Better | 2) About the same | 3) Worse | 4) Not sure |
| C) Rural areas:    | 1) Better | 2) About the same | 3) Worse | 4) Not sure |

23. In your state, are there any major points of disagreement or conflict on road and highway matters? If so, how might these frictions be eased? If there are no major frictions, please indicate this.

24. Do you have any suggestions for improving this questionnaire?

25. Other comments or suggestions?

# Responses to Question 23

## Municipal Leagues

1. The main discussion now involves where new loop roads will be located and how far out bypasses will be. The other discussion centers on which roads will be widened to four lanes.
2. No major problems yet.
3. The state should maintain the entire right-of-way of state roads that go through cities. Currently, they only maintain curb to curb. We need to have permanent weighing stations.
4. There are no major disagreements regarding the general need for road and highway improvements throughout [our state]. However, natural competition among the various areas of the state for limited funds is a perennial point of debate. In this regard, one option receiving increased attention in recent years has been greater private contributions to highway projects.
5. No major frictions.
6. A 1987 budgetary constraint has resulted in a very divisive proposal—taking \$50 million from the highway users tax fund, and replacing it with \$40 million in the first year, \$30 million in the second, and \$0 in later years. The real zinger to local governments is a tremendous shift of the burden of this reduction to local governments from a 60 percent to state, and 40 percent to locals sharing tradition put in place in 1979. The result:

	\$50 mil	\$40 mil	\$30 mil
state	30 (60%)	30 (75%)	30 (100%)
county	11 (40%)	6 (25%)	0
municipal	9	4	0 (0%)

Secondly, the Governor's office has proposed a \$20 per car and \$40 per truck additional registration fee in the urban part of the state which would be raised on state highways only. This is again breaking with a long-standing sharing among the state and local governments of vehicle registration fees; it is a concern from the standpoint that the state may become divided on a rural-urban basis, at the expense of the rural areas. While both of these proposals are still just proposals, they each have broad legislative and executive branch sup-



port which, in our opinion, has some long-range negative implications for the long-term financing of the entire state and local highway system. Finally, a financing issue which has been and continues to be a concern is the direct and indirect costs charged to local governments by the state for the administration of federally funded highway projects. While the state's charges are rationalized as being required to assure compliance with federal standards, there is no ability for locals to control the number of people the state department directs to review plans, sends to meetings, sends to inspect projects, etc. We're stuck with paying the bills.

7. Concerning the distribution of road-use fuel taxes to various jurisdictions: urban areas receive only 18 percent of revenues from fuel taxes, and state primaries receive more, although needs studies indicate urban systems should receive more. Road classification/reclassification: shifting maintenance responsibility from one system, i.e., state roads, to local jurisdictions with no shift in funding. Liability during construction of state/federal road systems through densely populated urban areas: Who assumes it? Who has responsibility?

8. Frictions are major, but center around insufficient revenue. There is strong public support—including Chambers of Commerce—for more highways for economic development, but the real growing need is for maintenance. The greatest single thing the federal government could do for highways is to *lower* the truck weight and speed limits on interstate highways—we will never be able to afford the maintenance of our existing system with the weight impact we now have.

9. Earlier cooperation during the planning phase would eliminate part of the friction.

10. The process in place seems to adequately allow conflict resolution.

11. Federal/state design requirements (particularly ASHTO) often conflict with local needs—add extra construction costs—and tend to be wholly inflexible. More early consultation with locals is needed—both state and federal. Inequitable allocation of funds—overspending on interstate system—underspending on federal aid system—severe underspending on local road system. Feds should provide more real oversight of federally aided projects.

12. Frictions are inherent where responsibilities for roads are split. Jurisdictional realignment is being proposed as a cost *saving* mechanism, but is viewed mostly as a cost *shifting* mechanism by local governments. Ease some friction by giving equal access to revenue sources which fit the level of road: state gas taxes for state roads, federal for federal, etc. This works in theory only, perhaps, but the fundamental principle is sound.

13. None to my knowledge—the highway department runs it and that's it—period.

14. There are no major frictions that are significant, but there are some disagreements on interchanges on freeway roads.

15. The Governor and Executive Council adopted a ten-year highway plan in 1986 which generally favors more urban areas (it does meet some very critical needs there), but also closes off any substantial highway work for ten years in other areas. The legislature has taken the ten-year plan to task openly as thwarting its prerogatives to establish highway priorities, and the Governor

has responded that he and the council won't approve any highway contracts which are inconsistent with the ten-year plan. The legislature has ordered a study of how well the state DOT has followed its directives over the years to start and complete projects . . . after some it authorized and funded several years ago have not been moved on at all. The damage is done now, the major problem being the way the ten-year plan was developed by the Governor's staff and the five executive councilors—with no legislative involvement at all. They basically went into a room and horse traded for several months, emerging with the plan.

16. There is always a demand for adding more miles of paved road to the state system. This demand might be allocated by indicating the costs of doing the initial paving plus the additional costs of maintaining those roads. There is some demand for constructing and/or maintaining roads in recreational areas. This should depend on the usage and the quality level of the road needed.

17. No major frictions.

18. State highway officials operate in a highly political manner. There should be better explanation re: development of priorities, planning process, and costs, short-range and longer.

19. Local governments are required many times to furnish utilities with free right-of-way before state projects can progress. This is a drawback.

20. There are no major points of disagreement, but there are continual minor disagreements over distribution of state highway user revenues to local governments. This problem could be solved by increasing the amount of revenues available for distribution.

21. The main question is how to finance roads—through a gas tax increase or with bonds.

22. The state department of roads does a good job overall but it is sometimes described as an independent institution which nothing can penetrate; nothing will change it. It is like the riddle: where does an 800 pound gorilla sleep? Answer: anywhere he wants to. It is like ol' man river—it just keeps rolling along. That adds to the frustration of the legislature and Governor.

23. I'm not aware of any major frictions. One friction could be over construction standards applicable to the state.

24. No answer.

25. In the state we have just finished a \$500,000 study of road/street/highway conditions and a financial package to meet long-range needs (both maintenance and modernization). The study has been well-received by the legislature. The split of the existing 12-cent state gas tax is 68/20/12 (state/county/city). The study indicate a 50/30/20 split is more equitable. Legislation for this split (for an addition six cents over three years and a doubling of vehicle registration fees) is pending.

26. No answer.

27. The state has responsibility for the construction and maintenance of county roads; however, cities, which are independent of counties, must maintain their own roads with some state aid and pay 5 percent of construction costs. Cities enjoy the control, but feel inadequate funding and state restrictions hamper the most effective road program. Counties feel they don't always

have enough control over the destiny of their roads. Rural areas feel they haven't been getting their fair share of highway projects. Fast-growing suburban areas feel projects are too slow in meeting burgeoning development needs.

28. No answer.

29. Currently the state, counties, and cities are conducting a statewide needs analysis of roadways and a jurisdiction study for responsibility. This will ultimately decide the fuel tax split. The lack of funds for maintenance and construction causes disagreement.

30. Municipalities have always supported a strong state highway program. Cooperation with local governments in priority setting has improved significantly in the recent past due partially to a formalized capital improvements planning process, an elimination of local categorical aid programs and a replacement of a "gas tax sharing" program, and a placement of a new Transportation Commissioner from the municipal manager ranks. Disagreements occur, but most municipal officials support the process of resolution and the Transportation Department. Most recent conflicts have occurred over projects being held up for lack of state environmental permits. In this case, the friction is not intergovernmental but between state agencies.

## **County Associations**

1. There is a funding controversy between the Governor's views on providing revenues and the reality of the system's needs.

2. Urban and suburban road needs compete with rural road needs. To some extent this could be avoided by using a formula based on demographic data. However, without some provision for adjustment, you might end up with road projects that conflict with regional and state growth and development plans.

3. The distribution formula is skewed toward the state, which has 1/5 the road mileage of local roads. We need formula revision.

4. On the state level, the distribution of highway revenues (e.g., the gas tax) is pretty even between state and locals, but there are occasional attempts to tilt the funding toward the state. One-half the state police budget comes from highway funds. This is very unpopular with local officials. On the federal level, the most common complaint is the "red tape" involved in the use of federal dollars. Many locals prefer to build themselves to save time and to save money on engineering services.

5. Local officials disagree with the insistence of the Federal Highway Administration on following AASHTO standards (excessively high standards) for roads in rural areas.

6. No major frictions.

7. There are disputes over secondary maintenance and acceptance into the state secondary system.

8. Secondary road funds are a state revenue—we have a problem with large, less-populated areas and great road mileage being the responsibility of the state.

9. There is not sufficient revenue. Everyone pursues the same tax sources: the motor vehicle excise tax, motor vehicle registration fee, and gasoline tax.

10. The main friction is big city versus upstate apportionment.
11. A problem is the serious diversion of Highway Trust Fund Revenues for purposes other than highways. About 25 percent of the fund is diverted for other purposes. We just increased the gas tax from 13 cents to 17 cents, but about 4 cents of this is diversions. The state gas tax and motor vehicle fees are distributed by formula: 63 percent state; 23 percent county; and 14 percent city. This seems to be equitable thus far.
12. Local governments don't feel they are getting a fair share of the highway user revenues.
13. Issues include:
  1. Bridges—which level of government is responsible?
  2. Orphan bridges—bridges over railroad rights-of-way with which ownership is uncertain.
  3. Turnbacks—state system roads reverting to the local system.
  4. Funding—county and local shares of state liquid fuels taxes. The [state] Transportation Commission and Transportation Department established a Local Official Advisory Committee of city and county officials to provide input to the Commission and Department. The committee was organized in 1978 and meets at least four times a year.
14. Local governments do not share enough in the fuel tax.
15. First, the State Transportation Department spends a significant amount of state funds each year for bridge construction because of the availability of federal matching funds. Many local officials believe that the bridge construction projects so funded are often of much lower priority than other road construction needs. Either the federal government should allow more flexibility in the use of its federal highway funds, or the state should reexamine its policy of matching every available federal highway dollar. Second, in certain areas of the state, the state Transportation Department is slow in reviewing subdivision site plans for compliance with state street requirements. The state should address this problem by decentralizing authority, i.e., placing more responsibility at the district level rather than requiring the central office to sign off on so many decisions.
16. In recent years a diminishing portion of highway funds have been used for repair and maintenance of secondary roads and local service roads. Recently, we have had a debate in the state legislature about whether to increase the gasoline tax or the general consumer sales tax to provide more money for highways, and also debate about whether to issue more bonds. A bond issue and sales tax increase were defeated in a public referendum in 1986. No new highway taxes were enacted by the 1987 legislature. A proposal to give counties authority for local roads was rejected by the state Senate this year. Counties have had no road responsibilities since the 1930s.
17. We have an excellent Transportation Department. There are no major frictions.
18. No major frictions are present.
19. The major friction is over the split of federal aid among the various jurisdictions. There should be equal input into decisions.

20. Local government agrees that the [state] Department of Transportation has too much red tape and the present funding structure is not equitable. We have undertaken legislative action to address these issues.
21. No answer.
22. There are no major frictions.
23. No answer.
24. No answer.

## **Township Associations**

1. There are significant frictions over specific projects (should they be done, etc.), but less interjurisdictional friction over where money is to be spent (although naturally there is some).
2. There is friction over how and where funds should be spent in improving state roads. There is not enough money to meet demand, and the feds require their funds to be spent only on specific types of projects (strings attached).
3. There are very few disagreements because there is little interaction between state and local officials, except when approval is required from the state for local projects.
4. County and local roads in [our state] are under the jurisdiction of county road commissions, yet very little direct funding is made by that body for local roads. In FY '85 townships "contributed" \$48 million from general funds, special voted road funds, and revenue sharing to maintain or improve 70,000 miles of local roads for which they have little legal or statutory responsibility. Federal funds turned back should be sent directly to townships for local road purposes, and sent to county road commissions but "earmarked" for local road use only with a minimum of match, if any.
5. There is no major friction.
6. There is quite a bit of disagreement between the units of government involved when talking about access roads off interstate systems, such as trails, skyways, or any other multi-use projects. We in the township government are not usually involved in these matters, but in some cases we would like to have input on the projects that are not actual user projects. By this I mean the skyways and bike trails should be funded by other sources than the highway user taxes.
7. The planning process seems to be too long (12 years), and local officials seem to be forgotten when it comes time to finalize the 12-year plan.
8. We believe the Local Highways Aid Fund should be distributed more equitably to rural roads. The state cost formula gives more credit to urban costs and returns more money to big spenders. Rural roads are generally more cost-efficient in construction and maintenance, yet receive less state aid. We believe the cost factor should be de-emphasized and more emphasis given to the per mile factor.
9. 1. The state has proceeded too slowly in taking over portions of existing roads which are mutually agreed to be part of the state system, but are currently under local (i.e., county) jurisdiction and control. This could be resolved by the state taking more aggressive action.

2. There are roads that are owned by the state but that are not part of the federal aid highway system. The state requires the county to maintain many of these. This could be solved by having the state expand its road system to include some nonfederal aid roads.
10. There are some conflicts with a major highway program. The conflict, of course, involves *where* the new highways are to be built, and how much pork-barreling will be done. Also, there are numerous urban/rural conflicts. The state has appointed a task force which has helped. Townships are not consulted at all. The states will work with the county officials, but seldom the smaller localities. The state serves as a mediator between the feds and the state in most cases, as there is little dialogue with the feds unless the locals initiate it (and then I would guess it is only the larger units of government).
11. There are no major frictions, but the rural/urban battle for money will always be there.
12. We've had some problems getting state funds into rural areas and local governments. Due to the poor agricultural economy, there is less of a rural population.

## **Regional Council Associations**

1. The state legislature is contemplating taking our "highway users trust fund" away from towns and counties, and inserting it into our general fund. Serious repercussions for small local governments in certain parts of our state.

The state highway commission diluted Western Slope representation by increasing the number of metro area or front range commission members. Rural areas, based on tourist economies, don't get the state support needed to enhance the system for visitors. All those dollars are *impact* dollars and add so much to states' economies. Frictions could be eased by viewing the state as *one unit* for all projects and their respective benefits/costs.

2. The major problem is insufficient funds to meet all highway maintenance and reconstruction needs in a timely fashion.
3. We need more communication.
4. We feel that for urbanized areas, due to the MPO process, there probably are no *major* frictions. That is the case here, where we have MPO and the "3-c" planning process. In rural counties and communities, I doubt that there is enough opportunity for local input.
5. Allow more input from local officials in the *initial* planning stages.
6. The conflict could be resolved by better communication between state lawmakers and local officials. Such conflicts are a result of regional differences and competition to establish priorities. The major issue is that the state Highway Department continually wants to remove any and all of its projects from intergovernmental review.
7. Local input into the state priority rating system needs to be improved.
8. From a regional planning agency point of view, and understanding our responsibility to our member communities and to metropolitan planning, our major conflict with respect to highway matters lies more with the operations of the state Department of Public Works than it does with the federal govern-

ment. As a practical matter, the state determines project priorities and controls the progress of all projects that are funded with urban systems money. In [our state] communities are responsible for hiring engineering firms to design urban systems projects and the state roads constructed with state and federal money. Therefore the state and federal governments control a project's progress and cost through the review and approval process. Given this region's increasing backlog, this leads to lengthy delays, due to projects requiring engineering firms to revise plans and request additional engineering funds from the community. In essence, the community funds engineering without control of its own funds.

9. The main issue is funding splits, between cities, counties, and state, of the state-generated gas tax.

10. The state is not turning motor vehicle excise tax moneys into the highway fund, thereby denying funding that was earmarked for transportation. This could be eased by making some level of transfer and or raising user fees (gas, etc.). With insufficient money in the overall pot there is friction between metro areas—which need good roads for their highway population and traffic volumes, and the rural areas—which need good roads to remain sound economically and to move agricultural raw goods to markets.

11. The off-system bridge replacement program has caused a great deal of consternation for county officials. The approval process can take three to five years and there are cases of counties being put on hold after going through all of the engineering and approval processes.

Frankly, I think that there ought to be more emphasis placed on “force account” construction for bridges of the smaller size, where county (or city) crews can handle the construction. It would stretch dollars farther and would result in more bridges being built. Local governments ought to be encouraged to do their own construction on smaller projects and also should be allowed to use existing manpower and equipment as “in kind” for the projects. The *Davis-Bacon Act* artificially inflates project costs because the prevailing wage determinations are not the “real” wages paid in rural areas. *Davis-Bacon* isn't a cure; it's a “problem.”

12. There are none.

13. Issues include:

1. Legislative desire to utilize the transportation user-based tax revenues for support of the state general fund and to make up for other tax system revenue failures.

2. Politics plays too much of a role in highway improvements.

3. The state has insufficient respect for local decision making or ability.

4. Conflict exists between county commissioners and the state transportation department. State engineering requirements are perceived by the county commissioners as excessive and costly, resulting in bridge construction far greater than the maximum needed. Counties have insufficient maintenance funds.

5. The level of coordination among federal, state and local officials is higher and more cooperative in the Metropolitan Planning Organiza-

tions' (MPO) process and environment than in the balance of state activities. Federal requirements are the basis for this long-term development. 6. Under turnbacks, the perception by rural areas is that urban areas will receive increased funding, while the urban areas fear an increased allocation to rural areas.

14. The main issue is how to finance primary and secondary roads.

15. Issues include:

1. The constitutionality of a truck axle tax to finance a billion-dollar bridge program.
2. The priority commercial network passively reacts to existing truck volume, rather than trying to reduce truck movements and encourage rail.
3. Bridge postings: what degree of safety hazard warrants them? There is confusion over state compliance with FHWA standards.
4. Large-scale capital projects are completely at the discretion of the state Transportation Commission, which may deprive some areas of any major projects.

16. Issues include:

1. How should the highway construction can be financed?
2. Should highway construction funds be distributed based on population and population density only? It may be equitable, but it is certainly not best.
3. A statewide research project on economic development potential, natural resources, and labor force should be conducted to justify some construction investment in low-population areas.

17. In general, the state is easy to work with and takes local needs into consideration. There are normally no major frictions between the state and local jurisdictions.

18. All state and federally funded highway *studies* should be overseen by a steering committee composed of representatives of the state DOT, Regional Council and chief elected officials (mayor, chairman of the board of selections, etc.) from each of the affected communities. We need to get more local involvement in highway planning studies at the front end of the process, not just at the public hearing stage.

19. Issues include:

1. The state lacks leadership on state highway financing. There is a trend to defer revenue raising to the local level, and this is proving divisive and destructive of statewide balance. The state has also deferred responsibility for much route planning and right-of-way acquisition to local government and the private sector. This could be resolved through recognition of needs for additional state highway revenues and a continuing state responsibility for development of the system.
2. From the perspective of a regional transportation planning organization encompassing several cities and counties (an MPO), we are often frustrated by communication snafus or by the state Department of Transportation going around us to local governments, essentially leaving us out of the process.



20. There are major conflicts only in metro areas, and minor conflicts in rural areas involving the amount of funding and the timing of projects.

21. Issues include:

1. Determination of priorities.

2. True coordination with local officials and gathering of input, rather than merely going through the motions.

3. Many decisions made in headquarters should be made at the district level.

4. Lack of a state plan leads toward uncertainty and lack of direction for program of improvements. Subsequently, there is always competition for funds.

5. Many projects get selected for political reasons without substantive technical support.

6. Where there is support data, it is not adequately used.

22. There are no major frictions. Our state has a long history of state-local consultation and cooperation.

To a certain extent, this is a period of catch-up on needed roadway improvements, so friction is minimized by the quest to improve roadways.

23. There are two priorities: to fund road repairs according to need and to complete expressway systems, giving each state region access and connections comparable to other regions in the state.

24. The state controls the use of all federal funds except FAUS. The locals can request projects. If the state does not approve, the locals simply will not initiate design work or start construction. FAUS has its limitations as well; if the state does not approve FAUS projects, the locals simply delay or avoid implementation.

25. The main issues are the future maintenance program for roads and bridges, and the source of funding.

26. None.

27. There are disputes regarding participation on the Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee. The lack of definition of "consensus" results in problems in approving plans. Jurisdictions physically affected by projects may or may not be represented on the Policy Committee, while other jurisdictions have multiple votes. This was a major problem with regard to the interstate 81/88 connection, where one town ended up in the courts to fight a particular design. The lack of coordination and the conflicts with the state education law caused students to have to walk through a construction site.

28. No answer.

29. No answer.

30. No answer.



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## What is ACIR?

The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) was created by the Congress in 1959 to monitor the operation of the American federal system and to recommend improvements. ACIR is a permanent national bipartisan body representing the executive and legislative branches of Federal, state, and local government and the public.

The Commission is composed of 26 members—nine representing the federal government, 14 representing state and local government, and three representing the public. The President appoints 20—three private citizens and three federal executive officials directly and four governors, three state legislators, four mayors, and three elected county officials from slates nominated by the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National League of Cities/U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National Association of Counties. The three Senators are chosen by the President of the Senate and the three Representatives by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Each Commission member serves a two-year term and may be reappointed.

As a continuing body, the Commission addresses specific issues and problems, the resolution of which would produce improved cooperation among the levels of government and more effective functioning of the federal system. In addition to dealing with the all-important functional and structural relationships among the various governments, the Commission has extensively studied critical stresses currently being placed on traditional governmental taxing practices. One of the long-range efforts of the Commission has been to seek ways to improve federal, state, and local governmental taxing practices and policies to achieve equitable allocation of resources, increased efficiency in collection and administration, and reduced compliance burdens upon the taxpayers.

Studies undertaken by the Commission have dealt with subjects as diverse as *transportation* and as specific as *state and local taxation of out-of-state mail order sales*; as wide ranging as the *transformation in American politics* to the more specialized issue of *local revenue diversification*. In selecting items for the research program, the Commission considers the relative importance and urgency of the problem, its manageability from the point of view of finances and staff available to ACIR, and the extent to which the Commission can make a fruitful contribution toward the solution of the problem.

After selecting specific intergovernmental issues for investigation, ACIR follows a multistep procedure that assures review and comment by representatives of all points of view, all affected levels of government, technical experts, and interested groups. The Commission then debates each issue and formulates its policy position. Commission findings and recommendations are published and draft bills and executive orders developed to assist in implementing ACIR policy recommendations.