



A National Transportation Workforce Development Strategy: *A Roadmap to the Future*

1. Need

Our nation's transportation system depends at its core on a highly skilled and qualified workforce, both now and in the future. Already public and private transportation organizations face an ever increasing challenge finding qualified staff and managers. As the baby boom generation retires, there will be an exodus of experienced employees: up to fifty percent of the current transportation workforce could leave in the next ten years. With fewer people entering transportation-related fields, increasing competition for workers from other industries and difficulties in reaching women and minorities, replacing those retirees will be challenging.

At the same time and in the foreseeable future, delivering and managing transportation systems and services will require greater skills in areas such as financing, project management, sustainability, livable communities, and greater public engagement. These skills go beyond traditional engineering disciplines, which are themselves expanding to reflect new materials and technologies. As a result, the skills and abilities of the next generation of the transportation workforce will need to be substantially different from today's, as transportation organizations respond to rapidly changing demands and a transforming industry.¹

2. Response: A National Strategy

Current efforts to address transportation workforce development challenges are often fragmented, each focused on parts of the transportation industry or community with no coordinated strategy to address the whole. A more comprehensive and widely supported strategy is needed to develop the qualified and high-performing national transportation workforce required to meet the demands of the rapidly changing 21st century transportation system. Such a strategy must encompass all modes and meet the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT's) goals for safety, livable communities, economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and organizational excellence. A summit of

¹ [Report on 21st Century Workforce Development Summit](#): Wittwer, Adams and Toledo-Duran, University of Wisconsin, Madison, National Center for Freight & Infrastructure Research & Education, September, 2009

senior representatives from all transportation modes and services (both public and private), is contemplated for 2011, as a way to help shape the national strategy and provide a springboard for near-term action.

3. Expected Outcomes

- a. A coordinated, national approach among contributing partners
- b. New policy solutions to address workforce issues and produce a high-performing transportation workforce in the next twenty years (now to 2030)
- c. A roadmap to address the most pressing issues, such as:
 - recruiting and retaining qualified personnel;
 - filling current and future shortages in personnel;
 - defining competencies needed for a high-performing workforce;
 - identifying and closing gaps in transportation workforce training and education;
 - linking workforce planning and career pathways to enhance opportunities that benefit the transportation workforce and the industry.

4. Participants

- Policy- and decision-makers from USDOT
- Academic leaders in transportation education, training and professional development
- CEO's/agency heads of key industry stakeholder groups
- Executives from transportation-focused professional associations
- Education and training leaders from labor organizations
- Other workforce partners, such as those in the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education, as well as in state, regional and local governmental organizations

5. Support Needed

- Assistance in identifying and engaging participants for whom transportation workforce issues are very high priority
- Commitment by leaders to help draft/review an implementation plan that:
 - Frames issues for presentation and discussion;
 - Outlines a strategy for realizing mid-to longer range goals; and
 - Becomes a tool for managing commitments to implement specific recommendations
- Staff labor to plan and execute the tasks

6. Current Partners

As of March 10, 2010

Federal Agencies

- US DOT Office of the Secretary
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- Federal Railroad Administration
- Federal Transit Administration
- Maritime Administration
- National Highway Transportation Safety Administration
- Research and Innovative Technology Administration

Academic Institutions and Organizations

- Council of University Transportation Centers
- California State University at Long Beach
- Iowa State University
- Missouri University of Science and Technology
- Marshall University
- Montana State University
- North Dakota State University
- Pennsylvania State University
- Portland State University

- San Jose State University
- University of Denver
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- University of Southern California
- University of Tennessee, Knoxville
- University of Vermont
- University of Wisconsin, Madison
- American Association of Community Colleges

Professional Organizations

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
- Associated General Contractors of America
- American High-Speed Rail Alliance
- American Public Transit Association
- American Road & Transportation Builders Association
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- Community Transportation Association of America
- Eno Transportation Foundation
- Institute of Transportation Engineers
- Transportation Learning Center
- TRB Education and Training Committee

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