Use of Expert Panels in Developing Land Use Forecasts

Proceedings of a Peer Exchange Sponsored by the
Travel Model Improvement Program
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation

October 23-24, 2002

FHWA-EP-03-018

TMIP
Travel Model Improvement Program

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I. Executive Summary

The following report summarizes the results of a peer exchange on the use of expert panels to forecast the impact that transportation projects and programs have on land use and development. The exchange, organized and sponsored by the Travel Model Improvement Program (TMIP) , brought together representatives of state and local departments of transportation (DOTs), metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), academics, and transportation consultants. Case studies presented at the exchange show that expert panels can not only be cost-effective, but can also produce results that could improve upon other methods (such as land use models). Participants in the exchange identified the benefits of expert panels, their key characteristics, issues associated with their use, and lessons for using them effectively. The group also drafted recommendations for USDOT action to promote more widespread use of expert panels. In addition to a written report, video excerpts of the exchange will be made available on the TMIP website.

II. The Travel Model Improvement Program

The Travel Model Improvement Program (TMIP) is a multi-year, multi-agency program sponsored by USDOT and EPA, with the mission of supporting and empowering planning agencies through leadership, innovation and support of travel analysis improvements, to better meet current and future mobility, environmental, safety and security goals. TMIP began operations in 1992, and has three goals:

1. Help build the institutional capacity of planning agencies to perform technical analysis
2. Support development of analytical methods that respond to the needs of planning and environmental decision making processes, and
3. Support mechanisms to ensure the quality of technical analysis used to meet local, state and federal program requirements.

One specific challenge that the TMIP is helping DOTs and MPOs address is developing methods for estimating the land use impacts of transportation projects. Traditionally, a variety of methods have been used for this purpose, ranging from planning judgement and other qualitative techniques, to complex urban land use models. Models have the advantage of rigor; they can incorporate and analyze a large amount of information, which is important given the increasingly complex and dynamic relationship between land use and transportation. However, land use models are relatively expensive to use and their results are not always widely accepted by stakeholders, in part because models are sometimes viewed as a "black box", and decision makers and the public do not always trust the results. Planning analysts and development experts can sometimes provide a more nuanced and realistic understanding of a given land use and transportation context, but may be perceived as insufficiently objective or rigorous. Thus, there is a need to identify analytical methods that combine the rigor and objectivity of land use models with the sophisticated realism of analysts and experts.

Expert panels provide these strengths, and have been used with substantial success in varying contexts throughout the United States and the rest of the world. An expert panel is a diverse

group of individuals with access to current, high quality information relevant to a given land use and transportation context. In the case studies reported here, expert panels generally utilized some variation of the Delphi Method, whereby the group works within a structured process to respond to two or more rounds of questions in order to develop forecasts of land use impacts, typically employment, population, and housing distributions. The Delphi Method typically involves each panelist developing analysis independently, and then sharing that analysis with the group so that the panel as a whole can report out a single set of findings.[1] Within these fairly broad parameters, there are important variations in how any one expert panel may be structured and how it may function. Thus, there is a need for better understanding of the ways that expert panels may be used, their characteristics, and the issues associated with their use.

III. The Peer Exchange

Participants and Format

To help build the analytical capacity of State DOTS and MPOs, the TMIP organized a peer exchange on the use of expert panels to forecast land use impacts of transportation projects. The exchange, conducted on October 23 and 24, 2002 in Washington, DC, brought together nine individuals with experience participating in or utilizing expert panels. Dr. Michael Meyer, of the Georgia Institute of Technology , facilitated the peer exchange. A representative from the TMIP and two representatives from the U.S. DOT Volpe National Transportation Systems Center assisted in facilitating and documenting the exchange proceedings. A list of all participants is provided in the appendix to this report.

Three participants made presentations on their experiences with expert panels. Other participants posed questions and offered discussion both during and following each presentation. During the second day of the exchange, the group responded to a set of summary observations prepared by the exchange facilitator, modifying and adding to them to meet the exchange objectives.

Objectives

The exchange had five objectives:

1. Identify the benefits of utilizing expert panels to forecast the land use impacts of transportation projects and programs
2. Describe the characteristics of expert panels and how they are utilized
3. Identify the issues that typically attend the use of expert panels
4. Present a set of lessons learned for the effective use of expert panels
5. Develop recommendations for actions by USDOT to promote and support the use of expert panels

[1] For further detail on the definition of the Delphi Method and use of expert panels, see *The Use of Expert Panels in Analyzing Transportation and Land Use Alternatives*, a report prepared for the American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Standing Committee on Planning, and funded through the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Project 8-36, Task 04.

IV. Summary of Presentations

Neil Pedersen
Deputy Administrator, Maryland State Highway Administration

Pedersen highlighted the state's experience with use of expert panels in four corridor studies. Maryland has learned that traditional land use models cannot always incorporate important factors needed for decision-making—such as concurrency requirements—into their assumptions. Models also have been designed to focus on factors less central to land use impacts, such as accessibility and travel time. Most important, in certain cases land use models have produced results that didn't seem plausible to the key decision makers and this lack of credibility in the results would halt the approval process after much time and effort had been spent on the modeling process.

One project along the U.S. 301 corridor was aimed at helping the state to manage suburban sprawl. An expert panel was convened to forecast household and employment changes that would result from multiple proposed highway and transit project scenarios. The panel was comprised predominantly of local and regional real estate professionals, but also included a demographer and a nationally recognized transportation planning professional. The panel met in private to review, discuss and revise analyses developed independently by individual members. The panel achieved consensus on its forecasts and the committee that sponsored the panel's work endorsed its results.

Another corridor project, along Maryland 43 in Baltimore County, examined options for constructing a stretch of highway through a gravel mining area. Because the affected area included wetlands, the panel included and worked closely with local environmental interests. The panel was, Pedersen maintained, uniquely effective in incorporating environmental considerations into its forecasts. The panel produced forecasts of development for various highway alternatives in ways that models could not have done.

The third corridor project reviewed by Pedersen was Maryland SR 32, a eight mile section between MD 108 and I-70 near Columbia. The corridor had a very high fatal accident rate and significant congestion at peak travel hours. Two counties, Howard and Carroll, were affected. The counties are quite different politically and, hence, in their orientation toward land use. Pedersen observed that formal models cannot effectively account for such variations, whereas expert panels can. The proposed highway widening alternatives met with fierce resistance from nearby residents. A nine-member expert panel was convened to forecast housing and employment changes that would follow from several alternative highway build scenarios. The panel held a series of five meetings, each with extensive interaction. Due in part to the intensity of public interest, the panel met as a group in public. In the end, the panel was unable to reach consensus on its objectives. Pedersen noted that the panel's effectiveness was undermined by the presence of members who had advocacy positions or otherwise arrived to the panel with preconceived notions about desired outcomes. He noted the importance of objectivity in selecting panel members.

The final project was Maryland's I-270/U.S. 15 multi-modal corridor, a 30-mile stretch running through Montgomery and Frederick County. The area has a variety of land use issues and is

experiencing tremendous growth pressures. A ten-member expert panel was convened to assess the impacts of various combinations of highway and transit alternatives. In addition, the panel was charged with estimating changes for input into secondary and cumulative effect environmental analyses to meet NEPA requirements. This study presented a very complex challenge for the expert panel, which eventually divided the task into two phases. In the first phase, the panel prepared a qualitative assessment of strategies for three generic alternatives (no-build, highway, and transit). In the second phase, the panel prepared numeric forecasts of population and employment distributions for three transportation alternatives: no-build, combined light-rail and highway, and combined HOV/bus and highway.

The panel, facilitated by a consultant, had difficulty managing the tasks, but did manage to achieve credibility and consensus on its forecasts, in both phases.

Katherine Gray Still
Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade and Douglas, Inc.

Still summarized lessons learned from five case studies about the benefits of expert panels and the "steps for success" in their effective use. Two of the case studies were in Maryland (SR 32 and I-270/U.S. 15) and were previously reviewed by Pederson. Highlights of the other case studies are as follows:

1. Wisconsin DOT, U.S. 41

   Two panels, each with 14 participants, assess impacts on two small cities of multiple highway alignment options. Members of each of the panels did not meet, but completed mail-back surveys to provide their analyses.

2. Washington DOT, I-5

   A six-member panel forecast the impact on three small communities of various interchange and highway improvements. An expert panel was used because the project did not have the resources needed for a formal land use model and the DOT felt the process would be well-received by the project's stakeholders. In this case, the panel produced two rounds of written answers to open-ended questions which, Still noted, presented a substantial logistics challenge. Synthesizing and identifying common themes in their analyses proved time-consuming. The panel's findings were presented in a final, public meeting.

3. New Hampshire DOT, I-93

   A 14-member panel was convened. As in the Maryland I-270/U.S. 15 case, multiple highway and transit scenarios were considered, and secondary land use environmental impacts were estimated.

Still highlighted several of the leading benefits of expert panels. She noted that panels can provide rigorous analysis, without the technical and financial challenges of formal land use

models. Panels are also more comprehensive than relying on a single expert, a series of interviews, or case studies. Expert panels have the advantage of providing a flexible and adaptable process for generating the forecasts necessary for local and regional planning. Finally, Still observed that expert panels can incorporate the "messy" realities of urban development because they combine an understanding of theory, empirical knowledge, and a detailed understanding of local conditions.

Still identified six "steps for success," and included detailed recommendations for four of them.

1. Know the Big Picture
    - Spell out specific objectives
    - Define roles and responsibilities (including the client agency, stakeholder groups, and panel management)

2. Design the Process
    - Identify analysis parameters
    - Describe the panel's charge (e.g. What questions will they be asked? How will they answer them?)
    - Specify the format (e.g. feedback, anonymity, meetings)

3. Create the Panel
    - Determine who is an expert (Real estate analysts, developers, planners, academics, non-profit agencies)
    - Determine ideal size, which depends on type of analysis
    - Emphasize impartiality and commitment

4. Final Preparations

5. Manage the Process
    - Unforeseen events (e.g. panel needs more information)
    - Ending the process (stability and consensus, consent versus consensus)

6. Document the Results

Still concluded by emphasizing three key points about the use of expert panels. First, and overall, stay in control of details. Second, the client agency must avoid the perception that it has steered the panel outcome. Finally, while consensus is desirable, even in the absence of consensus an expert panel's products nonetheless typically provide a great deal of useful information.

Karen Owen
Longview, Texas Metropolitan Planning Organization

Longview, Texas has a population of approximately 75,000. The MPO covers an area of approximately 60 square miles. Owen presented lessons learned from the use of expert panels in two cases. The Growth Allocation Committee of 1998 was tasked with developing the twenty-

five year socio-economic forecast for the Longview travel demand model. In 2002, a Citizens Advisory Committee was charged with developing future land use maps in eleven planning areas. The land use maps are conceptual in nature, project up to a 20-year horizon and are intended to express the growth goals of the community.

The Longview expert panels drew widely from the community and included groups not typical of these panels, such as the clergy. Members were all volunteers. The panels numbered more than 40, though the effective size for any one meeting was typically closer to 20. Each panel held a total of seven one-hour meetings, scheduled bi-weekly. All work of the panels was done at the meetings, which were open to the public. MPO staff facilitated the panels. Each panel successfully achieved consensus on all objectives.

Owen emphasized the importance of managing information for the expert panels. Because the Longview panels were especially diverse, the ability of individual members to process and analyze information varied widely. Thus it was incumbent upon staff to structure information so that it would be as accessible as possible. Maps, charts and graphs were used whenever possible. Graphic representations of data, for example, were generally preferable to text. Owen also emphasized the importance of conducting meetings in a neutral setting, i.e. not city hall, so that members would feel comfortable speaking candidly, if necessary, about the local government. Despite the fact that members were not compensated for participating, Owen reported that participation levels were high. She did note the importance of encouraging engaged, articulate citizens to participate. Their enthusiasm sometimes spreads throughout the panel. Also, despite the especially wide diversity of membership, the panels had little difficulty reaching consensus on their decisions. Owen also observed that, despite the intensive staff support required, expert panels are a cost-effective alternative to formal land use modeling.

V. Peer Exchange Summary Observations

Characteristics of Expert Panels

Based on the case studies presented, the peer exchange described the typical characteristics of expert panels and the ways they are utilized.

As noted earlier, expert panels are utilized with some variation on the standard Delphi Method, whereby a diverse group of experts is convened and charged with generating a specific set of forecasts. Members of the group, each provided with equal access to information, work independently within a structured process to develop analyses in response to the panel's charge.

Characteristics

- Members possess knowledge of local context
- Process is visible
- Initial presentation given on regional numbers and how derived
- Start with a regional control number, then focus on redistribution
- Report to an oversight committee
- MPO is part of oversight panel
- Key stakeholders/groups structure the process
- MPO forecasts based on some "build" alternative
- Results used as part of secondary/cumulative impact analysis
- Efforts made to secure impartiality of panelists
- Room for different approaches

These individual analyses are then shared with the rest of the group, usually with each individual's anonymity preserved, and all are given an opportunity to ask questions of the various analyses. Panel members then separate again to respond to the questions and repeat the process. This iterative structure continues until members reach agreement on the forecasts they were charged with developing. Based on the cases reviewed during the peer exchange, it is unusual for a panel to go through more than two rounds of question-and-response.

The peer exchange participants observed that panel members are selected for their knowledge of the local market and land use context. Efforts are also made up front to secure the impartiality of panel members. To maximize its credibility, the panel must be perceived has having no current, direct stake in the outcomes that the panel's forecasts will shape.

Regarding the expert panel procedures, one defining characteristic is that the process is highly visible. This contributes to the panel's credibility and to public understanding of the forecasting effort. There is variation in the degree of visibility. In some cases, analysis of information is anonymous and private, whereas in other cases it may be open (in public meetings).

Panels typically report to an oversight committee, which, in the cases presented during the peer exchange, included the appropriate MPO. The MPO in the cases reviewed during the exchange did not initiate or otherwise manage the work of the expert panel. The exchange participants also noted that key stakeholders typically contribute to the composition and procedural design of the expert panel, which helps ensure that those stakeholders will find the panel's results credible.

In the cases reviewed during the peer exchange, the expert panel's work typically began with an initial presentation on regional transportation and land use estimates and how they were derived. Panels typically started from a regional control number, and thus focused on redistribution. Moreover, because MPO forecasts are based on some "build" alternative, expert panels typically do not include in their comparative forecasts any true "no build" alternative.

Participants also observed that, in some of the cases reviewed, results generated by the expert panels were used as part of secondary and cumulative environmental impact analysis.

Benefits of Expert Panels

Expert panels represent an alternative to formal land use models and can yield more effective and widely accepted results.

Benefits

- Credibility with stakeholders
- Provide visible response to sensitive issues
- Cost-effective
- Provide product comparatively quickly
- Product can be used for NEPA
- Can anticipate likely changes to land use

They are likely to have more credibility with stakeholders than models, in part because members of the community affected are represented on the expert panel. Thus expert panels will be an especially attractive method where detailed knowledge of local conditions is required.

Expert panels also provide a highly visible response to issues of land use, which is important, as these issues are invariably sensitive because of their consequences for the local community. Where local community values are in conflict, a relatively public and visible method for deriving impact forecasts is much more likely to be accepted and trusted than is a technical method such as a formal model.

Maryland turned to the use of expert panels for analysis of land use impacts of corridor projects after the assumptions underlying land use models—and the forecasts they produced—were questioned by stakeholders. Forecasts subsequently prepared by expert panels have been widely accepted by stakeholders. Panels can also be more flexible and adaptable than land use models. Experts can often account for planning and policy contexts in ways more subtle and complex than models.

Participants in the peer exchange also noted one other increasingly significant benefit of expert panels, derived from their use to generate secondary and cumulative environmental impact analysis: no better method has yet been identified for generating the products needed to meet NEPA requirements. Because NEPA requires public involvement, expert panels are a strong alternative to land use models or other methods.

Another benefit of expert panels is that they can prove a cost-effective alternative to land use models, especially for smaller MPOs for corridor studies. The costs of data, staff time, technical expertise and technology associated with models can be prohibitive for smaller organizations. Moreover, expert panels can also produce results more quickly than models, if the panels are composed, organized and managed appropriately. Expert panels also represent an attractive method for smaller metro areas, not only because of cost issues, but because the analytical demands should be reduced compared to a larger metro area. Panel members should be able to process the requisite amount of data and prepare meaningful forecasts for different scenarios.

Issues Regarding Use of Expert Panels

One of the most important products of the peer exchange was the identification of issues that may arise regarding the appropriate and effective use of expert panels to forecast the impacts of transportation projects.

Issues-Relationship to Other Organizations

- Role of MPO and implementing agency
- Risk for implementing agency
- Panel facilitation by sponsor

One cluster of issues centers on the ***relationship of the expert panel to other organizations and authorities***, especially the relevant planning agency, such as the MPO or DOT. As a primary source of information, the role of the planning agency is likely to be closely scrutinized and it is best if it is not seen as driving the process. The same is true for whatever agency or agencies would be responsible for implementing the transportation project in question. In cases presented at the peer exchange, planning agencies typically served on panels that oversaw the expert panels and helped with selection of panel members. Participants also observed that panel sponsors should be cautious

about facilitating the panel's work. A third party, such as a consultant specializing in facilitation, may be preferable.

Interestingly, the peer exchange concluded that the strengths of an expert panel—visibility, involvement of multiple experts—also create risk for the implementing agency, because the strengths correlate to reduced control over the forecast outcomes.

Issues-Panel Definition

- Capacity to address multimodal alternatives
- Who determines ground rules, and when
- How quantitative the process will be
- How many panel members
- Motivation of panel members (e.g., stipend)

A second set of issues centers on ***how the expert panel is defined***. This includes a question as fundamental as panel size. In the cases reviewed, panels ranged in size from as few as six (Washington DOT I-5 project) to more than 40 (Longview, TX). For any given context, the panel sponsor must consider the tradeoffs associated with varying panel sizes and the related information and staffing demands. Another fundamental issue observed during the peer exchange is member motivation. In some cases, members are provided a nominal stipend for their participation, whereas in others no compensation of any kind has been provided. Panel sponsors should determine whether some incentives are appropriate or necessary to ensure full and complete participation by the desired range of panel members.

Who determines the panel ground rules—and when—can be an issue when using this method. An expert panel must be given clear and detailed direction and kept on task, but it must also be left with some autonomy and flexibility if it is to function effectively and deliver credible results.

Perhaps most important with regard to panel definition is the nature of demands placed upon it. There may be variation in how quantitative the panel process is. In some cases, panels have been asked to provide rather detailed, quantitative forecasts, whereas in others that may have been asked only to provide ranges or fully qualitative analysis. Sponsors should anticipate the use to which the expert panel's product will be put and gauge how quantitative it is accordingly. The nature of the demands should also influence how the group itself is comprised. Similarly, sponsors should consider whether to ask their panels to prepare forecasts for multimodal alternatives. Maryland's experience with the I-270/U.S. 15 corridor indicates that, while a panel may complete its work, the complexity of the task may stress the panel's capacity to complete its work effectively and on time.

Issues-Panel Work Process

- Openness of the group review process
- Consensus versus consent
- How to keep panel within its charge

A third set of issues focused on the ***process by which the expert panel does its work***. One significant issue is how open the deliberative process will be. In some cases, the expert panel reviewed its individuals' analyses in a meeting open to the general public. This can lead, the peer exchange participants observed, to panel members being influenced by factors other than the analyses before them.

An issue that generated a good deal of discussion during the peer exchange is whether the panel is charged with achieving consensus on its objectives or simply some definition of consent. Consensus, by definition, requires unanimity, whereas consent can be satisfied by any number of decision rules. Given that one defining strength of the expert panel method is the credibility it carries, how the group conveys its conclusions can be very important. At the same time, the panel and its sponsors must be realistic. It may not be possible to achieve consensus on all items.

A final process issue is how to keep the panel focused on its charge. In some cases discussed during the peer exchange, panel members wanted to or found themselves moving from forecasting outcomes to prescribing mitigation measures. Maintaining a firm separation between those two efforts is an important responsibility of the panel facilitator.

The final cluster of issues identified by the peer exchange participants centered on the ***analytical decisions of the expert panel***. Participants observed that panels may face a number of decisions that will affect both how they do their work and what they produce. Anticipating these questions will help panel sponsors make their own decisions about panel composition, charge, and process. Specific questions noted during the exchange include the following:

Issues-Analytical Decisions

- How address other assumed transportation improvements in region
- How allocate district forecasts to TAZs
- How reconcile future population forecasts with zoning, vacant land, and existing development
- Can panel assume land use policy changes?
- Latitude to change control numbers
- Credibility of data sources

- How to deal with other assumed transportation improvements in region (including the long range constrained plan)?
- How to allocate district forecasts to Traffic Analysis Zones?
- How to reconcile future population forecasts with zoning, vacant land, and existing development?
- Can an expert panel assume land use policy changes?

Beyond these questions, any expert panel may also encounter questions regarding its analytical leeway. For example, how far can a panel go in questioning the credibility of the sources of data provided to it? Once these questions have been raised, what impact does this have on the panel's product and how it is used? Similarly, what latitude will a panel be given, if any, to modify existing regional control numbers? In the Maryland 301 corridor study, the panel questioned the validity of the land use forecasts baseline provided to it, and incorporated its questions into the analyses generated by the panel.

Lessons Learned

Based on the cases presented and the subsequent group discussion, participants of the peer exchange formulated a set of lessons learned about the appropriate and effective use of expert panels to analyze transportation and land use alternatives. These lessons may be organized broadly into considerations of panel design and management.

- **Design**

  Panel member selection is a critical consideration. Every effort should be made to select members who understand local real estate, land use, and political contexts. It is also essential to screen out members who have preconceived notions or a current conflict of interest. The Maryland 32 corridor study illustrates the difficulties that may arise if some members enter a panel and demonstrate a lack of objectivity in the process.

  Panel selection is also important as one aspect of the overall process design. Key decision makers and stakeholders must participate in or accept that design before the panel begins its work. Otherwise, their support of the panel's products cannot be ensured. Also, once the process is established, maintaining continuity throughout the life of the panel is important, as it supports perceptions of stability and credibility.

  Lessons-Panel Design

  - Select members who understand local real estate, land use and political contexts
  - Screen out members who have preconceived notions or conflict of interest
  - Anonymous/private analysis is best, but…
  - Make sure process is visible
  - Continuity over process is important
  - Key decision makers/stakeholders must buy into process up front
  - Obtain suggestions from panel
  - Need technical support for deliberations
  - Details of process are critical
  - Consider a hybrid of models and panel

  One of the defining strengths of the expert panel method is its credibility, which derives in part from the fact that it entails some measure of public involvement and is more visible than formal models or other methods. Panel sponsors should ensure that the process is visible to stakeholders and the public. While the panel members should prepare their analyses independently and those analyses should remain anonymous, the panel's group work should be accessible to interested parties. In the cases reviewed during the peer exchange, this has often meant panel meetings that are open to the public.

  Ensuring that adequate technical support is available, especially during the panel's group deliberations, will also strengthen panel design. Panel members are likely to generate questions that require further information or clarification; staff with the expertise to address those questions should be available.

  In general, the peer exchange participants emphasized that attending to small details of panel design significantly increases the chances of success. Details may include having a full range of potentially relevant data and information at hand, logistics of scheduling and meeting locations, establishing ground rules for how meetings will be conducted, and more. Anticipating and planning for these details will help minimize unexpected issues, and make those that do occur more manageable.

Finally, the facilitator or panel sponsor should ask members for feedback that will help improve the design of future expert panels.

- **Management**

  Panel facilitation is an important consideration. The facilitator must be neutral with regard to the issues under consideration by the panel. Thus, it is certainly best if the implementing agency (where this is applicable) does not handle the facilitation duties. A third party, separate from agencies that provide data or have some role in implementation, is ideal. The facilitator should have very strong interpersonal skills, to keep active groups on task, energize groups that may be flagging, mediate where disputes arise, and so on.

  Lessons-Panel Management

  - Facilitator needs to be neutral
  - Select a facilitator with strong people skills
  - Provide clear, precise initial charge
  - Remind panel its charge is not prescriptive
  - Manage presentation of information
  - Structure so that issues are manageable
  - Advise members on press relations

  The panel must be given a clear, precise charge when it begins work. It must be provided with specific questions and given direction as to the form in which those questions should be answered. This may be particularly important where the group's product will be largely qualitative. When giving the panel its charge, the facilitator should also emphasize (where this is applicable) that the panel's job is not to prescribe, but to estimate or forecast. Otherwise, panel members can easily, if unconsciously, move to specifying their preferences for how their community will evolve.

  Panel sponsors and the facilitator can also take several steps to make the panel's work as easy as possible to complete. This includes managing the presentation of information (as in the Longview cases) so that it is accessible to a wide audience of lay people. The tasks themselves can be structured to be manageable. This may mean breaking a large objective into smaller tasks, or moving from quantitative to qualitative objectives. The Maryland 32 case is instructive on this point.

  Finally, participants in the exchange noted that one often-overlooked aspect of expert panels is dealing with the press. Precisely because the process involves the community, is relatively visible, and addresses sensitive issues, it is likely to attract the news media's attention. Panel sponsors should provide members with guidelines, and perhaps some training, on how to respond to media inquiries. Sponsors should also anticipate media interest and plan the overall panel process accordingly.

VI. Recommendations

The final objective of the peer exchange was to develop recommendations for action that could be taken by the USDOT to promote and support the use of expert panels to analyze transportation and land use alternatives. Participants identified 10 recommendations:

1. **Develop training in the design and management of expert panels.**

2. **Make special effort to educate new MPOs on the benefits of expert panels.**

3. **Deliver TMIP seminars on use of expert panels.**

4. **Integrate the expert panel process into existing training, especially as it relates to NEPA.**

5. **Educate implementing and planning agencies regarding use of expert panels for environmental impact analyses.**

6. **Document and disseminate case studies and best practices for use of expert panels.**

7. **Provide example statements of work and/or requests for proposals (RFPs) for hiring consultant support on expert panels.**

8. **Work with AASHTO's Center for Environmental Excellence to encourage the use of expert panels.**

9. **Host and facilitate expert panel sessions at TRB annual meeting.**

10. **Support sessions at stakeholder meetings and conferences (e.g. AASHTO, AMPO).**

At the conclusion of the peer exchange, the participants suggested developing a statement and recommendation in the form of a letter, encouraging the U.S. DOT to support the use of expert panels as a best practice to meet the terms of Executive Order 13274. Signed by President Bush on September 18, 2002, one objective of EO 13274 is to "*identify and promote policies that can effectively streamline the process required to provide approvals for transportation infrastructure projects.*"

Appendix

Use Of Expert Panels In Developing Land Use Forecasts

Peer Exchange
October 23-24, 2002
Capital Hilton
1001 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036-5701

AGENDA

Wednesday- October 23, 2002

12 Noon-	Lunch
12:45	Welcoming Remarks by Cindy Burbank and Mike Culp of FHWA
1:00	Mike Meyer- Facilitator Ground Rules Introductions
1:15	Presentation by Neil Pedersen, MD SHA Discussion
3:15	Break- refreshments
3:30	Presentation by Katherine Gray Still, Parsons Brinckerhoff Discussion
5:00	Session Wrap up

Thursday-October 24

9:00 am	Breakfast
9:15	Presentation by Karen Owen, Longview Texas
10:30 noon:	Wrap up

- What are the major characteristics for the successful use of expert panels?
- What are the major lessons learned?
- What should FHWA/FTA do to further disseminate the characteristics of successful use of expert panels in land use forecasting?

Participants

Harvey S. Bloom	Baltimore Metropolitan Council
John Boiney	U.S. DOT, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
Cindy Burbank	U.S. DOT, FHWA – Associate Administrator, Office of Planning, Environment and Realty
Michael Culp	U.S. DOT, FHWA - Travel Model Improvement Program
Chris Forinash	U.S. EPA- Smart Growth
Bob Griffiths	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Michael Lester	Baltimore Metropolitan Council
Bart B. Lewis	Atlanta Regional Council - Research Division
Michael Meyer	Georgia Institute of Technology
Karen Owen	Longview, Texas Metropolitan Planning Organization
Neil Pedersen	Maryland State Highway Administration
Lamar S. Smith	U.S. DOT, FHWA – Office of Project Development and Environmental Review
Katherine Gray Still	Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade and Douglas, Inc.
Dan Thomas	North Carolina Department of Transportation
Tisha Weichmann	U.S. DOT, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center