

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS IN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The state Department of Transportation's (DOT) declared mission is to provide a safe, efficient, and cost-effective transportation system that meets the mobility needs of its users. A fundamental aspect inherent in DOT's mission and one of its strategic goals is the promotion of economic development.

Because mobility is an important aspect of economic activity, adequate transportation facilities are a crucial factor in promoting economic health and assist in maintaining competitiveness. Increasingly, multi-modal concepts are being offered to promote the efficient and cost-effective movement of people and goods on land, air, and water. Multi-modal concepts emphasize transportation networks between airports, seaports, roadways, and rail facilities to provide a basic framework for economic development to take place. The efficient flow of people and freight along these networks contributes to ensuring the vitality of economic activities.

Congestion and gridlock limit access to markets, increase costs, and can cause economic flows to locate elsewhere. Some of Connecticut's transportation linkages have been overwhelmed by increased traffic flows and may impede the region's access to global markets. The Department of Transportation plays a crucial role in eliminating these barriers to growth and development.

The primary focus of the department's efforts over the last 16 years, however, has been on the rehabilitation of the state's transportation infrastructure. By most measures, the physical condition of the state's transportation system has improved considerably and on-going maintenance remains a priority. Concerns, though, have been raised about a lack of attention to the overall strategic mobility needs of the state.

AREA OF FOCUS

This study will evaluate whether the Department of Transportation is organized, structured, and operated in such a way as to adequately respond to the strategic economic needs of the state in a timely manner.

AREAS OF ANALYSIS

- I. What is the role of transportation in economic development?

- a. Identify the relationship between transportation and economic development
- b. Describe the significance of multi-modal strategies in transportation planning
- c. Examine to what extent economic development strategies in the state consider transportation issues

II. How do DOT's planning and priority setting processes operate?

- a. Review DOT's transportation strategic planning process, including the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Master Transportation Plan
- b. Determine how internal priorities are developed among bureaus in the department
- c. Identify the role of the federal government, municipalities, regional planning organizations, and other state agencies in the planning process
- d. Review how border state activities are considered
- e. Examine how anticipated funding levels and environmental considerations affect the planning process

III. How effective is the link between the state's strategic economic planning process and DOT's strategic planning efforts?

- a. Evaluate the relationship between DOT and other state agencies involved in economic development and planning
- b. Determine if DOT's processes are responsive to the overall economic development strategies of the state
- c. Assess how multi-modal transportation concepts are incorporated into these processes
- d. If appropriate, propose recommendations to strengthen the link between transportation planning and economic development

AREAS NOT INCLUDED IN ANALYSIS

Effective and efficient transportation networks are only one part of a successful economic strategy. This study will not evaluate the

efficacy of the state's economic development programs or the goals of those programs.