

# **CENTRAL FLORIDA IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS: DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC-PUBLIC AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Public-private partnerships (PPP) and public-public partnerships (also known as Interjurisdictional Agreements) are key to successful Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) deployment in metropolitan areas. Almost by definition, the integration of ITS infrastructure components or subsystems requires agreements among transportation officials and agencies throughout a metropolitan area. PPPs have been part of the TEA-21 legislation and official policy pronouncements, and given greater emphasis than under ISTEA (ITS FAQs, 2000).

To validly evaluate both types of partnerships in light of their contribution to ITS deployment efforts, several criteria must be developed:

1. An understanding of what constitutes ITS deployment success.
2. Identification of what constitutes effective partnerships.
3. Evaluation of partnerships as they exist at various stages or points in time.

Furthermore, current or legacy infrastructure must be compared with planned or future efforts. Since ITS deployment is occurring rapidly, data may be out of date a year after it is collected. More important, ITS deployment in a given metropolitan area will likely continue into the future, which means that plans for future deployment have an impact on present activities and the assessment of their success.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the research project was to identify model public-private partnerships and public-public partnerships in the deployment of ITS in United States Metropolitan areas.

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

It will continue to be a challenge for public partners to define and refine their role in a PPP because the tendency toward treating private partners as if they were in a traditional vendor customer relationship is very strong among long-time public employees. This role evolution is heavily influenced by the process of choosing private partners and the resulting efforts that are made. The choice of private partners in the context of a given model is often complex and challenging. The key issues in PPP creation are (1) the quality and effectiveness of the technology (software and hardware) that is

deployed to collect and fuse the data; (2) the delivery of the information to the traveling public in terms of dissemination mode choice, and the reliability and accuracy of that data; and (3) the private business plan or marketing efforts that will determine how diligent the private partners will be in pursuing subscribers and advertisers in a given region. For the PPP to be successful, efforts to resolve all of these issues must succeed because activities in any one area will significantly impact the others.

Currently, there is no example of an ATIS PPP that can be judged successful or effective in terms of the number of users that have bought or adopted a customized, personalized service. Thus, currently none of the six models can be identified as best. The adoption of one model or another by a given metropolitan area depends upon several factors, including the nature of the ITS deployment prior to the formation of ATIS PPPs; the underlying philosophy, tradition or culture that identifies the public attitude toward or perception of the privatization of service delivery; the severity of the congestion; the public will to provide ATIS services; and the funds available to commit to transportation policy.

The major problem, supported by evaluative studies of existing ATIS deployment, is that the average traveler is not aware that customized information can be purchased. Few public websites identify private partners or provide links to their information. Success may come only when the role of the public partners is based more fully on the philosophy that it is in the public interest for private vendors to succeed—in terms of receiving a fair return on investment or making a profit.

Ultimately, as the customized market for ATIS evolves and greater numbers of travelers purchase these services, a private controlled model may be the best choice for many metropolitan areas. Only then will some degree of control and direction in terms of using private data collection and fusion for public purposes occur. As congestion becomes more severe, however, many areas may realize that the adoption of customized services, in addition to the free, publicly provided ATIS services, must become a public policy of higher priority. It seems unlikely that the will and the expense to make customized services a freely provided public good will develop in any American metropolitan areas. A public private partnership in which the private partner plays a significant role in providing these services remains the only option.

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