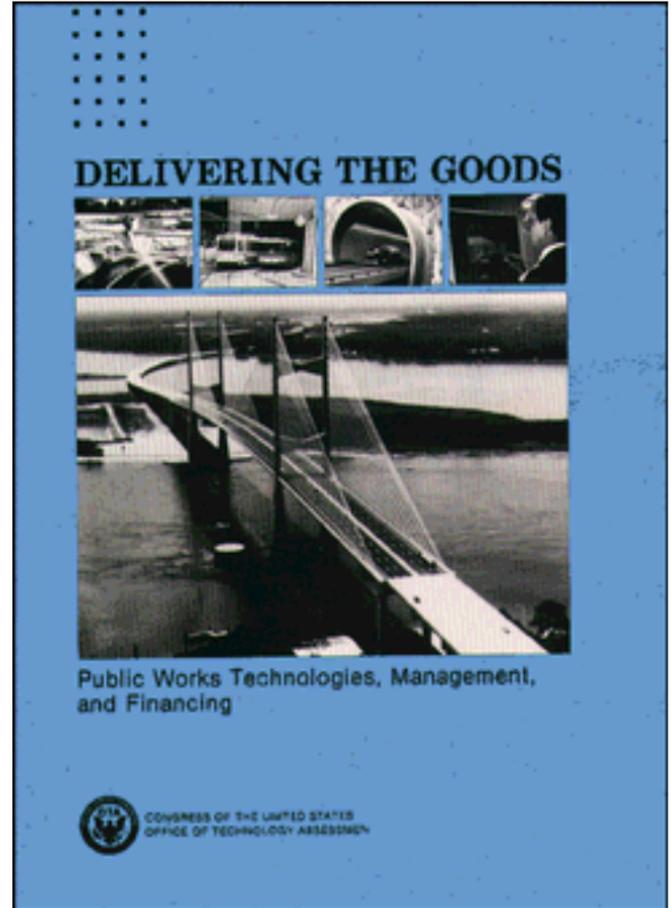


*Delivering the Goods: Public Works
Technologies, Management, and Financing*

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Foreword

Traffic jams and bridge lanes closed for maintenance create headaches for travelers and transportation officials, and public works directors would give their eyeteeth to find a way to solve leaking water pipe and storm water overflow problems. Such vexing difficulties are the legacies of years of neglect and underfunding for the infrastructure that provides vital public works services. In 1988, following a number of national studies calling in vain for more investment in public works infrastructure, the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation asked OTA to identify ways to change Federal policies and programs to mobilize management, financing, and technology efforts to make public works more productive and efficient. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Subcommittee on Transportation of the Senate Committee on Appropriations both expressed their interest and concern by endorsing the study.

OTA identifies several immediate steps the Federal Government could take. First, new environmental standards, population shifts, and industrial changes have transformed the nature of many public works problems, and Federal programs must be refocused to fit the new circumstances. Second, if we expect to maintain our economic health, the Nation must increase its investment in public works, despite budget dilemmas. As it stands now, critical infrastructure, such as bridges, Interstate highways, sewage pipes, and water systems, are breaking down or wearing out faster than we can repair or replace them. The toll on national productivity is already substantial, and, because infrastructure investment has been declining for at least a decade, the situation is likely to get worse before it can get better.

Reauthorization of the Federal highway program is the first piece of major public works legislation to reach the top of the Federal agenda for the 102d Congress. The priorities that OTA has identified should help Congress in its deliberations on this and other transportation and environmental legislation and lead to actions that will ensure the continued vitality of our country's infrastructure.

Members of the advisory panel, workshop participants, and a host of government, industry, and private citizen reviewers for this study provided an invaluable range of perspectives and information. OTA is grateful for the substantial commitment of time and energy given so generously by each. Their participation does not necessarily represent endorsement of the contents of the report, for which OTA bears sole responsibility.



JOHN H. GIBBONS
Director

Delivering the Goods: Public Works Technologies, Management, and Finance Advisory Panel

Carol Bellamy, *Panel Chair*
Principal, Morgan Stanley & Co., Inc.

Jon Lee Craig
Chief, Water Quality Service
Oklahoma State Department of Health

David Davis¹
Executive Director
New Jersey Highway Authority

Siro DeGasperis
Vice President, Public Affairs
United Parcel Service

Daniel Dudek
Senior Economist
Environmental Defense Fund

Hazel Gluck²
President
Public Policy Advisors

Anthony Hall, Jr.³
Chairman
Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority

Austin V. Koenen⁴
Managing Director for Public Finance
Morgan Stanley & Co., Inc.

Jerome Kruger
Department of Materials Science and Engineering
The Johns Hopkins University

Fred **Moavenzadeh**
Director, Center for Construction Research and Education
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

James **Poirot**
Chairman
CH2M Hill

Harry Reed
Planning Director
Arizona Department of Transportation

Burton Stallwood
Town Administrator
Lincoln, Rhode Island

Michael Uremovich
Vice President of Marketing
American President Companies

Theodore G. **Weigle, Jr.**⁵
Vice President and Manager,
Surface Transportation-East, **Bechtel** Corp.

¹~~Former~~ Executive Director, Massport

²~~Former~~ Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Transportation

³~~Former~~ Member, Houston City Council

⁴~~Former~~ Managing Director, Shearson, Lehman, Hutton, Inc.

⁵~~Former~~ Executive Director, Chicago Regional Transportation Authority

NOTE: **OTA appreciates** and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The panel does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full **responsibility** for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

Delivering the Goods: Public Works Technologies, Management, and Finance OTA Project Staff

John Andelin, *Assistant Director, OTA
Science, Information, and Natural Resources Division*

Nancy Carson,
Science, Education, and Transportation Program Manager

Edith B. Page, *Project Director*

Jonathan Atkin, *Analyst*

Julia Connally, *Analyst*

Walter Diewald, *Senior Analyst*

Kevin Dopart, *Analyst*

Sharon Burke, *Research Assistant*

Karen Mathiasen, *Research Assistant*

Daniel Broun, *Research Assistant*

Marsha Fenn, *Office Administrator*

Gay Jackson, *Administrative Secretary*

Tamara Cymanski, *Secretary*

George Branyan, *Research Analyst*

Ian Freed, *Research Analyst*

Ketan Patel, *Summer Intern*

Miriam Roskin, *Summer Intern*

Andrew Scott, *Intern*

Contractors

Analytical Services

Apogee Research, Inc.

Sarah Campbell

Robert Gordon Associates

Government Finance Research Center

L.E. Haefner Enterprises, Inc.

Thomas D. Hopkins

Rochester Institute of Technology

Rizwan *Salim*

Heywood Sanders

Porter Wheeler

Other Contributors

Federation of Materials Societies, National Association of Corrosion Engineers

Pacific Northwest Laboratory/Battelle through the Department of Energy