3.3.3   Success Through Innovation and Adaptation

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The struggle to balance the shrinking budgets and resources with the increasing customer needs is a challenge for most of the state Department of Transportations to resolve. The demand by both internal and external customers for traffic and spatial data in all formats has grown. The Georgia Department of Transportation's Office of Transportation Data (OTD) has expended a significant amount of strategic planning and effort on improving efficiency and reducing costs through multiple approaches ranging from reorganizing staff to changing business practices. For the past several years, OTD has been striving to transform itself.

OTD's primary mission is the collection, quality assurance and reporting of the state's roadway and traffic data, as well as the administration of the four major highway systems within the state (the State Highway System, the U.S. Route System, the Highway Functional Classification System, and the National Highway System). OTD is also tasked with producing the Official State Transportation Map, 159 County Maps, and various specialty map products. OTD is responsible for the submission of the annual HPMS Report, as well as other federal and state reports.

In fiscal year 2010, OTD had 84 positions, but by the close of 2013 there are only be 40 positions available to meet program requirements. In order to complete its mission with the reduced resources, OTD has made several key changes to the dynamics of the staff organization in order to accomplish its goals. The changes included: 1) increasing the technical and overall skill level of the staff through training, 2) acquiring new talent, and 3) reorganizing the office from a hierarchical branch structure to a cross-trained, matrix structure. Additionally, consultants have been brought on board to assist with the tasks as well as train the staff.

Business processes have been changed in order for OTD to accomplish its responsibilities. In the past, OTD hand collected data from field surveys and performed laborious, manual data entry processes. Presently, OTD has turned to an office based data collection process that focuses on data mining existing department systems; establishing data sharing relationships with local government entities; extracting and validating data from aerial imagery and the Department's video log images.
OTD has also utilized service contracts for collection of traffic data as well as for support of applications that present our data to the public. These service contracts are more economical than performing these duties with in-house staff. OTD has also trended away from the manual data entry of the past in favor of more automated processes.

In order to meet the existing program objectives with reduced resources, OTD has reorganized the office into a smaller, more versatile, tech-savvy workforce and utilized service contracts, where appropriate. This workforce is accomplishing their mission in new and creative ways that include data mining existing department systems, forming data sharing agreements, utilizing automated methods for data entry and integration, as well as managing service contracts to meet program requirements. OTD has met the budget and resources challenges with innovative methods and is actively planning for the future.