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A Time for a Change: Rethinking GIS to a Transportation Enterprise.

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GIS systems are now well established within state transportation agencies. Their processes are matured and "baked in." However, their historical orientation to early project development phases (Planning, Environmental, etc.) has created an information gap for agencies. Projects don't exist in isolation. The same areas are maintained, re-examined, and developed/improved many times. Project data lives in and becomes part of a larger ecosystem of transportation enterprise information. MAP-21 has a strong emphasis on streamlining and innovation. The law challenges DOTs to be leaner and smarter. GIS has an opportunity to re-envision itself to help information flow through not only the lifecycle of a single project (from GIS to CADD back to GIS), but also throughout the larger transportation information ecosystem. GIS must be redesigned to help as-builts feed asset management systems that then feed Planning and Design processes that feed machine control in new projects. By stepping back and seeing and then supporting the larger enterprise information flow, GIS can provide critical analytical and information management services that will greatly streamline asset management and project development efforts. Repositioning GIS will allow DOTs to leverage their entire information stream thereby realizing the goals of MAP-21 to better evaluate investment performance, improve safety, and benefit the traveling public.