



# From the Margins to the Mainstream

A Guide to Transportation Opportunities in Your Community

## Acknowledgements

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**STPP** is a 501(c)(3) national coalition of more than 650 organizations working to promote transportation policies that expand transportation options for everyone, conserve energy, protect the environmental and aesthetic quality of neighborhoods, promote access to those now under served, including seniors and persons with disabilities, and strengthen the nation's economy. The coalition is supported by contributions from coalition members, foundations, individuals, and corporations.

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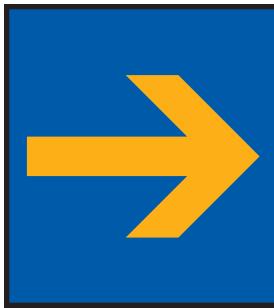
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“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead



# Foreword

For nine years I served as secretary of transportation in two states, New Jersey and Delaware. People often ask me why I chose to lead a public advocacy organization.

I came to STPP convinced that a well-organized and informed corps of citizen advocates is an essential, and maybe **the** essential element in achieving a different transportation system—a system that provides travel options for all residents within our communities and among regions, where sidewalks and streets are safe for our kids to walk to school and our parents to walk to the library, and where investments revitalize our existing communities and support a healthy economy. My time as President of STPP has strengthened my conviction.

The passage of the *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act* (ISTEA) in 1991 (reaffirmed in TEA-21) set the stage for a new era in transportation reform. The changes to the law aimed to advance needed reforms. These included: greatly strengthened planning requirements; flexibility in the use of funds; meaningful public participation; greater attention to safety and system preservation; equal federal match for highway and transit investments; and control by larger metropolitan areas over a modest share of federal funds.

Over the past 15 years, we've seen many advances, and it's worth celebrating the significant increases in new transit lines, sidewalks, and bike paths/lanes. Yet, the proportion of funding devoted to designing safe, healthy, livable communities, creating greater transportation choices, and enhancing access for people and freight remains well below what the public is demanding. Regrettably, the flexibility and the tools made possible under ISTEA have been unevenly embraced. It should be no surprise that the public is increasingly dissatisfied with the results produced from old policies and priorities and is looking for new answers to congestion, traffic speeding through their neighborhoods, the lack of travel choices, bumpy roads, and old buses.

The recent approval of more than \$240 billion (FYs 2005–2009) for federal transportation programs provides the opportunity to shape transportation investments over the next few years. The challenge is to ensure these resources produce the outcomes that the public wants to see. The lack of a clear direction for the future threatens to deflect ad-



vocates' attention to protecting their piece of the pie instead of working together for fundamental change.

Fortunately, signs of change are emerging as more people realize:

- Just building more roads will not fix today's problems.
- The public is demanding a better set of travel options.
- Reinvesting in our existing communities can be very profitable for both local governments and the development community.

It is becoming increasingly clear that current policies are doing real harm to our existing communities, to those who are unable to drive, and to families struggling to make ends meet. The evidence is compelling that today's transportation decisions are exacerbating health costs and increasing our reliance on fossil fuel.

As we look to the future, some tough questions need to be addressed:

- Will we embrace the concept of healthy, livable communities that serve a diverse population and make travel choices a priority?
- Will we help our older citizens stay connected to their communities, interests, and activities that are the linchpin to maintaining their health when they no longer are able to drive?
- Will we protect our neighborhoods from the onslaught of trucks engaged in global trade?
- Will we endorse transportation policies that reduce our energy consumption?
- Will we commit to a truly interconnected network of transportation options that serves a wide variety of different travel preferences?
- Will we manage growth to minimize our infrastructure costs and make the best use of our existing roads and transit services?

Furthermore, the slowness in adapting to new flexibilities and requirements has encouraged a huge increase in designated or "earmarked" projects, bypassing planning and capital programming processes altogether.

So what can we do?

Engaging in the transportation decision-making process is the best way to have a real voice in determining the investments that our nation will make in the next few years. This *Guide* is designed to help change the course of transportation investment. After all, it is our neighborhoods, our communities, and our money that are at stake.

At STPP, we are committed to working in partnership with you to make our communities great places to live, work, and play.

**Anne Canby, President, STPP**

*January 2006*



Livable communities are places where people want to live, work, and play. They are communities where there is a mix of housing for all income levels, and where good schools, accessible public transportation and other transportation options link people to jobs and recreation. Walking and bicycling are supported by a well-designed network of sidewalks, paths, and trails. Streets and sidewalks are safe and inviting for people of all ages and physical abilities. Roads and bridges are in good condition. Freight moves smoothly by a combination of modern clean trucks and railways. Historic buildings, scenic vistas, and nearby open spaces define the special character of the community. The air and water are healthy and clean. Land-use plans support walking, bicycling, and transit choices. Businesses want to locate there and contribute to the economy. Most importantly, citizens are involved in making decisions that affect their future—and their government treats them as valued partners in this endeavor.

Is this an idealistic pipedream or a realistic possibility? Thanks to local determination and transportation investments, millions of Americans are taking steps each day to realize their dream of a more livable community.

### **Why a Guide to Transportation Opportunities**

Transportation is defined as “the act of transporting someone or something from one location to another.” In America, this simple act has created a complex system of money, machines, and physical structures that affects virtually every activity in our daily lives. This extends from safely crossing the street to being on time for work, from grocery shopping to moving freight, from the air we breathe to the taxes we pay. Transportation is second only to housing as the largest expenditure that affects every American pocketbook every day.

*From the Margins to the Mainstream: A Guide to Transportation Opportunities in Your Community* is designed to demystify some of the complexities of the transportation laws, programs, and processes. The *Guide* can help take advantage of opportunities to make communities healthy, safe, and livable. A primary strategy to accomplish this is to create greater transportation choice and access for people and freight.

### This Guide is for ...

- Citizens and elected officials who are new to transportation policy, planning, and projects;
- Transportation advocates who are ready to move from narrow issues to a larger framework;
- Professionals in transportation who may want to help citizens gain a basic understanding of the work they do and the demands they face;
- Neighborhood groups that want to expand transit, slow traffic, and fix sidewalks and paths for the safety of older adults, kids, and others; and
- Many others who want better transportation outcomes.

Producing good outcomes is the ultimate test of how well the system works. How do you get transportation plans to articulate a vision of where your community is headed and the strategies to get there? How do capital programs include projects that fulfill the vision of the plan? What can be done to make public decision-making transparent so that the public easily understands the decisions and anticipated outcomes? How can we hold public officials accountable for such outcomes?

This *Guide* provides ideas on how the federal surface transportation law (SAFETEA-LU) can help answer these questions. It is based on a belief that, while individuals can make known their wishes and preferences, organized coalitions focused on a common purpose can have a greater impact on future transportation choices. To transform opportunities into accomplishments, it is helpful to have a basic understanding of the planning process, funding allocation methods, and how ideas become projects that get built using the tools in the federal law.

*Chapter I: From the Margins . . .* explains the key players, briefly reviews the evolution of transportation law, and makes the case for advocates to get involved in moving from the margins to the mainstream of transportation investment.

*Chapter II: Getting In the Game—Planning is Fundamental* and *Chapter III: Paying for What You Want—Money Matters* provide basic information on using the key planning tools and how the money works.

*Chapter IV: Designing Safe, Healthy, Livable Communities* and *Chapter V: Creating Greater Transportation Choice and Access* identify specific funding opportunities to fix what is broken, save and enhance what is unique, promote public health through bicycling and walking, protect the environment, improve transportation safety and security, relieve traffic congestion, provide for all users of the transportation network, build an integrated public transportation system, enhance movement of freight, and improve all aspects of rural transportation.

*Chapter VI: . . . To the Mainstream* sets out broad strategies to help citizens be more effective in achieving community goals.

## THE PLAYERS

### Who decides what?

A diverse set of players makes transportation decisions. Sometimes, these interests work together; at other times, they work at cross-purposes, without knowledge of the needs and plans of others. Congress has built in a great deal of flexibility for how funds can be applied to meet local needs; however, control over most of these funds is concentrated at the state level. Finally, with so much money at stake, and with so much of our national future riding on the quality of transportation, we need to set the “refresh button” on how decisions are made and who will benefit.



## How we move from the “margins” ...

For many years transportation policy was made almost entirely from the top down, with Federal and state officials often deciding what and where to build, with few environmental or other constraints. Citizens were marginalized and were seldom included in planning for projects in their communities. From the late 1950s through the mid-1970s,

Major Transportation Players	
THE PLAYERS	THEIR ROLES/ WHAT THEY CONTROL
<b>National</b>	
<b>Congress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Enacts national transportation laws</li> <li>→ Approves funding levels for transportation programs</li> <li>→ Enacts annual transportation appropriations; designates certain funds to specific states and transit agencies</li> <li>→ Maintains oversight for implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)</b> <b>Federal Transit Administration (FTA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Establish rules, regulations, and guidance to interpret how laws are to be carried out and manage programs</li> <li>→ Provide technical assistance on planning, best management practices; support research</li> </ul>
Others including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of the Interior, Federal land management agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Have a role in some aspects of planning, project review and/or project implementation, helping to determine protections for public health, environmental and historic resources, parks, and other resources that may be impacted by transportation.</li> </ul>
<b>State</b>	
<b>Governor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Appoints the head of the state DOT and often, members of a state transportation board</li> <li>→ Submits legislation to the state legislature</li> <li>→ Initiates the state budget process</li> </ul>
<b>Legislature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Enacts state transportation laws and annual transportation appropriations</li> <li>→ Approves funding levels for state programs</li> <li>→ Maintains oversight for implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Transportation (DOT) and/or State Transportation Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Plans, designs, builds, and maintains state highway system</li> <li>→ Owns, and operates other transportation facilities—ferries, airports, transit services, rail lines</li> <li>→ Develops statewide long-range transportation plan and transportation improvement program</li> </ul>
<b>Air Quality Planning Agency</b> (may be a regional agency in some metropolitan areas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Develops regional emissions budget for each metropolitan area where air quality exceeds national standards established to protect public health</li> <li>→ Determines emissions budgets for mobile sources that must be reflected in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)</li> </ul>

Major Transportation Players (cont.)	
THE PLAYERS	THEIR ROLES/ WHAT THEY CONTROL
Regional	
<b>Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Primarily a planning body and usually does not control land use or operate transportation facilities</li> <li>→ Governed by a board of local elected officials, local and state transportation agency representatives and state representatives</li> <li>→ Prepares a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that meet the air quality emission budget (in non-attainment areas)</li> <li>→ Directly controls only a limited amount of federal funds for projects</li> </ul>
<b>Regional/Local Transit Agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Plan for and operate transit services, including paratransit; usually separate from state department of transportation</li> <li>→ Must coordinate with MPO in development of LRTP and TIP</li> <li>→ Larger systems are direct recipients of federal transit funds</li> </ul>
Local	
<b>Elected Officials (Mayor, County Executive, City and County Council Members)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Control local revenues but, with the exception of California, often have little authority over federal highway dollars, even though their jurisdictions own and operate roads, streets, bridges and nearly one-half of all Federal-aid highways (varies by state)</li> <li>→ Serve on the MPO Board with state transportation agency, regional transit agency and others appointed by the governor</li> </ul>
<b>Local Department of Transportation/Public Works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Manages and operates local roads, streets, bridges, and a share of Federal-aid Highways (varies by state)</li> <li>→ Some projects funded through MPO process</li> </ul>
<b>Local Planning Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Develops local comprehensive land use plan including elements for transportation that the MPO is supposed to consider in setting priorities</li> </ul>

federal transportation funds were focused on construction of the Interstate Highway System—a 42,500-mile network of high-speed, limited-access highways that linked the country, often called the greatest public works project in history.

As city residents learned that Interstate plans called for taking huge swaths of land that would wipe out existing urban communities, they began to organize intense campaigns to save their neighborhoods. Some were successful. For example, Memphis saved Overton Park; New Orleans saved the French Quarter, but not the North Claiborne neighborhood; and Washington, DC saved a large swath of the National Mall, but not the Southwest neighborhood. Many cities were not at all successful and suffered massive dislocations, especially in older, low-income African American and other minority neighborhoods. Highways bisected city neighborhoods and converted large amounts of urban land, including valuable riverfronts, to high-speed expressways. By connecting the city with outlying rural areas, the Inter-

state also contributed to a substantial population shift from cities to new suburbs and beyond.

With the growth of the environmental, civil rights, and disability rights movements in the 1960s through the 1980s, attention turned to protecting public health and natural, scenic, and historic resources; and to gaining accessibility to public transportation for all people, regardless of their abilities.

In 1991, advocates from a broad spectrum of national organizations worked with far-sighted leaders in Congress under the umbrella coalition of the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP) on sweeping amendments to transportation law (U.S. Code: Title 23, Highways, and U.S. Code: Title 49, Transportation). Known as the *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act* (ISTEA), these amendments included provisions to move beyond the Interstate era, to change the nature of projects that were built, and to begin a new era of greater collaboration and balance.

Since 1991, the fundamental changes of ISTEA have been sustained and extended through the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* (TEA-21) of 1998 and the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005. However, the promises of ISTEA, TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU are still largely unfulfilled.

### ...To the “mainstream”

The transportation “mainstream” is in view. By what route will we arrive?

Many advocacy groups are beginning to move beyond their own “niche” agendas to forge a greater role in shaping transportation policies and priorities. ISTEA spurred many new and established groups at the local, regional, and state levels to advocate successfully for more transit, bike, and pedestrian facilities, environmental conservation and historic preservation as well as new transportation policies and priorities.

Other groups have joined in—organizations representing children, older adults and persons with disabilities; advocates for social equity, environmental justice, and public health; and businesses and unions whose future depends on the quality and viability of community life. Interest in transportation policies and priorities is gaining ground outside the circle of engineers and builders that has dominated the discussions for so long. Today as never before, advocates realize that all will benefit from working together in strong coalitions.

Congress and the federal agencies have prepared the way with a wide range of programs and policies that, if states and local agencies so choose, provide many opportunities to advance new approaches and adopt new practices.

Today, the states, and to a lesser degree, MPOs, control the transportation mainstream. They have the authority and the funding to plan, to program, and to deliver. How they use this power varies widely from one jurisdiction to another, from one region to another, and from one state to

#### Key ISTEA Innovations

- Funding flexibility to spend funds previously limited to one means of transportation on other means
- Emphasis on connecting modes including autos, buses, trains, sidewalks, bicycling facilities, and trails
- Greater local and public role in planning and decision-making
- MPO control over a portion of the funds, including establishment of special programs to minimize impacts and enhance transportation investment from a community and environmental perspective

## Transportation Law Terminology

This *Guide* uses the term **federal transportation law** to refer to US Code: Title 23, Highways, and US Code: Title 49, Transportation as amended by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, the National Highway System Act (NHS) of 1995; the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) of 1998 and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005.

Where the 2005 amendments to federal transportation law have created new programs or made significant changes to the statutes, we identify them as part of SAFETEA-LU.

The *Guide* focuses on the full range of programs and policies under federal law, not just those most recently enacted.

another. Some have been progressive and far-sighted; others have been slower to adopt new methods and models. Some are reaching out to implement new approaches, actively engaging the public and using their funding flexibility for a wide range of community improvements. Others resist. Redefining the mainstream will require more collaboration between agencies and advocates. States, regional agencies, and local governments, with an engaged public, must each find the path to better outcomes for their communities. This means greater openness to new approaches, flexibility in how investments are made, and public willingness to stay engaged in the decision-making process. These collaborations will improve the overall performance of the transportation system.

## Why You Should Care

Why should community advocates invest their scarce time and energy in a complex, jargon-ridden transportation decision-making process that produces more of the same approaches that have contributed to growing congestion, an unacceptable number of fatalities, and degradation of our communities?

Advocates can affect the decision-making process. First, you can help change transportation outcomes if you **know the rules and follow the money**. Congress has provided billions of dollars for these programs—more than \$240 billion from 2005-2009. State officials, and to some degree, local officials will decide how to spend those dollars. Those choices will affect everyone's daily lives. All of these are possible: new and rehabilitated buses; ferries; highways and bridges; passenger rail; and freight rail; road and transit safety and security; bicycle facilities and trails; sidewalks; bus stops; readable street signs; rehabilitation of train stations and protection of scenic views; restoration of air quality, mitigation of storm water runoff and protection of wildlife; public transportation in national parks and on public lands; and much more. SAFETEA-LU has strengthened existing programs and added new ones to address community concerns.

Second, you can **make a difference**. More than any other federal law, transportation law vests control of planning and funding with local and state elected officials and professional staff where citizens can have a discernible impact. Federal law establishes rules and guidelines, but it allows great flexibility to states to define their priority problems and invest in solutions to fix them. Advocates can, and do, affect the outcomes that benefit their families and communities. SAFETEA-LU further strengthens your hand by requiring transportation planners to use visualization techniques for their plans and to post information electronically showing how the funds were spent.

Third, you can **leave a legacy for the future**. America has a long history of civic engagement. As French author and statesman Alexis de Tocqueville noted in *Democracy in America* (1835):

## Selected Milestones in Federal Transportation Policy, 1956–Present

YEAR	ACTION
1956	<b>Federal Aid Highway Act</b> and <b>Highway Revenue Act</b> established the means to fund the Interstate Highway System, and determined who made the decisions.
1964	<b>Urban Mass Transportation Act (UMTA)</b> , the first U.S. government public transportation program.
1964	<b>Civil Rights Act, Title VI</b> prohibited discrimination in any program receiving federal assistance.
1966	<b>Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f)</b> protected parks, recreation areas, wildlife refuges, and historic sites.
1966	<b>National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106</b> required federal agencies to attempt to resolve “adverse effects” of their projects on historic sites listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places.
1969	<b>National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)</b> mandated all federal agencies to consider the potential social, natural environmental, and cultural consequences of their proposals and alternatives.
1970	<b>Clean Air Act (CAA)</b> required states to achieve and maintain air quality standards, leading to regulatory plans to control pollution from transportation sources.
1972, 1977	<b>Clean Water Act, Section 404</b> established a program to regulate the discharge of dredged and fill material into waters U.S. waters including wetlands. Regulated activities include infrastructure development such as highways and airports.
1978	<b>Surface Transportation Act</b> was the first time Congress considered transit, highways, and safety in the same legislation.
1980	<b>Staggers Act</b> deregulated railroads, helped them regain their profitability, yet also set in motion two decades of merger, consolidation, and disinvestment in rail.
1990	<b>Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)</b> required virtually all public transportation service to be accessible to persons with disabilities.
1990	<b>Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA)</b> set more stringent requirements for transportation plans to contribute to timely attainment of healthy air quality and comply with adopted air pollution control plans.
1991	<b>Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)</b> , landmark transportation reform amended federal transportation law, created programs oriented toward community building, and strengthened public involvement and shared decision-making with localities.
1995	<b>National Highway System Act (NHS)</b> designated 160,000 miles (256,000 kilometers) of roadway as important to the nation’s economy, defense, and mobility.
1998	<b>Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)</b> continued and extended reforms of ISTEA, added some new programs, and designated special projects
2005	<b>Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)</b> continued most ISTEA reforms; emphasized transportation safety and security; added requirements to coordinate transportation plans with environmental and land use plans; and supported thousands of special projects.

*In towns it is impossible to prevent men from assembling, getting excited together, and forming sudden passionate resolves. Towns are like great meetinghouses with all the inhabitants as members. In them the people wield influence over their magistrates and often carry their desires into execution without intermediaries.*

America's "passionate resolves" have left a rich legacy of beautiful buildings and quaint neighborhoods, graceful parks, elegant boulevards, and rolling landscapes. Now Americans have the opportunity to apply their energy and to "wield influence" to conserve the past while charting a new course for the future by using the tools in the transportation law.

Remember this: **If you don't help decide how to spend our nation's transportation money, someone else will.** 🟡



# Getting in the Game: Planning is Fundamental

This chapter, along with *Chapter III: Paying for What You Want: Money Matters*, are the cornerstones for understanding how transportation decisions are made and how to get decisions that produce good outcomes.

## Overview

This chapter is designed to help community leaders and advocates participate effectively in the transportation planning process that, for the most part, drives decisions about what gets built.

Success in setting priorities and committing money to projects that will provide real travel choices, improve access, and enhance the flow of goods begins with the plans that a state transportation department, transit agency, regional planning organization, or local government develops.

Transportation investments can have a significant impact on a community. For this reason, the federal transportation law provides one of the most open and accessible planning processes in government. But good planning by itself is no guarantee that the best answer will prevail because in the public sector, investment decisions are not made solely on the basis of planning.

Transportation planning has improved over the past 15 years as a result of the provisions in the 1991 amendments to federal transportation law. In a number of places, the value of good planning

### Key Planning Features

- State transportation departments, transit agencies and the metropolitan organizations or MPOs are the main players;
- Transportation planning requirements and processes are comprehensive, involve multiple levels of government and stakeholders, and produce a variety of products;
- The statewide and metropolitan long-range transportation plans (LRTP), and the multi-year capital programs (known as the transportation improvement program—STIP for the state and TIP for metropolitan regions) are the two key planning products that drive other activities;
- Other planning efforts play important roles in determining what gets built and how transportation investments can be used to improve communities. These include: freight studies, transit system expansion, highway safety, security of the transportation system; specialized planning studies for sub-regional areas, corridors, transit service, including coordination of social service transportation; and NEPA documents (the Environmental Impact Statement, Environmental Assessments, Categorical Exclusions). Elements from these planning activities may be incorporated into the long-range plans and capital programs; and
- Federal law and regulations provide standards for public participation.

## Who's Who

**Metropolitan planning organization (MPO)**—The organization designated by agreement between the Governor and representatives of 75% of the population of the metro area, including the largest incorporated city.

**Transportation Management Areas (TMA)**—MPOs with 200,000 or more population.

**State transportation agency (DOT)**—Also known as the DOT or Highway Department. This agency is responsible for the roads and bridges that are on the state highway system. Some DOTs have responsibility for other transportation facilities and services as well—airports, ports, and transit systems.

**Transit agency**—The regional, local, or state agency that plans and operates transit services in the metro area or the providers of transit services in the rural areas of a state.

is gaining credibility as the results come in and early engagement with the public is seen to be a productive way to reach consensus and get a better product. But old priorities die hard, new possibilities take a long time to sink in, and working with the public is sometimes not regarded as a choice assignment. So in some places, planning is still viewed through the lens of project development with less emphasis on preparing a long-range plan that meets the spirit as well as the intent of the law or a project that is sensitive to the context of a community.

Sections in this chapter discuss the long-range transportation plan (LRTP); the transportation improvement program for both the state and the metropolitan region (STIP & TIP); air quality requirements; planning activities that help define and shape transportation priorities and projects; public participation; environmental justice; protecting the environment; monitoring the performance and outcomes of the long-range plan and the results of the projects being built.

## The Players

Transportation planning involves several levels of government and different planning products. The three main transportation planning agencies are the state transportation agency, the transit operator, and the metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Cities and counties also undertake transportation planning along with regional planning organizations in rural areas.

The public, encompassing a wide range of stakeholders, has opportunities to comment on the LRTP, the capital program or TIP, and other plans and studies. If an agency is so disposed, the public can shape these products.

## The Basic Planning Framework

Planning requirements vary depending on the population of an area. For areas with less than 50,000 population, the state transportation agency plays the lead role in developing the transportation plan and the capital program (STIP). For areas with a population of 50,000 or more, the MPO is responsible for developing the long-range plan and the TIP.

The law calls on state and local officials to work cooperatively in developing both the long-range plan and the capital program (STIP/TIP). Regulations issued by the federal agencies guide this relationship and spell out the expectations for cooperation and consultation.

**The Long-Range Plan—A 20-Year Look into the Future.** The plans prepared by the state DOT and the MPO must consider and, in some cases, include: demographic analysis such as age, size of the workforce, any shift in housing patterns and travel patterns and trends; and also current conditions such as congestion and safety, the condition of the roads, bridges, transit vehicles and facilities, and other key infrastructure.

Plans must “provide for the development and integrated management and operation of transportation systems and facilities (including accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) that will function as an intermodal transportation system for the (metropolitan planning area or state). . . .” They may lay out a broader vision and context for transportation issues or focus more narrowly on the investments necessary to meet the “needs” defined in the transportation plan. Plans are also supposed to establish goals and performance criteria.

Federal law directs that the long-range plan **considers projects and strategies** that will:

- support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area;
- increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- increase the security of the system;
- increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;
- protect . . . the environment and promote energy conservation;
- enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes for people and freight;
- promote efficient system management and operations; and
- emphasize the preservation of the existing system.

Although not absolutely required, it is reasonable to expect that a good long-range plan would address these issues. The state transportation agencies and the MPOs do this to varying degrees. **Figure 2.1** displays the steps in the planning process.



**“If you don't know where you are going, you are certain to end up somewhere else.”**

**–Yogi Berra**

**Figure 2.1. Good Long-Range Planning Practice**



SAFETEA-LU requires that the metropolitan and statewide long-range plans include a discussion of potential environmental mitigation strategies to protect resources, with FHWA guidance urging consideration of alternatives and other strategies (e.g., wetland banking or watershed protection), necessary to compensate for any adverse impacts that would be created by implementing the plan. The transportation agency must consult with federal, state, local, and tribal wildlife, land management, and regulatory agencies in identifying and developing the mitigation activities.

In the past, plans often were developed without realistic consideration of the financial resources likely to be available over the life of the plan. As a result, plans in metropolitan areas (not state plans) must now demonstrate that funds “are realistically anticipated to be available for the proposed projects in the plan.”

The requirements for the metropolitan plans are somewhat more comprehensive than for the state plans. In addition to the analysis spelled out above, the metropolitan LRTP **must include strategies** “to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve . . . congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods, . . . strategies to preserve the existing and projected future metropolitan transportation infrastructure and provide for multimodal capacity increases . . . , proposed transportation and transit enhancement activities.”

**Table 2.1** summarizes the content of the key planning products and lays out the planning horizons and timeframes for the various plans and programs. The key metropolitan and state planning documents cover different time periods. The cycle for MPO long-range plans is now set at five years, except it is every four years for locations that do not meet Clean Air Act standards. This means that the opportunity to influence the long-range plan occurs only once every four or five years. A full update of the multi-year capital program (STIP/TIP) takes place on a four-year cycle, but it is important to note that amendments to the STIP/TIP are common.

**The Transportation Improvement Program—Setting the Priorities and Selecting the Projects.** The multi-year capital program for transportation is known as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at the metropolitan level and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for the state as a whole.

The TIP and STIP are key documents for spending both federal and state funds for selected projects and programs. To be eligible for federal funds, a project must be included in the TIP and STIP. The proposed projects **must be consistent** with the long-range transportation plans. The law requires that both the statewide and metropolitan TIPs include a financial plan that “demonstrates how the TIP can be implemented; indicates the resources from public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be available to carry out the program; identifies innovative financing techniques to finance projects, programs, and strategies . . .”

**Table 2.1. Planning Time Frames and Plan Updates**

	TIME/HORIZON	CONTENTS	UPDATE REQUIREMENTS
<b>Metropolitan Plans</b>			
<b>Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)</b>	20 years	Future goals, strategies and projects	At least every 5 years in attainment areas; 4 years in non-attainment areas
<b>Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)</b>	At least 4 years	Transportation investments including 4 years of strategies and projects	At least every 4 years
<b>Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)</b>	1-2 years	Planning studies and tasks	Generally, annual or biennial
<b>State Plans</b>			
<b>Long Range Transportation Plan—(Statewide LRTP)</b>	20 years	Long-range needs of metropolitan and rural areas	No update cycle
<b>State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)</b>	4 years	Statewide transportation investments	At least every 4 years
<b>State Implementation Plan (SIP)*</b>	Compliance schedule for standard(s)	Measures to improve air quality in non-attainment areas	Continuing oversight for compliance
*Unlike other plans above, SIP is developed by state air agencies.			

The metropolitan TIP includes projects within the area for which it is the designated planning body and must be **approved by the MPO and the governor**. For areas that do not meet the Clean Air Act health standards, the MPO must demonstrate that the TIP **meets the emissions limits** established in the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality (See box on page 15). Before approving new funding for individual projects in areas that violate pollution standards for fine particulates such as soot, agencies must also demonstrate that the project will not contribute to pollution “hot spots” that cause new violations or delay timely attainment of pollution reduction goals.

A key task in assembling the TIP is the selection of projects. Projects originate from many interests—citizens, city and county officials, state legislators, Members of Congress, the governor, business interests, transportation firms, developers, consulting firms, and the agencies that plan and manage the transportation systems and facilities. Development of the capital programs is both a technical and a political process. There are always more projects than there is money; choices have to be made.

For the metropolitan TIP, the law allows each state to select projects funded by the Bridge, Interstate Maintenance, and National Highway System programs, in cooperation with local officials. Local officials select all other projects in consultation with the state and the transit agency. The fact that the states control almost all of the federal high-

way funds, including obligation authority and often most state funds, can create an uneven playing field. To address this situation and to enable the MPO to assemble its capital program, the law requires that the MPO, public transit operator, and state DOT “cooperatively develop estimates of funds that are reasonably expected to be available to support program implementation.” For urbanized areas (200,000 and up in population), federal law directs that a portion of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds be made available to the MPO for the selection of projects. This provides local control over the selection of projects to be funded from this source.

Because there is never enough money to meet the full set of “needs,” project selection can involve intense negotiations between the state DOT, MPOs, transit operators, and other local officials over priorities, types of investments—preserving existing roads and bridges and building new highway facilities—and the balance between highway and transit investments. This is particularly so if there are old projects, still on the books “waiting their turn.” Conceived in an earlier era, these projects may be out-of-step with contemporary community preferences. Meanwhile, relatively simple transportation improvements like sidewalks and legible street signs may be delayed year after year to the detriment of children, older people and persons with disabilities. The question is, are they still valid or should they be removed from TIP and the STIP or redefined to make way for new projects that meet today’s priorities? Some states such as Vermont and Pennsylvania have taken a second look at older proposals and updated their transportation improvement programs. As MPOs and states update their capital programs, it is important to make sure that they review old projects in light of today’s circumstances.

The STIP includes all areas of the state and identifies all proposed federally funded highway, bike, pedestrian, and transit projects; incorporates the metropolitan TIPs; identifies selection priorities; and includes measures and projects that help localities meet air quality standards. The statewide STIP must be approved by the U.S. DOT every four years. Within the state the specific approval process varies, but the governor, the state legislature, and the state transportation agency, along with MPOs and transit operators, are the central players.

Information about projects included in the TIP/STIP varies widely. The law requires that each project be defined “to identify the project or phase of the project.” At a minimum, project information shall include:

- sufficient descriptive material (i.e., type of work, termini, length, etc.) to identify the project or phase;
- estimated total cost;
- amount of federal funds proposed to be obligated during each program year;



- for the first year, the proposed category of federal funds and source(s) of non-federal funds;
- for the second and third years, the likely category or possible categories of federal funds and sources of non-federal funds; and
- identification of agencies responsible for carrying out the project.

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/igs/lpja.htm>

## How does the transportation planning process help protect air quality?

Motor vehicles contribute to four “criteria pollutants” identified by Congress in the Clean Air Act (CAA): ozone, carbon monoxide, particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide. Each state air quality agency must develop a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that defines how each State will achieve the CAA goals and the steps necessary to meet air quality standards for areas that are not in compliance (“non-attainment areas”). Because the standards set for pollution by the Act and its regulations are based on scientific studies and designed to maintain our respiratory and general health, it is very important to meet the standards.

The SIP must include an emissions budget and strategies in the STIP that will attain and maintain air quality standards. In other words, the SIP must demonstrate how the projects and offsetting pollution reduction strategies, which may include project-related investments and transportation control measures (TCMs), will reduce emissions from **stationary sources** (large fixed facilities such as power plant, refineries, chemical plants); **area sources** (small, stationary facilities such as dry cleaners and bakeries, crop burning and home furnaces); and **mobile sources** (on-road vehicles and off-road sources such as trains, ships, planes, boats, lawnmowers and construction equipment).

**Non-attainment areas** are geographic areas that do not meet the federal air quality standards under the CAA. The challenge for states and MPOs is to decide on the mix of transit and highway investments that will keep emissions from motor vehicles within the allowable limits. Investments to be funded must come from a conforming plan and TIP. This may include measures such as inspection and maintenance

programs, use of reformulated gasoline, car sharing, car or van pooling, increasing transit ridership, value pricing to reduce peak period demand, certain other congestion relief measures, and retrofitting or replacing diesel vehicles with cleaner fuel and pollution-trapping tailpipe equipment.

**Transportation conformity**, required under the CAA, ensures that federal funding and approval are given to highway and transit projects that help to meet the air quality goals established in the SIP. Conformity simply means that transportation projects and activities will not cause new air quality violations, worsen existing violations, or delay timely attainment of the applicable air quality standards. MPOs and states must demonstrate the conformity of transportation plans and programs (long range plans and TIPs) at least every four years, and upon any significant changes to the plan or program.

In areas violating some pollution standards, “project-level conformity” is done to ensure that new projects or funding agreements will not worsen pollution or cause pollution “hot spots.” If a state or metropolitan region fails to demonstrate conformity within a specified time, it has a one-year grace period to fix the problem. If the transportation plan continues to exceed the pollution budget, the area is in a conformity “lapse” and funding for projects that worsen pollution will be suspended. During such a “conformity lapse,” funds can be spent on safety projects and transportation investments that help reduce pollution. Federal sanctions on transportation funding occur only if an area ignores other CAA requirements.

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/index.htm>

## Other Planning Activities

In addition to the long-range plan, the state and the MPO undertake numerous other planning activities and analyses, the results of which are likely to show up in the long-range plan and the TIP.

Both MPOs and state DOTs are likely to be engaged in **freight planning studies**. Many areas are experiencing a significant growth in truck traffic that is raising a number of issues such as safety concerns, trucks traveling on inappropriate routes, and degradation of neighborhood quality of life. Rail freight is increasing in many areas as well; the intensity, noise and traffic associated with long freight trains disturbs communities accustomed to rail tracks that have long been dormant.

One challenge in the freight area is the lack of comprehensive and timely data. Federal law and regulations protect many aspects of both trains and trucks, and they are not subject to much local regulation, except for health and safety matters that do not impede commerce or affect train operations. A good source for data is the Freight Analysis Framework (FAF) that integrates data from a variety of sources to estimate commodity flows and related freight transportation activity among states, regions, and major international gateways. FAF estimates and forecasts are available for 1998, 2010, and 2020.

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/freightplanning/>

 [http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight\\_analysis/faf/index.htm](http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight_analysis/faf/index.htm)

Other plans include studies that state DOTs and MPOs are likely to undertake to examine specific transportation issues caused by growth in traffic, ongoing congestion, development, etc.

**Area plans** examine issues in a specific area within a larger jurisdiction such as a neighborhood or district within a county. The product is usually a list of potential projects to be considered for inclusion in the plan and TIP. The range of projects can include all modes or focus only on one or two. Effective public participation in area studies can be valuable in helping to sort out preferred travel modes and in framing a future vision for the area.

**Corridor studies** are another example of planning activity at the state and/or MPO level. These studies generally examine only a main arterial corridor and may not include a complete review of modal options and trade-offs. These studies can set the stage for community enhancement and reinvestment. A number of MPOs and DOTs are beginning to incorporate land-use considerations into their corridor studies, most often in the context of access management, but sometimes in broader contexts as well, to shape the placement of housing on the landscape and reduce trip demand to the extent possible. Transit operators are incorporating land-use projections as required by federal law as they develop transit long-range plans and undertake project development. This is an important step and merits strong citizen participation to help shape choices about projects and travel modes.

Corridor plan recommendations might include actions such as revising land-use plans to address new issues and opportunities associated with a highway expansion project, employing tools to balance transportation and land-use in local areas, planning for interchange areas, preserving agriculture, and addressing multi-modal needs.

For corridors that are on the National Highway System (NHS), SAFETEA-LU adds language encouraging state DOTs to adopt the approaches for design criteria described in two publications, *Flexibility in Highway Design* and *Eight Characteristics of Process to Yield Excellence and Seven Qualities of Excellence in Transportation Design*, developed from the conference “Thinking Beyond the Pavement.” The principles and characteristics of project excellence described in these publications are popularly referred to as context sensitive solutions (CSS). While not a requirement, the reference to these two documents in SAFETEA-LU provides a basis for advocates to discuss CSS with metropolitan and state transportation officials. [SAFETEA-LU, Sec. 6008 & T. 23 Sec. 109 (c)]

 [www.contextsensitivesolutions.org](http://www.contextsensitivesolutions.org)

Some programs may require a plan before federal funds are made available for projects. For example, the Federal Highway Administration requires a **scenic byway corridor management plan (CMP)** for any road that a state nominates as a National Scenic Byway or All American Road. The CMP is usually drafted by a local byway management group and local governments sign off on it. The CMP assesses the intrinsic qualities of the byway (scenic, historic, cultural, archaeological, natural and recreational) and strategies for conservation, management, interpretation, marketing, and promotion over time.

SAFETEA-LU also requires a locally developed **public transit/human services transportation plan** separate from the LRTP as a condition for receiving formula funding under three Federal Transit Administration programs: Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities; Job Access and Reverse Commute; and New Freedom. The plan must be developed with participation from representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers, as well as the general public.

A requirement in SAFETEA-LU for a **State Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)** as part of the new core safety program provides an opportunity for advocates to press for investments to enhance the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. It is also an opportunity to address design improvements, such as signage, lighting and road markings, that enhance safety for all road users and for older persons in particular.

The plans discussed in this section are not the only source of projects, but from a transportation agency perspective, this is a prime source for projects to be considered for inclusion in the plan and TIP.

The numerous planning activities provide the basis to shape the Long-Range Transportation plans and the capital programs (TIP/STIP), directly and through the various planning studies that the state DOT, the MPO, and the transit operator undertake each year.

**Consultation and Coordination.** A key aspect of the transportation planning process is the requirement that transportation agencies consult and coordinate with a variety of other federal and state agencies in preparing their long-range plans and transportation improvement programs. These required consultations provide an opportunity for citizens to reach out to the same agencies to discuss their vision and priorities for the transportation plan and TIP as they relate to the responsibilities of each agency.

The state transportation agency must coordinate with each of the MPOs as well as rural officials in areas with less than 50,000 population, Indian tribal governments and relevant federal land management agencies in developing the long-range transportation plan. The state's consultation with rural elected officials must be separate and discrete from the general public involvement process for other activities.

There are several new provisions in the law that strengthen consultations with other federal, state, and local agencies and the public. Key among them is that the MPOs and state transportation agencies must **consult, as appropriate, with state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation** in developing their long-range transportation plans. In addition, depending on the action, states shall cooperate and consult as well as coordinate with federally recognized tribal agencies.

## Public Participation

The transportation law is clear that the public is to have access to, and participate in, the development of the state and metropolitan long-range transportation plans (LRTP) and capital programs (TIP/STIP), as well as the development of programs such as the new Safe Routes to School, statewide bicycle and pedestrian master plans, New Freedom, and other planning studies.

SAFETEA-LU requires the MPOs to develop a participation plan that spells out the methods by which the MPO will provide reasonable opportunities for the public to comment on the long-range transportation plan and to be consulted in the development of the participation plan. This is an opportunity to help shape how the MPO will reach out to the public, how they communicate and through what media, as well as what basic information should be communicated and how it should be presented.

It is clearly in the best interests of the agencies to share information with the public, to help them understand the technical aspects of problems and to listen to the thoughts and ideas of the citizens who use the transportation facilities and services, live and work in the communities in which projects are being considered, and are the neighbors of these facilities.

Good public participation rests on several basic premises—that there is open and timely sharing of information about choices before decisions are made, that the information is complete and clear, and that the agen-

**Table 2.2. Opportunities for Public Information/Participation**

<b>PLANNING ACTIVITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE AGENCY</b>	<b>WHAT AVAILABLE AND WHEN</b>
<b>Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)</b>	State DOT, transit operator, MPO	Draft & final plan on Web* as well as print version, public hearing and/or comment period
<b>Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)</b>	MPO	Draft & final TIP on Web* as well as print version, public hearing, comment period
<b>Annual Listing of Obligation of Federal Funds</b>	MPO	Made available on the Web*, including pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities
<b>Public Participation Plan</b>	State DOT, MPO	Comment period after notice
<b>Statewide Bicycle &amp; Pedestrian Master Plans</b>	State DOT, transit operator, MPO	Usually meetings to gain input, comment period
<b>Highway Safety Plan</b>	State DOT	Notice and comment period
<b>Transit Service Plan</b>	Transit operator	Notice and comment period
<b>Area and Corridor Studies</b>	State DOT, MPO	Participation opportunities available through DOT & MPO meetings
<b>Freight Master Plan</b>	State DOT, MPO	Notice and comment period
<b>Public Transit/Human Services Transportation Plan</b>	Local decision (probably transit operator)	Notice and comment period, there may be a public hearing.
<b>Project Plans: Environmental Review of Projects (NEPA)</b>		
<b>Purpose and Need for project and determination of Range of Alternatives to be studied</b>	State DOT, transit operator, MPO	Public notice and comment; this is the best place for early input to affect project location, mode choices and other important criteria for a successful project.
<b>For transit project, determination of Locally Preferred Alternative</b>	Transit operator, FTA, MPO	This is often a consensus-driven process that occurs through the course of many meetings of route choices; public hearing, notice and comment.
<b>Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)</b>	State DOT, transit operator, other project applicant or lead agency	Public hearing, notice and comment period
<b>Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)</b>	State DOT, MPO	Usually no opportunity to comment on the record after FEIS released, but it should be updated if the project is not built after three years in a "supplemental" environmental document, if circumstances change or there is significant new information. Citizens should write to the lead agency and permitting agencies to advise them of same.
<b>Record of Decision</b>	U.S. DOT	Same as above
*Law requires agencies to make information available to the public in an electronically accessible format, which generally means via the Web.		

cies and the public are able to openly and honestly discuss the issues.

One challenge to effective public participation is the complexity of information sometimes provided such as technical data without a summary or analysis to help interpret it. Fortunately, the states and MPOs are now required, to the maximum extent practicable, to use visualization techniques—drawings, computer models, visual simulation, geographic information system (GIS) maps, and other state-of-the-art techniques—to help people understand complex problems and projects, and their impacts in developing transportation plans and capital programs. These techniques should help to demystify many of the issues in the plans and programs. Having more timely information with accompanying analysis will allow appropriate assessments of proposals or plan elements. The need for better information will require a good faith effort on the part of the agencies to make information available as the law requires. It will be incumbent on the public to let the agencies know what kind of information is most helpful and the types of analysis that would provide a better indication of the impacts that a project will have on issues or areas of concern to the public.

Federal law now requires that a variety of information be made available electronically, which generally means via the Web. This information will help community advocates, elected officials, and planners understand and communicate their concerns about proposals to appropriate agency staff as well as their elected officials. A listing of “obligated” projects must be posted annually. Having this information readily accessible in an electronic format will help officials and transportation advocates track the progress of programs and projects.

During the planning process, there are numerous instances in which information must be made available to the public for comment. Making information available and engaging the public in a meaningful discussion about the issues and choices may be two very different exercises. The earlier the public is involved and the better the information, the more likely it is that there will be successful outcomes. Table 2.2 identifies the key activities and the information made available and/or the opportunity for participation in the decision-making process.

**Citizen participation in rural areas.** In small urban (population below 50,000) and rural areas, the process of engaging the public has been less structured than in urban areas, and consequently the public has had less opportunity to become engaged in state transportation issues; however, this situation is changing.

Today, federal law requires states to have a separate and distinct process for considering the views of local officials in the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (statewide LRTP).

In rural areas, Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs), typically organized and managed by a Regional Development Organization (RDO), serve as the forum for local engagement in rural transporta-



tion issues in many states, but not in all cases. RPOs are composed primarily of local elected officials who serve as a link between state DOTs and citizens to ensure their involvement in transportation planning and decision-making.

🌐 <http://www.ruraltransportation.org/consultation/tea21.shtml>

🌐 <http://www.ruraltransportation.org/fhwa.pdf>

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/rural/planningfortrans/3resprurpln.html>

**Citizens Matter.** The role of citizens in ensuring that the laws are faithfully carried out cannot be underestimated. Federal planning, consultation and public involvement requirements for metropolitan areas, rural areas, and states are in place. Now the challenge is to make sure they are fully implemented.

Fortunately, transportation experts and citizens are beginning to collaborate in new ways. Congress has written strong public participation requirements into federal transportation law. The Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration and several transportation professional associations are investing heavily in promoting best practices for citizen involvement. Some states are beginning to adopt **context sensitive solutions (CSS)**, a holistic planning process with a design quality philosophy, and to train staff in this approach. (See full discussion of CSS in *Chapter IV. Designing Safe, Healthy, Livable Communities.*) These leadership initiatives are fostering a much greater commitment to partnership between public agencies and community advocates.

Advocates need to keep in mind that, whatever frustrations they may encounter, there are often transportation agency staff members who are sympathetic to community goals and willing to implement new solutions to perennial problems. Finding and helping them work on the inside to advance best practices is an important strategy.

## Environmental Justice

The 1964 Civil Rights Act required federal agencies “to ensure that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, or national origin.” Age, sex, disability, and religion were addressed in subsequent legislation. The U.S. DOT Order on Environmental Justice directs federal actions for transportation purposes. All transportation agencies receiving federal funds must demonstrate compliance with Title VI and Environmental Justice. Environmental Justice is broadly applied to all planning, policies, programs, and project development activities, including the metropolitan and statewide long-range transportation plans, the transportation improvement plans, all planning studies. The core principles of Environmental Justice are:

### From SAFETEA-LU

“(B) CONTENTS OF PARTICIPATION PLAN.—A participation plan—

“(i) shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties; and

“(ii) shall provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the transportation plan.

“(C) METHODS.—In carrying out subparagraph (A), the metropolitan planning organization shall, to the maximum extent practicable—

“(i) hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

“(ii) employ visualization techniques to describe plans; and

“(iii) make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information under subparagraph (A).

1. To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
2. To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
3. To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income populations. (Source: FHWA Environmental Justice Fact Sheet)

State and local actions on Environmental Justice extend to children, older citizens, persons with disabilities as well as to minority and low-income communities under the federal order. The concepts of Environmental Justice compliment the overall intent of the planning process for a fully integrated set of activities. Environmental Justice issues are intended to be addressed as part of the NEPA review process as well.

Advocates have an important role to play in ensuring that agencies comply with the Environmental Justice requirements by making sure Environmental Justice concerns are being addressed.

## Protecting the Environment

Transportation projects can have a substantial negative impact on the natural and human environment—health, air and water quality; wildlife habitat; historic, cultural and scenic resources; parks, open space and recreation. Basic knowledge of key statutory requirements and recent changes in the law will help transportation advocates shape projects to improve the environment and support their communities and travel needs better.

## Key Project Review Processes

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
- Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (wetlands protection)

After a specific project is developed, key project review processes come into play. Unfortunately, a lot of the environmental considerations that the NEPA, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Water Act and Section 4(f) of the DOT Act required during project review are better addressed in the planning stage, and often do not occur there. For the most part, the question of which travel mode is most appropriate to address a particular problem such as congestion on an urban arterial is more appropriately answered in a planning study rather than at the point where an agency has settled on a specific project. For the state DOT, the answer is almost always an increase in highway capacity; for a transit operator, adding transit service or routes or building a

new transit line. It is still rare that the modal agencies reach across their boundaries to collaborate on an interdisciplinary study for a corridor. Even more rarely are housing and land-use agencies brought into the process. Some MPOs have a record of combining various aspects of planning, but here again the record is spotty. So this leaves the environmental review process to sort issues that are sometimes better addressed at the planning stage.

It should be noted that the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations implementing NEPA encourages agencies to incorporate environmental reviews early in the planning process.

This section will provide a brief review of four of these requirements.

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).** NEPA establishes the basic framework for integrating environmental considerations into federal decision-making, serving as an umbrella process for guiding compliance with key elements of other federal environmental laws. NEPA establishes three levels of environmental documents that assess impacts based on the magnitude of the anticipated environmental impacts: an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for major projects with significant impacts; an Environmental Assessment (EA) for projects where impacts are not clearly established, which will then lead to either a full EIS or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI); or a Categorical Exclusion (CE) for minor projects with few impacts. Some types of projects are advanced under "programmatic" NEPA agreements, in which whole categories of projects are reviewed as a class and can be approved subject to various conditions.

Two key decision points in the development of an environmental document are the determination of the project's **purpose and need** and the **range of alternatives** to be considered. SAFETEA-LU requires that the public be given an opportunity to be involved in determining the purpose and need for a project (i.e., what problem it is intended to solve, and the range of alternatives to be studied). This opportunity allows citizens to identify partial build alternatives and alternative investments that might not otherwise be entertained by the agency proposing the project.

Ensuring that this involvement is meaningful will be important going forward because this is the best opportunity to help shape the framework of the analysis for projects that require an environmental document.

The period of time within which any challenges to an environmental approval must be filed is now limited to 180 days once the environmental impact statement has been approved in a final decision by the agency, called a "record of decision" or ROD. The shortening of the period for filing a legal claim from 5 years to 6 months could reduce the opportunity to negotiate a resolution of issues and result in an increase in legal action that will ultimately delay projects.

**Section 4(f).** Section 4(f) established protection for historic resources, parks, wildlife, waterfowl refuges and recreation areas from road-building. Section 4(f) directs the Secretary of Transportation not to approve any program or project requiring use of these resources unless (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative; and (2) the program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the affected park, recreational area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site.

Changes in SAFETEA-LU now permit a *de minimis* exemption if there are no adverse effects on the Section 4(f) protected resource with respect to parks and other non-historic Section 4(f) protected resources. SAFETEA-LU also now requires public notice and comment each time a *de minimis* impact determination under Section 4(f) is sought. Additionally, the agency in charge of the particular resource must agree to the *de minimis* classification. In the case of historic resources, *de minimis* means that the project has been found to have no adverse affect under the Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act, subject to concurrence by applicable preservation agencies. For parks and other non-historic resources, there is no *de minimis* exemption from the requirements of Section 4(f)(2) to minimize harm.

The changes in the law, while creating new opportunities for public comment, also provide greater leeway to the transit or highway agency sponsoring a particular project to “use” these precious resources. It will be important for citizens to be attentive to their opportunities to be involved in the comment period on the *de minimis* taking, and to participate in the processes for determining the project’s purpose and need, the alternatives to be examined, and any permits that may be needed.

 <http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/pd5sec4f.asp>

**Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.** Section 106 requires federal agencies to work with the state historic preservation officer (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), an independent federal agency, to determine whether a proposed project will have an adverse effect on historic sites listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places. The federal agency must seek ways to mitigate any “adverse effects.”

**Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.** Section 404 establishes a program to regulate the dredging and filling of the nation's waters, including wetlands. The 404 permit program is controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, except in New Jersey and Michigan, where the states control permitting directly. The federal law states that no discharge of dredged or fill material may be permitted if a practicable alternative exists that is less damaging to the aquatic environment or if the nation's waters would be significantly degraded. The applicant must demonstrate the steps it has taken to avoid wetland impacts, and if it cannot avoid impacts to wetlands, then to minimize potential impacts, and to mitigate for any unavoidable impacts by restoring or cre-

ating wetlands. Moreover, projects should be for water-dependent activities—most roads are not “water-dependent.”

The air quality requirements are discussed earlier in this chapter in conjunction with the long-range plans and the TIPs.

It is too soon to tell if the changes in SAFETEA-LU will provide for better public involvement and better projects. The vigilance of citizens working to enhance and protect their communities, in tandem with agencies willing to be flexible in finding the most appropriate answers, offers the best chance of both a sound environmental process and a good transportation investment. It has been well demonstrated that the best process engages stakeholders early in considering a wide variety of alternatives, as well as secondary, induced, and cumulative impacts in planning, project development, and design. Delays, especially for controversial projects, are likely to arise when agencies fail to effectively consider impacts on specific populations or neighborhoods, or the effects of transportation infrastructure projects on land use, travel behavior, and public health.

## **Measuring Performance to Get the Right Outcomes**

In recent years, transportation agencies have come under increasing pressure to measure the performance of the transportation system against criteria of community satisfaction, transportation efficiency, and environmental stewardship. In addition, state legislatures, citizens, and local officials are pressuring agencies to justify new spending and explain the results.

Unfortunately, the federal law is weak in this area. However, MPOs, some states, and advocacy organizations have developed measures of performance that begin to show measures that track progress. This vacuum creates an opportunity for citizen organizations to develop measures that reflect their goals for the transportation system.

The key is to have performance measures that reflect desired outcomes. Some obvious areas that should be measured include: the condition and use of the transportation system, trends for pedestrian and bicycle fatalities, the extent of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and the coverage of transit systems in a region, improvement in air quality and reduction in mobile source emissions. Tracking how and where state and federal funds are being spent is important in understanding the results of transportation investments. To gain a better understanding of the ‘livability’ of a community, measures such as access to transit, sidewalks and bike paths should be tracked. To monitor health issues, tracking the amount of individual physical activity is important.

Developing a good set of performance measures can help determine whether the transportation system is providing travel options, sidewalks and bike paths, safer streets for our kids to walk to school and our parents to walk to the library and a reduction in our exposure to unhealthy air pollution.

Examples of organizations that have performance measurements in place include:

→ Portland Metro, Portland OR

🌐 [http://www.metroregion.org/library\\_docs/land\\_use/full\\_2004\\_perf\\_meas\\_report\\_.pdf](http://www.metroregion.org/library_docs/land_use/full_2004_perf_meas_report_.pdf)

→ Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Oakland CA

🌐 [http://www.mtc.ca.gov/library/state\\_of\\_the\\_system/index.htm](http://www.mtc.ca.gov/library/state_of_the_system/index.htm)

→ The Oregon Department of Transportation has established performance measurements affecting all modes of transportation.

🌐 [www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/docs/otpSteering2/5Nov04/sumMemo.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/docs/otpSteering2/5Nov04/sumMemo.pdf)

→ The National Center for Bicycling and Walking has developed a set of indicators that are helpful in assessing progress toward goals and objectives. This can be viewed on their website.

🌐 <http://www.bikewalk.org/pdfs/ncbwpubthereyet0203.pdf>

→ The FHWA has developed examples of performance measures through their capacity building program. These are contained in *The Metropolitan Planning Process*, which can be found at:

🌐 <http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/BriefingBook/BBook.htm#11BB>

Citizen advocates should work with elected officials and transportation professionals to ensure that performance measurements include their concerns.



## Summary

Planning can be a powerful tool to shape communities. Transportation planning processes are among the strongest in the public sector. But there is potential for things to go awry as well. We do not always get the products or the performance we would like to see.

To move from the margins to the mainstream requires knowledge and vigilance on the part of advocates, and flexibility and openness on the part of the transportation agencies. A long-range plan that truly reflects the vision of the whole community and is implemented consciously through the transportation improvement program (TIP or STIP) should be an attainable goal.

Rather than slowing down the delivery of good projects, the planning process is the tool to ensure a balanced set of investments that make our communities good places to live. The key opportunities in which to become engaged are:

- Participating in shape the long-range plans;
- Studying the TIP/STIP and proposing projects;
- Participating in other planning activities;
- Measuring the performance of the transportation system from your perspective to see if you are getting the desired results; and
- Getting to know the players and find allies in the agencies. ●



# Paying for What You Want: Money Matters

This chapter provides information to help transportation advocates connect the flow of federal dollars to their continuing efforts to increase travel options and strengthen their communities.

## Overview

Successful transportation efforts in your region or community turn on the availability of resources to fund them. In short, money matters.

Undeniably, deciphering what many call the “black box” of federal transportation finance is necessary to help your community advance its priorities. The good news is new provisions in the law help, including directives that make federal financial information more accessible

and transparent.

Making progress on your priorities means knowing how much money is in play, who controls it, and knowing the difference between how it can be used and how it is being used. As frames for these questions, “show me the money” coupled with “follow the money” are not too far from the mark.

This chapter offers perspectives on key federal transportation financing issues, discussing how federal funds can be used to advance a vision for the future, for a neighborhood, community, or region. Finally, it suggests ways to keep track of the allocation of federal transportation dollars to ensure fuller accounting and more transparency in how these dollars are being invested.

### Key Funding Features

- Federal transportation funds represent about one fourth of all governmental spending on highways and transit.
- Federal law allows states to allocate most “core” highway dollars (\$29+ billion in FY’06) and gives transit agencies control over most formula grant funds (about \$5+ billion in FY’06).
- Federal highway funds are very **flexible**—at least 60 percent of each core highway dollar can be used for any project eligible under the law. In some cases, more than three of four highway dollars could be shifted to public transit investment. (This means that more than \$17 billion in FY’06 can be used to purchase buses, improve paratransit services, expand commuter rail, make bicycling and walking safer, clean-up the air and stormwater discharges, etc.)
- SAFETEA-LU places more emphasis on safety: new Highway Safety Improvement Program; new Safe Routes to School program; and funding set asides funds for rural roads safety program as well as a program for larger road signs.
- New law focuses on selected transit initiatives, such as Smaller Transit Starts (e.g. streetcars), New Freedom Program to promote more options for persons with disabilities, and a boost in funding for rural transit.
- New law directs funding to freight initiatives and intermodal connections and provides additional options for tolling and value pricing.

## Getting Started

To get started, here are two suggested areas of inquiry: 1) understand how federal dollars relate to other state and local transportation resources and the financial profile of your community, region, and state; and 2) give consideration to the question of transportation costs and how they affect families and your region.

**Governmental Financing of Highways and Transit:** For highways, it is useful to think of the financing sources as follows. About one fourth of highway funding is federal and is used mostly for capital investment; about one half comes from state governments, for both capital and maintenance commitments; and the remaining fourth is provided by local governments, the largest share reserved for maintenance of local roads. In transit financing, federal dollars represent about one fourth of all spending, largely for capital investment. Local governments and transit users contribute substantially more than half of all transit funding, with states providing the remaining share.

Importantly, each state has a different financial profile (i.e., mix of public resources for highways and transit). The State of Alaska, for example, generally set its state transportation taxes to collect enough money to match federal dollars (i.e., roughly one state dollar for every four federal dollars), but it also funds a range of travel options, including a state-owned railroad and the nation's second largest ferry system. Virginia, which owns a significant share of the state's highways and streets, raises more than two state dollars for every federal highway dollar it receives and, recently, is starting to place more emphasis on "complete streets" as well as raising transit and freight rail investment, not just highway improvements. In getting started, know how federal transportation dollars in your state relate to other state and local transportation resources.

**Transportation Costs Matter:** In reviewing how to deploy federal dollars, take note of the overall costs of transportation in your community. How governments invest these resources can reduce transportation costs for families and local areas. The 2005 STPP/CNT study, *Driven to Spend: Pumping Dollars out of Our Households and Communities*, showed how higher gas prices affect transportation costs for families and regions. This report and others in the series call attention to the costs to families of local and regional transportation systems that rely predominately on automobile travel. The 2000 *Driven to Spend* report showed that families spend at least five times more than what all governments expend on highways. Therefore, it matters to all of us how federal transportation resources are deployed; in many communities and regions, federal transportation funds account for a substantial share of new capital investment. Investing these dollars in ways that give people other options to driving alone can help reduce transportation costs for families, especially now with higher gas prices and other energy costs.



**In getting started, know how federal transportation dollars in your state relate to other state and local transportation resources.**

## What Are the Major Federal Programs

In moving option-promoting and community-building investments from the margins to the mainstream, some familiarity with the major federal programs will help in reviewing the topical discussions throughout this chapter. **Table 3.1** shows the relative share of the \$29+ billion being provided to each of the “core” highway programs in fiscal year 2006. The table also indicates the funding flexibility features of each program.

**Table 3.1. Core Federal Highway Programs**

Core Program	Description & Flexibility
<b>Bridge</b>	About 16% of total funds: for the rehabilitation or replacement of bridges; bike/ped projects eligible (50% flexible)
<b>Congestion Mitigation &amp; Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)</b>	About 6%: for transportation projects that help local areas with compliance with applicable clean air standards; amount per state varies, based on clean air needs; and about one-half of U.S. population, mostly in urban areas, is affected (funds already very flexible, but about 15% fully flexible)
<b>Equity Bonus</b>	About 9%: for guaranteeing every state a minimum return on federal gas taxes; amount per state varies; and about 2/3 of funds distributed proportionately to other core program, with remaining 1/3 for State STP program (100% flexible)
<b>Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)</b>	About 4%: a new program that is intended to enhance existing safety efforts, through an increase in funding and broader planning effort; bicycle and pedestrian safety initiatives – infrastructure and programs – are eligible
<b>Interstate Maintenance (IM)</b>	About 18%: for maintaining and rehabilitating Interstate Highways; new capacity is not eligible (50% flexible)
<b>National Highway System (NHS)</b>	About 23%: for both maintenance and expansion projects on the 160,000+ mile NHS network; bike/ped eligible; new stormwater eligibility; and funds can be used for transit investments that can show NHS corridor relief (50% flexible; 100% with U.S. DOT approval)
<b>Surface Transportation Program (STP)</b>	About 24%: can fund any transit or highway eligibility under the law; about 10% of total for Transportation Enhancements (TE); 37.5% for State flex; and 62.5% for local areas (areas with 200,000+ people get allocated share, based on population) (100% flexible)
<p>Please note that only a state transportation agency can elect to transfer funds from one highway program to another. Also, when a state transfers funds to the STP program, the spending authority only goes to the state flex program, which means that local areas and the TE program do not share in these funds.</p> <p>Also, note that other smaller apportioned programs (e.g., Recreational Trails, Safe Routes to School, and Appalachian Highways) are not shown here.</p> <p><b>Special Note:</b> The funding shares shown here and in later tables are based on total national program funding.</p>	

In reviewing this table and other discussions in this *Guide*, note that “funding flexibility” is generally defined as the ability to invest available dollars in travel options (e.g., transit, walking, bicycling, car and vanpooling, etc.), either directly as a program eligibility or by shifting (i.e. transferring) funds among program categories. Once a highway dollar, for example, is converted to a STP dollar, it can be used to fund any project eligible under all federal highway (Title 23) and transit (Title 49) programs.

States also receive funding from other non-core federal highway programs including Appalachian Development Highway System, Recreational Trails, and Safe Routes to School. These programs and others generally have specific program purposes and account for a small percentage of total funding. However, certain programs, such as Safe Routes to School, support efforts to achieve critical community objectives. It is important to ensure each state allocates a fair share of its obligation authority to them (but more on equitable funding later in this chapter). In addition, there are other highway programs—High Priority Projects (often called earmarks), the National Scenic Byways Program and the Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TCSP)—that are not shown in this table because the funding commitments are determined at the federal level, either in Congress or by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

**Table 3.2** summarizes the major transit programs benefiting local, regional, and state transit providers. Note that most transit funds are allocated directly to the nation’s larger transit providers, with formula grants to individual agencies largely determined by factors considering population, ridership levels, and transit services delivered.

Note especially that funds under the Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program, beginning in fiscal year 2006, are not longer allocated each year by Congress. These funds are allocated directly to transit providers in the larger urban areas (i.e., population of 200,000 or more) and to states for transit providers and other agencies in smaller urban and rural areas. This is one area to give particular emphasis as the JARC program is now being restructured with a state and local area focus.

The table also includes the New Starts and the Bus and Bus Facilities programs, where transit agencies directly seek additional transit commitments from Congress and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). These program funds are provided by Congress, based in part on FTA’s recommendations, in the annual transportation funding bill (i.e., Transportation-Treasury Appropriations Bill).

**Table 3.2. Key Transit Programs**

Key Program	Description
<b>Formula Grants</b>	About 46% of all transit funds: funds are directed to transit agencies (more than 530 transit providers) under a service-based formula; funds largely for capital improvements under a broad range of eligibilities; special rule allow agencies serving fewer than 200,000 people (and some just above) to use a portion of these funds for operating costs (share funds can be transferred to highway-eligible projects)
<b>Rural Transit</b>	About 4.5%: funds directed to states to assist rural areas in increasing transit services; funding represents a significant increase over prior law (funds can be transferred to highway needs)
<b>Fixed-Guideway Modernization</b>	About 16%: funds are allocated to certain transit providers with fixed guideway systems to support maintenance and rehabilitation projects
<b>Jobs Access &amp; Reverse Commute (JARC)</b>	About 1.5%: formerly a Congressionally directed grant program; beginning FY'06, JARC funds allocated by formula directly to transit providers in areas of 200,000 or more, with each state reserving a portion of these funds for areas 50,000-200,000 and below 50,000 in population
Please note: For the programs shown above, transit agencies and the states decide how to invest these funds. In the programs shown below, Congress, with recommendations from U.S. DOT, allocates dollars to New/Small Starts and Bus & Bus Facilities programs and a portion of funds under Special Programs.	
<b>New/Small Starts</b>	About 18%: funds are allocated by Congress each year, providing capital funds for the construction of fixed guideway transit projects, usually rail transit projects; starting in FY'07, about \$200 million each year will be available for Small Starts (e.g., streetcars, trolleys or bus rapid transit)
<b>Bus &amp; Bus Facilities</b>	About 10%: funds are allocated by Congress each year, providing additional capital funds to transit providers for Bus & Bus Facilities, often used to expand bus fleets through additional bus purchases
<b>Special Programs</b>	About 5%: funds for others programs (e.g. New Freedom, Transit in Parks, Elderly and Disabled and Clean Fuels Formula Program) and other activities (e.g., planning, research and FTA administration)

### Funding Levels for Highway and Transit Programs

This section briefly describes how each core highway dollar and each transit dollar are allocated among the federal program categories.

**For highways:** In fiscal year 2006, the 50 states, with the District of Columbia and the U.S. Territories, received more than \$29+ billion in core highway program funding, along with spending authority for project earmarks and selected other program categories, including Safe Routes to School (about \$96 million in FY'06) and Recreational Trails (about \$68 million in FY'06).

**For transit agencies:** Transit providers, directly or through the states, will share in nearly \$8.6 billion in funding from the Federal Transit Administration.

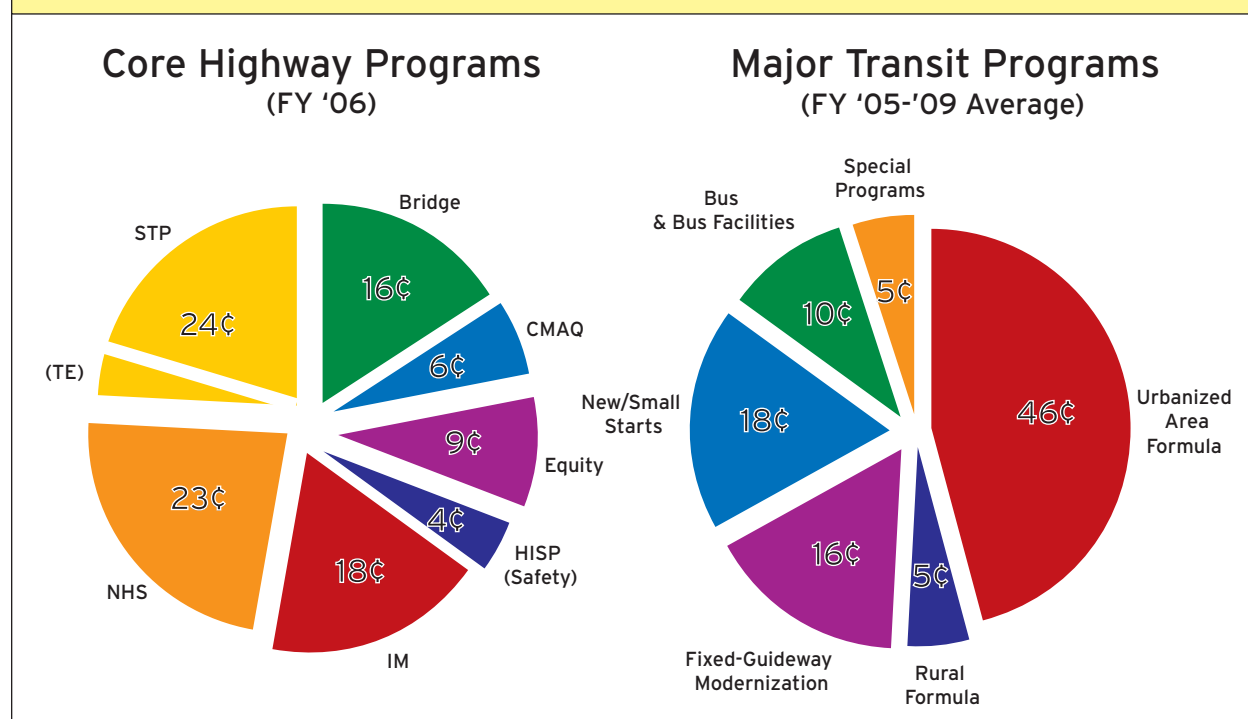
**Table 3.3** illustrates how each federal dollar is distributed among the core highway programs (FY'06) and the major transit programs (average of FYs'05-09). These pie charts reflect national program levels, not individual state levels, but they do offer a quick overview of the relative funding shares. Finally, note that nearly four times as many federal dollars go to core highway programs than go to major transit programs.

### Federal Dollars Are Flexible Dollars

If there is one thing to remember about the federal transportation law, it is the fact that federal dollars are very flexible. While a community can successfully fund almost any individual transportation project it wants, the law is also flexible enough to deliver significant resources to broader investment initiatives—fix-it-first, expanding transit and other travel options, making streets safer for pedestrians and bicyclists or linking travel options with land use. **Table 3.4**, as indicated in the middle column, about 60 cents of every core federal highway dollar can be used for any eligible highway or transit project under the law. For transit options, in the right column, more than three out of every four dollars can be shifted (i.e., flexed) to these investments.

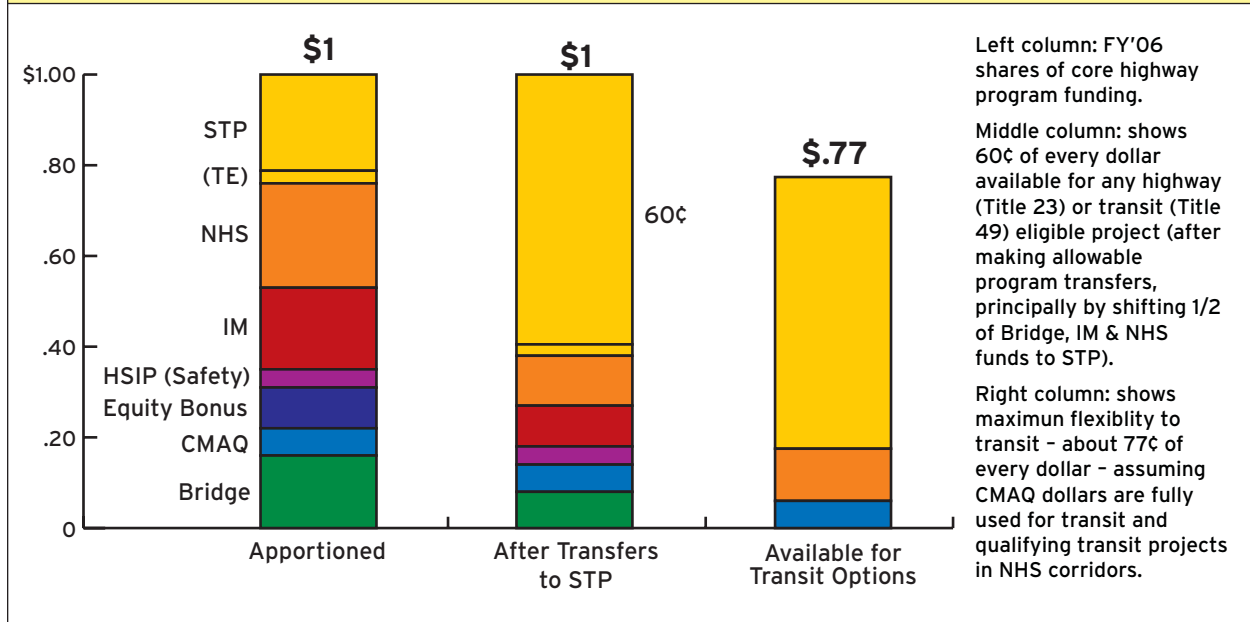
For bicycling and walking, this flexibility means each state could dramatically raise its funding commitments to projects that make walking and bicycling much safer, not just what is funded with Safety and/or TE program dollars, as examples. If a governor or the legislature wants “Safe Routes to School” for every community in their state, they have the flexibility to commit substantially more resources beyond the SRS funds allocated to the state under the new law.

**Table 3.3. How Each Federal Dollar is Distributed**





**Table 3.4. Federal Highway Dollars are Flexible**



For expanding transit options, about three-fourths of each federal highway dollar can be used just like a federal transit dollar—to buy paratransit vehicles, buses or rail cars or to make capital investments in commuter rail, light rail, or streetcar systems.

To address transportation-related pollution, states could direct more dollars to help local areas curtail harmful air emissions from the transportation sector, by using flexible STP dollars to go well beyond what can be funded with available CMAQ funds. States could undertake large-scale efforts to retrofit existing highways to reduce road-related stormwater pollution.

See <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/flexfund.htm> for the joint FHWA/FTA Memorandum (2/06/06), Flexible Funding for Highways and Transit and Funding for Bicycle & Pedestrian Programs, which explains the funding flexibility rules under federal law.

**Flexible Federal Dollars Deserve Special Consideration:** Federal transportation dollars are often the most flexible resources available to states and local transportation agencies. For this reason, special priority should be given to where and how these funds are used. In many states, flexible federal dollars may be the only resources, outside of local dollars, that are available for expanding travel options in communities.

In more than 30 states, there are constitutional and/or statutory provisions limiting the use of state dollars for highway construction and maintenance. Be alert to the potential that these limitations can distort local priorities and undermine efforts to invest in travel options. For example, there are many states that routinely provide state funds to meet the 20 percent federal match when a community is seeking a highway investment. However, when local leaders want to use federal STP or CMAQ funds for a transit investment (i.e., called

“flexing” highway dollars to transit), the state may be unable (e.g., limitations on state revenues) to match the federal funds. Such cases point to the need to modernize state laws and policies that limit the use of state transportation dollars to secure more stable and reliable revenue streams for transit services and other travel options.

To take advantage of the flexibility of federal funds, states should establish processes for allocating federal funds to programs that expand travel options. Understanding how to combine federal and state funds can help advocates and local officials maximize the flexibility of federal funds.

Most state agencies, however, do not use this flexibility to direct more federal funds to expanding travel options. Only a few states have shifted any significant highway resources to transit investments, with California accounting for nearly one-half of all federal highway dollars transferred to transit during TEA-21 (FYs '98-'03). This is largely the difference between the promise of the original 1991 ISTEA law and the reality in most states.

**State Financial Constraints Matter:** Financial shortfalls in a number of states have put pressure on state transportation funds, forcing the delay of highway projects. With sizeable backlogs of unfunded highway projects, transferring funds for transit projects may be a hard sell. One indication of this, is the slowing of transfers from the CMAQ program that has been a key source of additional funding for transit projects. Transfers peaked in FY 2000 and have even declined thereafter, though the overall CMAQ program has grown. Starting in 2001, the national economy slowed and states started withdrawing state funds from their transportation accounts, adjustments that, obviously, affected the flexible use of federal dollars.

Finally, note that many state transportation agencies are being directed by their state elected leaders to base their investment programs on current revenue commitments, not new taxes. This has been true in most states over the past several years, if not longer. This explains why many states have taken on so much transportation debt to finance their programs and their recent interest in tolling as well the sale of state transportation assets. This environment also explains why so many local officials feel transportation costs, which were traditionally funded by their state, are being shifted to regional agencies and local governments. It also helps explain why state officials pushed Congress so hard and for so long to increase funding levels in the new law, even if it meant delaying renewal of TEA-21.

## Using Core Programs to Move from the Margins

In looking for ways to move beyond the margins to the mainstream, it is crucial to focus on getting federal transportation dollars committed to your priorities. Start by learning more about what funds are available to your community and what other funds might be available. Program spending levels throughout the remainder of this

### Fighting Stormwater Pollution

#### **SAFETEA-LU gives states more tools to combat stormwater pollution from highways:**

In one of the biggest battles on the new law, Congress chose not to require states to set aside a portion of their annual STP funds for stormwater pollution abatement projects to address this significant source of water quality impairment. Congress did, however, allow NHS funds to be used for stand-alone stormwater projects on the National Highway System. When combined with existing STP program eligibility to fund stormwater projects, more than \$13 billion of \$29+ billion in FY'06 was available for these improvements.

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/envrestore.htm>



**Any effort to move from the margins to the mainstream should first begin with a careful review of the core highway programs.**

decade are set in the law. Therefore, states and larger transit agencies have considerable certainty about formula funds to be provided to them through FY'09. (Larger MPOs certainly know what STP funds they are likely to receive and all MPOs should know what funds their state is expected to receive under the various program categories). How these program resources—core highway dollars and major transit program dollars—are invested will largely define the progress your community makes in achieving the outcomes it is seeking.

Any effort to move from the margins to the mainstream should first begin with a careful review of the core highway programs, including the funding that is likely to flow to your state through FY'09. For most places, federal highway dollars represent the biggest opportunity to match resources with local priorities.

Historically, local leaders seeking to develop option-rich communities have been steered to the smaller federal highway categories: Transportation Enhancements program, CMAQ program and STP funds that local decision-makers control. These programs comprise a relatively small share of the \$29+ billion provided to the states in FY'06. Yet, they are certainly the most popular and for many people define what the 1991 ISTEA law and its funding flexibility was all about. Dollar for dollar, these three programs have made the biggest contribution to local efforts to enhance livability and deliver more travel options. Moving from the margins means going beyond these commitments by insisting that additional program resources made available to the states are used in ways that accomplish these same outcomes.

Next, recognize that state transportation agencies receive and largely control most federal highway dollars; California is the only exception (state law allocates about 75 percent of its annual program resources to MPOs and other local areas). Most states identify their funding priorities and then transfer funds among the federal programs to fund them. When they make these decisions, they usually have most of the federal highway dollars on the table and at their disposal. One key purpose of this *Guide* is to help advocates understand how to apply federal funds to support a broader set of investments.

**Some Targets of Opportunity:** Here are three specific targets of opportunity to consider: 1) If your state doesn't have a policy governing highway program transfers, seek an agreement with your state that includes a reporting system to MPOs and the public on funds that are transferred and a policy on how these funds are used; 2) develop a mechanism for allocating unprogrammed Equity Bonus funds; and 3) revisit policies on how statewide STP funds are allocated.

On program funding transfers, ask your state for a policy or agreement that provides an opportunity to use these resources for local priorities. At a minimum, ask for a notification process to inform MPOs and local areas of any transfers. Another approach might give local areas a right of first refusal to use any program funds being transferred

from its original purpose (e.g., Bridge funding) to another category (e.g., STP Statewide funds).

Work with your state leaders to develop an allocation process for the distribution of unprogrammed Equity Bonus funds. In FY'06, states will receive more than \$2.6 billion in unprogrammed Equity Bonus funds—on average, more than \$50 million per state or about 9 percent of each core program dollar allocated to the states. If there is no policy in place, ask your state DOT or your state legislators to develop one that shares these funds with local areas or targets them to priority initiatives, such as projects that expand travel options. (The 1991 ISTEA law apportioned one-half of available equity funds as STP dollars to local areas, but states successfully pressed Congress to have these funds taken back during action on the 1998 TEA-21 law.)

While some states do have systems for allocating statewide STP funds, many do not. These funds, according to federal law, are available for projects anywhere in the state and for any highway or transit eligibility, but states generally use these funds for state projects. An agreement with the state DOT or an action by the state legislature to direct these funds to community transportation priorities could make a big difference. Taken together, these three opportunities could easily double current federal highway program commitments in most places.

**Federal Match Matters:** In thinking about funding the types of investments that your community wants, the federal matching share can make a difference. The law generally provides an 80 percent federal funding share for both highway and transit projects. The Interstate Maintenance and Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) projects qualify for a 90 percent federal share. Importantly, the new Safe Routes to School (SRS) program, with average annual funding of \$120 million through FY'09, provides a 100 percent federal share.

In the transit area, demand for new rail investment under the “New Starts” program (funds allocated by Congress) is so great that a 50 percent federal share is now becoming the norm, despite the law’s authority for an 80 percent federal share. (Note that a local New Start project sponsor facing the potential for a lower federal match under the New Starts program can use STP funds, for example, to increase the federal share of the project costs, up to 80 percent.)

One overlooked opportunity to help accelerate safety efforts and promote transit use and other travel options is a provision that allows states to provide 100 percent federal matching funds. Eligible projects include: traffic circles (or roundabouts) and other traffic calming measures (e.g., traffic signals, signs and pavement markings) as well as others that provide for commuter carpooling and vanpooling, railway-highway crossing improvements, and priority signal control systems that improve transit services. Efforts to deploy new rapid bus services and even full Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), for example, could get a big boost from full federal funding of signal pre-emption systems that are often needed in providing these services. The total share of federal

funds that can be devoted to these 100 percent eligible projects is capped at a fixed amount; in FY'06, about \$2.1 billion nationwide was available.

Full federal funding is a particularly powerful tool for making further progress on improvements communities are seeking, particularly in states where there are continuing financial challenges and where state and local matching dollars are limited. Again, working with your state transportation agency or your state legislature to establish a policy for the use of this 100 percent federal money can help make walking and bicycling safer and promote transit use and other commute options.

Finally, in some states where highways have been constructed with toll revenues, the law allows states to use toll revenues as a credit in meeting state and local requirements. These credits can be used for meeting the non-federal match for any federal project purpose.

### Other Issues Worth Remembering

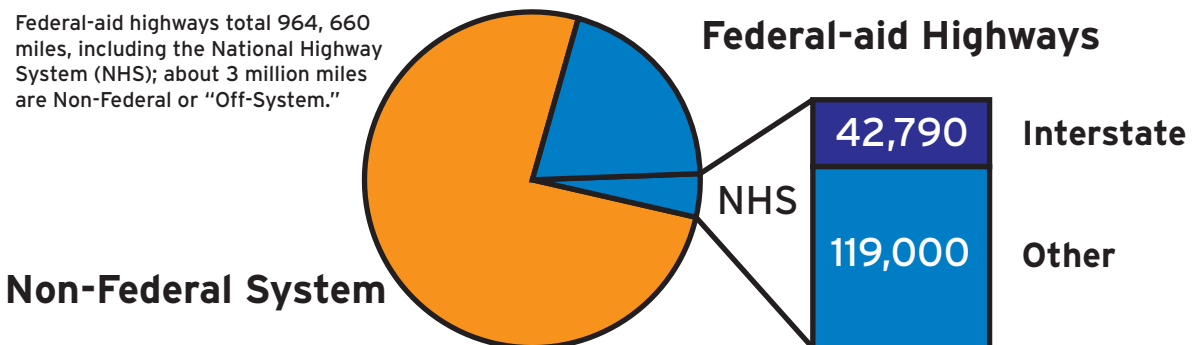
Although there are many other considerations to keep in mind as you go forward, the following are also noteworthy in making the case for specific changes and acknowledgements in the allocation of federal transportation dollars.

**Federal-aid Highways:** Federal law generally directs available federal highway funds to Federal-aid highways, the shared network of designated federal, state, and locally owned highways that account for a significant share of the nation's car and truck travel and transit use.

As shown in **Table 3.5**, there are nearly one million miles of Federal-aid highways, comprising roughly one fourth of all U.S. highway miles (center line miles).

While most federal highway dollars are largely invested in improvements to Federal-aid highways, there are opportunities to use federal funds "off system" (see **Table 3.7**). For example, the Bridge program and the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program regularly fund investments off the Federal System. The new Safe Routes to School

**Table 3.5. Miles of Federal-aid Highways**



(SRS) program and a new safety program, called the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), allow funds to be used on **any public road**.

**Who Owns the Federal-aid Highways:** In addition to knowing what highways are Federal-aid highways, it also helps to know who owns the facilities. There are dramatic differences among states with regard to who owns the state's highways, streets, and bridges.

**Table 3.6** shows that local governments in urban areas, on average, own more than 60 percent of all Federal-aid highways. The ownership pattern is the mirror opposite in rural areas, where states own more than 60 percent of all highways on the Federal System. Yet, federal law delivers all federal highway dollars to the states, regardless of what the state owns and/or operates.

For information on your state, go to—

[www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/ohim/hs03/htm/hm14.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/ohim/hs03/htm/hm14.htm)

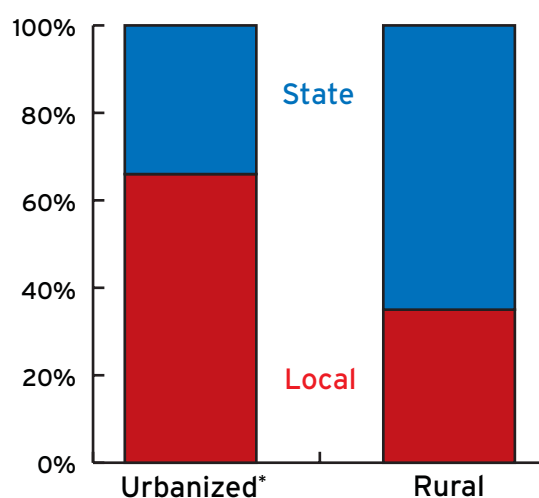
**Lining Up the Programs with the System:** Where and how federal highway funds are invested on the various road systems is very important. In most states, the fatality rates on rural roads (not Federal-aid highways) are the highest of any category. The new federal law establishes a program to combat this rural safety problem, by setting aside a small portion of each state's HSIP program funds for this purpose. On the other hand, in urban areas where the auto fatality rates are relatively low by comparison, pedestrian fatalities and injuries are a significant concern. This is especially important to the continued success of transit services because roughly 85 percent of all transit users walk to a bus stop or train station. Similarly, the challenges posed by dangerous streets to younger children walking to school underpinned the new Safe Routes to School program.

Beyond these relatively modest but important initiatives, it is helpful to consider the larger picture and the relationship of core highway programs and funding eligibility on the various highway networks, as shown in **Table 3.7**. The types of highway investments also make a big difference in the delivery of transit services, whether it is safer intersections and crosswalks, sidewalks and trails, bus shelters, timing of signal systems, or the quality of road surfaces.

Who owns the various transportation systems—a state, regional, or local government—sometimes underlies state and local political struggles over where program funds are used and what types of solutions are offered.

State transportation agencies tend to focus their attention on the roads with the highest traffic volumes. These roads tend to be on the state highway system and their most likely solution is to expand capacity. Local officials, who own most of the nation's highways and streets,

**Table 3.6. Federal-aid Highways Ownership**



\* About four of every five Americans live in urbanized areas



**Table 3.7. Core Federal Highway Programs and System Eligibility**

Core Program	Percent Share of FY '06 Funding	Federal-aid Highways			Non- Federal-aid Highways <sup>1</sup>
		Interstates	NHS Other NHS	Other	
Bridge <sup>2</sup>	16	\$	\$	\$	\$
CMAQ	6	\$	\$	\$	\$
Equity Bonus	9	\$	\$	\$	\$
HSIP (Safety)	4	\$	\$	\$	\$
IM	18	\$			
NHS <sup>3</sup>	23	\$	\$		\$
STP	24	\$	\$	\$	\$
Percent State-Owned Miles		95	95	53	8
Percent Locally-Owned Miles		5	5	47	92
<sup>1</sup> Funding tied to programs & eligibilities (e.g. bridge repair, safety as well as Safe Routes to School projects, transit, and Transportation Enhancements like trails).					
<sup>2</sup> A minimum of 15% of total <b>Bridge</b> funds must be spent Off-System, but now all funds are eligible for Off-System.					
<sup>3</sup> <b>NHS</b> funding eligibility can be off the NHS System for transit projects—light rail, commuter & intercity rail (non-Amtrak)—that can show investments provide relief to NHS corridor(s).					

virtually all of the nation's transit systems, most of the signal systems, sidewalks, parking structures, etc. and also control land use and development decisions, often bring different perspectives and are open to a wider range of transportation solutions.

It is difficult for most state agencies is to consider non-highway options for addressing capacity issues. System ownership is certainly an issue to consider in engaging the debate on how transportation dollars are allocated.

**Highway Obligation Authority Is a Key Part of the Story:** While transit funds are distributed directly to transit providers, other designated recipients and states as grant dollars, the mechanics of federal highway spending are not so clear cut.

First, highway spending is controlled by obligation authority. Spending authority is generally meaningless unless there is obligation authority to go with it. A state receives its apportioned spending authority in several categories, but it receives a lump sum of obligation authority—an amount that is almost always less than the total spending authority it receives. With some exceptions, each state must assign its full obligation authority in the year it is received. When a state commits funds to a project, it assigns equal amounts of spending authority and obligation authority. The law generally lets states decide how to allocate its obligation authority.

**Table 3.8** shows that for every core program dollar allocated to the states in FY'06, they received about 87 cents in obligation authority. This ratio also applies to the other allocated programs, including Safe Routes



to School, Recreational Trails, and most project earmarks. As a result of this difference, roughly \$4 billion in spending authority, is expected to go unused, which accumulates as unobligated program balances. For STPP's Decoder on these issues, "The Transportation Funding Loop-hole", go to—

<http://www.transact.org/library/decoder/ObligationLimit.pdf>

A state can assign its obligation authority to fully fund one or two programs (i.e., assign one dollar of obligation authority for every dollar in apportioned spending authority), while reducing funding commitments to others. It is the ratio between obligation authority and spending authority (i.e., 87% in FY'06) that sets a frame of reference or target to measure equitable funding among programs, or what is often called "fair share" program funding.

Any project that is funded under a core program category (exception is STP funds for larger MPOs) or any other apportioned program category must receive a share of the state's annual obligation authority. In effect, all projects are chasing the same obligation authority.

Since each state transportation agency controls the allocation of its annual obligation authority, an agency can essentially dictate how and where federal highway funds are invested, absent intervention by the governor, state legislature, governing statutes, or local political pressure.

**Who Really Controls Spending:** For the transit program, larger transit agencies generally receive funds directly from the Federal Transit Administration and make their decisions, subject to LRTPs, STIPs and TIPs, on how to deploy these funds within the areas they serve. Smaller transit agencies receive federal transit funds that are passed through the states. Federal funds are allocated as grant funds and remain available to the agency generally for 3 years.

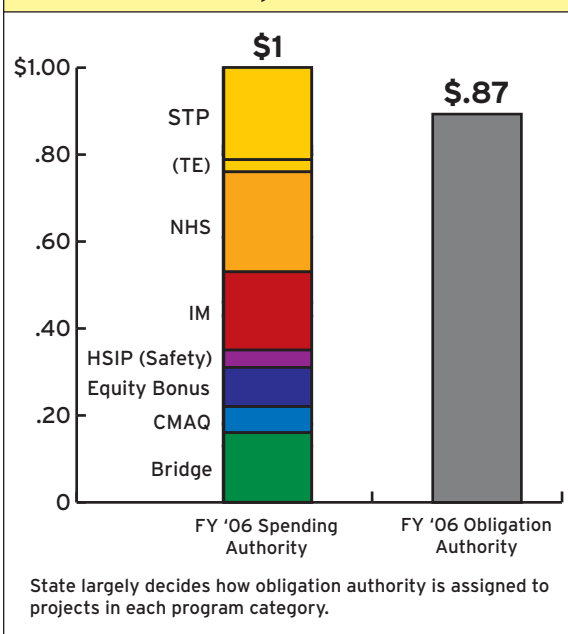
**Table 3.9** indicates which governmental agency generally controls funding decisions for the "core" highway programs.

## Getting More Accountability in Funding

To ensure more accountability in how federal funds are being deployed in your local area, region, and state, current law provides several tools to track available funds and keep tabs on how federal funds are spent.

There is considerable variability among state and local agencies in keeping financial data up to date and how this information is shared with the public. For highway spending, state transportation departments track federal expenditures and fund balances through FHWA's Fiscal Management Information System (FMIS). This information is not readily shared with the public, although some MPOs have access

**Table 3.8. Federal Highway Funds Exceed What States Can Spend**



**Table 3.9. Who Largely Controls Federal Highway Dollars**

Core Program	Percent Share of FY '06 Funding	State	MPO	Shared <sup>1</sup>
Bridge	16	●		
CMAQ <sup>2</sup>	6			●
Equity Bonus	9	●		
HSIP (Safety)	4	●		
IM	18	●		
NHS	23	●		
STP	24			
TE	(3)			●
State	(8)	●		
Local - 200K+	(7) <sup>3</sup>		●	
Local - Other	(6) <sup>3</sup>			●

<sup>1</sup> **Shared** means MPOs/local governments are generally more engaged in decisions on funding, usually due to program emphasis or directives in law, but states (except CA) make decisions on when and if funds are actually obligated.

<sup>2</sup> **CMAQ** funds are intended for local areas for compliance with the Clean Air Act.

<sup>3</sup> **STP Local funds** are the only program (except earmarks) where states must proportionally allocate share of obligation authority (based on Table 3.8, this means about 87% of apportioned STP funds in FY '06 must also get obligation authority). Also, shares fluctuate slightly as population changes among the areas.

to it. Similarly, transit agencies do not routinely make information available to the general public on the status of program funds.

**Tracking New Federal Highway Funds:** The most current information (with some exceptions) on highway program dollars apportioned to the states can be found at FHWA's site—

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/notices.htm>

These tables can help you track dollars that are apportioned by formula to your state, including the core programs as well as funding for SRS, Recreational Trails, Metropolitan Planning and other programs.

**Tracking New Federal Transit Funds:** Available federal transit program dollars, including funding information specific to individual transit providers, can be found at FTA's website—

🌐 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003_ENG_HTML.htm)

or go to the joint FTA/FHWA site on SAFETEA-LU—

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/fundtables.htm>

Absent some action by Congress that might reduce or even increase federal funding commitments, FTA's data on the funds available to transit systems is generally more timely and tends to be more informative. When an urbanized area receives its share of transit funds, these are grant dollars that are real dollars from that point forward. (FHWA program funds are new spending authority, not actual spending.)

**Tracking Federal Expenditures:** For people in urban areas, the MPO is the place to go to get financial information. For example, no federal funds for either a transit or highway project can be committed unless the project is in the transportation improvement program (TIP) maintained by the MPO. This is also true for the expenditure of federal transit funds by your local transit agency.

Another method for tracking expenditures is the current law requirement that every MPO release a report at the end of each fiscal year listing the various projects that were funded with federal transportation dollars. SAFETEA-LU now requires that MPOs provide this information via the web, which should make this information much more accessible.

**Anticipating How Much Funding Will Be Available:** The law requires state transportation agencies to work with MPOs on *cooperative revenue estimates*, which are basically budgets showing the funding each MPO area will receive. These estimates should describe what highway program funds are anticipated to be received in the upcoming year. MPOs also work with local transit providers to anticipate planned program expenditures during the year.

**How to Keep Track of How Funds Were Expended After the Fact:** Federal law requires FHWA to issue an annual report to the public describing how states used federal highway funds in the prior fiscal year. It reports on state program obligations, types of projects and the location of the spending within each state. SAFETEA-LU elevated this report by directing FHWA, beginning in FY'05, to share this information with the public in "an user-friendly" format via the Web. This revised format should vastly improve the tracking of federal highway program expenditures by states going forward. FTA is not subject to similar reporting requirements, largely because of differences in the programs. FTA funds go directly to designated recipients, with the public knowing how much money was provided and generally how it was expended. Many states, however, have yet to develop readily accessible tracking systems for following state allocations of transit funds to smaller transit service providers.



**Federal law requires FHWA to issue an annual report to the public describing how states used federal highway funds in the prior fiscal year.**

## Summary

Federal transportation funds are very flexible, making these resources a potent tool in securing the transportation and community outcomes the public is seeking. The flexible funding features in the law are what helped define federal transportation reforms first set forth in the 1991 ISTEA law.

The success of community and other public efforts to move from the margins to the mainstream will largely be determined by how these federal transportation resources are used to help build better communities and deliver more travel options to the public. To achieve these outcomes, some mastery of money matters will help. But making more progress for your community also depends on increased public accountability on how these resources are invested, including decisions by state and local elected and appointed leaders.

The many challenges before the public and community leaders on these money matters can appear daunting, but the outcomes to be achieved are well worth the effort. 🟡

Chapter IV focuses on two topics: 1) how to improve project design; and 2) federal transportation funding that can help realize five opportunities to design healthy, safe, livable places:

- **Livability Opportunity #1:** Reinvest in existing community transportation infrastructure (a.k.a. “Fix It First”).
- **Livability Opportunity #2:** Improve transportation safety and security.
- **Livability Opportunity #3:** Improve multi-modal transportation and public health through bicycling and walking.
- **Livability Opportunity #4:** Protect the environment.
- **Livability Opportunity #5:** Protect and enhance scenic, historic and cultural assets.

As noted in *Chapter I: From the Margins....*, livable communities are places that people want to live, work and play. Today more than ever, we understand that economic growth can be achieved by conserving natural resources, preserving historic structures and designing vibrant mixed-use communities. State and metropolitan transportation plans and projects discussed in *Chapter II: Getting In The Game: Planning is Fundamental*, should fully reflect this understanding.

**Action Tips**, included in each opportunity statement, identify key players to contact and key questions to ask as you learn more about transportation in your community. These questions are not exhaustive; rather they provide a starting point for your interaction with elected officials and transportation planners.

## How to improve project design

Over the past 20 years, citizens and planners have learned much more about what works and what does not work in designing livable places.

Federal transportation agencies—the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration—support good design and state-of-the-art technology, and they encourage states and local governments to share their experiences and to adopt best practices. Failure to design livable communities is not a federal issue; it is a state and local issue.

Good design occurs most often when people are involved early and continuously, from problem identification to execution. In the transportation field, this has developed into a holistic planning and design philosophy known as **Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)**. CSS is applicable to highways, to transit, and to all other improvements eligible for federal funding.

CSS (also known as Context Sensitive and Sustainable Solutions (CS3)) is defined as "... a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility. CSS considers the total context within which a transportation improvement project will exist." SAFETEA-LU officially recognizes the principles and processes that yield good transportation projects. (See FHWA Web site below.)

A growing number of state departments of transportation, including those in Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, and Vermont, are beginning to adopt CSS and retrain highway engineers and planners to put this philosophy into practice. The result is better projects; a higher degree of public satisfaction; and often, shorter project delivery that saves time, money, and good will.

A new FHWA web site, [www.contextsensitivesolutions.org](http://www.contextsensitivesolutions.org), provides a wealth of information on many outstanding CSS projects that are eligible for federal funding, proving that good design can transform a transportation necessity into a community asset. Featured projects include: integration of bicycles on streets and roads; historic bridge restoration; safer street crossings and crosswalks; highway interchanges that serve as welcoming community gateways; landscaping with native plants and wildflowers; wildlife crossings; attractive and readable information signs; roundabouts that eliminate traffic conflict points while increasing vehicle capacity; burial of electric, telephone and other wires; road alignments that better fit the topography; and bus shelters and special bus lanes that make transit service more comfortable and efficient for passengers.

Advocates may encounter resistance to official adoption of CSS through legislation or executive order. Some transportation officials say that CSS is nothing new, that they have always done business this way. Others misrepresent CSS as concerned mostly with design "frills," failing to grasp the underlying emphasis on public engagement. Whatever their fears, they are unlikely to disagree with the statement that **good transportation design should be the rule, not the exception**. And it follows that institutionalizing CSS can only improve the odds that projects will be well-designed and meet public expectations.

Understanding what is possible and demanding the best will hold public officials and private developers accountable for raising the standard for all public works projects. The qualities and characteristics of CSS discussed under *Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)* below can be helpful in conversations with elected officials and transportation professionals.

#### New CNU/ITE Design Guide

"Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities" is a new guide from the Institute of Transportation Engineers and the Congress for the New Urbanism. Sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, this manual gives designers tools to flexibly and creatively design streets that match the urban built environment.

 <http://ite.org/bookstore/RP036.pdf>

## Underlying Principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)

CSS is a project design approach that has grown out of a widespread recognition that engineers can—and should—design transportation projects that respect community and environmental values. Flexibility in Highway Design, a 1997 landmark study, affirmed that design guidelines established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials in *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, more commonly known as “the Green Book,” can accommodate well-documented design flexibility. In 1998, participants in Maryland’s Thinking Beyond the Pavement Conference identified core CSS principles to govern both project implementation and evaluation. SAFETEA-LU specifically refers to the qualities and characteristics of excellence listed below and authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to consider them in establishing standards to be used on the National Highway System. In addition, state adoption of CSS is one of the Federal Highway Administration’s Vital Few Goals.

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/csd/102902.htm>

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/csd/activities.htm>

### Context Sensitive Solutions Process: Characteristics of the Process That Yield Excellence

- ➔ The project development process is tailored to be flexible in meeting the circumstances. This process should examine multiple alternatives that will result in a consensus of approach methods.
- ➔ Communication with all stakeholders is open, honest, early, and continuous.
- ➔ A multidisciplinary team is established early, with disciplines based on the needs of the specific project, and with the inclusion of the public.
- ➔ A full range of stakeholders is involved with transportation officials in the scoping phase. The purposes of the project are clearly defined, and consensus on the scope is forged before proceeding.
- ➔ A commitment to the process from top agency officials and local leaders is secured.
- ➔ The public involvement process, which includes informal meetings, is tailored to the project.
- ➔ The landscape, the community, and valued resources are understood before engineering design is started. A full range of tools for communication about project alternatives is used (e.g., visualization).



### Context Sensitive Solutions Qualities of Excellence in Transportation Design

- The project satisfies the community and transportation needs as agreed to by a full range of stakeholders. This agreement is forged in the earliest phase of the project and amended as warranted as the project develops.
- The project is a safe facility for all types of users and the community.
- The project is in harmony with the community, and it preserves environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, and natural resource values of the area, i.e., exhibits context sensitive design.
- The project exceeds the expectations of both designers and stakeholders and achieves a level of excellence in people's minds.
- The project involves efficient and effective use of the resources (time, budget, community) of all involved parties.
- The project is designed and built with minimal disruption to the community.
- The project is seen as supporting community objectives and adding lasting and sustainable value.

## Transportation Design Projects

*Context Sensitive Solutions—Best Practices in Context-Sensitive Solutions*, sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Center for Environmental Excellence in 2005, recognized three winners:

**Best Project.** Minnesota's Trunk Highway 38, the Edge of the Wilderness National Scenic Byway Corridor is a corridor reconstruction project focused on maintaining the roadway's existing alignment, incorporating four-foot paved shoulders with a rumble strip and an additional two feet of reinforced soft shoulder to improve safety and accommodate bicyclists, while reducing the roadway's impact on the land.

**Best Program.** Oregon's Transportation Investment Act (OTIA) State Bridge Delivery Program is an innovative program to replace or repair more than 300 bridges. The program includes a collaborative permit-streamlining effort to be implemented using a context-sensitive and sustainable solutions (CS3) approach.

**Best Institutional Change.** The New York State Department of Transportation's Context Sensitive Solutions Implementation Initiative includes a CSS policy directive for the department as well as an annual CSS award to recognize exemplary practices; a CSS web site; numerous CSS training courses; and incorporation of CSS into the agency's Project Development Manual.

## LIVABILITY OPPORTUNITY #1

### Reinvest in existing community transportation infrastructure (a.k.a. “Fix It First”).

From potholes to pedestrian-hostile intersections, aging and outmoded transportation facilities can be a headache for everyone. Nearly 70 percent of the nation’s urban and suburban roads where most of the population lives and most of the driving occurs, are in less than good condition, according to FHWA. While the nation is making progress on fixing the Interstate, freeways and expressways, spending to repair older roads and bridges and reinvest in other community transportation facilities is far short of need.

SAFETEA-LU revised the eligibility rules under the Bridge program that should prove helpful to Fit-It-First efforts to improve local bridges. Specifically, the new law allows states to use 100 percent of their Bridge funds for repairs of Off-System bridges, which are often owned by cities and counties and are not on Federal-aid highways.

A well-maintained transportation system is critically important in attracting new private-sector investment and in building a sense of confidence in the economic future of the community. Reinvestment makes the best use of roads and transit systems already in place by tackling congestion and safety through better management, redesign and improvement of existing facilities.

The San Francisco Bay Area’s impressive Long Range Plan, Transportation 2030, charts a 25-year course to fulfill a vision “. . . in which potholes on the streets, roads and highways are rare exceptions and not common occurrences; in which the region’s bridges prove mightier than the strongest earthquake; in which all the doors on all the buses open and close; in which train station escalators and ticket machines are no longer adorned with ‘out of order’ signs; and in which broken sidewalks no longer bedevil pedestrians, wheelchairs or baby strollers.”

The first rule of managing one’s personal investment is to preserve principal; the first rule of managing the public’s transportation investment is to preserve the core system. Federal transportation law permits states and local governments to apply most transportation funds to fixing existing facilities and thus, preserving core systems.

States, MPOs and transit agencies have wide latitude in how they invest federal transportation funds (see *Chapter III. Paying for What You Want: Money Matters*). State and metropolitan transportation plans should clearly articulate goals and priorities to maintain transportation systems in good working order, using the law’s flexibility features to fund these needs.



**The first rule of managing the public’s transportation investment is to preserve the core system.**

#### Federal Programs That Can Help

- Core Highway Programs, especially Bridge, Equity, Interstate Maintenance and STP
- Fixed Guideway Modernization Program
- Urbanized Area Formula Grants

### Action Tips

#### Key People:

- Staff in charge of developing capital program at MPO
- State DOT staff in charge of pavement and bridge management systems

### On Maintaining Existing Transportation

Writing on infrastructure and economic development for Boston's MetroPlan 2000, author Stephen Landau noted that inadequate infrastructure "...can deter investments when public works suffer from deferred maintenance or are used significantly over capacity. The prevalence of unsatisfactory public systems may contribute to disinvestment, discourage local expansions and lead to a general climate of economic decline. Ironically, a vibrant economy ...places unexpected stress on infrastructure systems. If maintenance is deferred during "boom" years, costly investments to upgrade a deteriorating public capital plant may be required while the economy is stagnating in order to prevent a long term decline."

→ State DOT staff in charge of developing the state TIP

→ District engineer for your area

#### Key Questions:

→ What are the conditions of bridges, roads and transit facilities in your community?

→ Is information readily available from either the MPO or the state DOT on the condition of the roads, bridges, transit vehicles, etc.?

→ Do the metropolitan and statewide LTRPs address the preservation of existing roads, bridges, transit vehicles, bus stops, etc.?

→ Is system preservation a priority in the capital programs (the TIP and the STIP)?

→ Can the MPO or the state DOT tell you how they allocate resources among system preservation, new capacity, and system management (safety, maintenance, and operations)?

→ What is the backlog of deferred maintenance for the state's roads and bridges?

→ Does the schedule for replacing buses and rail cars meet generally accepted timeframes?

### Fix-It-First Projects

**Preservation of Oregon Historic Coastal Bridges, Pacific Coast Scenic Byway.** This preservation project, winner of a 2002 Scenic Byways Best Practices Award from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, has restored four of eight historic bridges that stretch the length of Oregon's Pacific Coast Scenic Byway. By using the most appropriate time-tested technology to preserve the restoration, the state is able to protect its legacy of architecture and engineering that was in grave danger of being lost. The state's goal is to restore all historic coastal bridges by 2020.

🌐 <http://www.byways.org/press/releases/2001/25>

**Comprehensive Streetscaping Program, Lake Worth, FL.** Ten years ago, downtown Lake Worth was in disrepair, commercial vacancies were high, and traffic flowed through core streets at high speeds. It was not an attractive or welcoming place to be. Faced with growing traffic problems, planners decided to implement a comprehensive streetscaping program designed to reduce the speed of traffic. The program included narrower streets, wider sidewalks, decorative lighting, benches, landscaping and more. To improve mobility, a trolley bus service was added along with new bike lanes. Lake Worth's downtown is now revitalized, with well-attended public events and increasing property values.

🌐 [http://www.contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/case\\_studies/lake-worth-flor/](http://www.contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/case_studies/lake-worth-flor/)

## LIVABILITY OPPORTUNITY #2:

### Improve transportation safety and security.

Livable communities are characterized, in part, by safe streets and roads, and by secure public transportation for all users, young and old, pedestrians as well as motorists. Yet, highway safety remains a significant national problem.

In 2004, 42,636 people died in motor vehicle crashes on U.S. highways. About 2 percent of deaths are bicyclists; 11 percent are pedestrians. Among children 2-12 years old, motor vehicle crash injuries are the leading cause of death. Motorcycle fatality rates are on the rise, with the number of deaths on motorcycles per mile traveled about 27 times the number in cars. And for every person killed in a crash, many more are seriously injured.

🌐 <http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/queryReport.cfm?stateid=4&year=2002>

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the 2004 attack in Madrid, and the 2005 London bombings, increased funding for security has been a priority for transit operators. While some strides are being made, transit security relative to aviation has not received adequate federal funding commitments. Security measures include on-site readiness assessments; technical assistance teams; regional forums for emergency responders; grants for drills, training and accelerating technology; research projects and more.

🌐 <http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Security/Default.asp#FTA%92s%205-POINT%20SECURITY%20INITIATIVE>

Federal transportation law now consolidates many federal safety efforts into a new core highway program called the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP); doubles safety program funding; establishes new programs for Safe Routes to School and Roadway Safety Improvements for Older Drivers; strengthens public transportation safety and security planning and coordination; and provides incentives to use seat belts and prevent impaired driving.

🌐 <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/>

States are required to prepare a separate State Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) that identifies critical highway safety problems and opportunities within the state, and provides a comprehensive framework for reducing highway fatalities and serious injuries. The SHSP integrates the “four E’s” of safety—engineering, education, enforcement and emergency services. HSIP requires consultation with public and private safety stakeholders and provides significantly more funding to state DOTs for safety improvement projects.

It is important for advocates to ensure that pedestrian and bicycle issues are included in SHSPs.

🌐 <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/toc.htm>


#### Federal Programs That Can Help

- ➔ Core Highway Programs, especially Equity, HSIP and STP
- ➔ Roadway Safety Improvements for Older Drivers
- ➔ Safe Routes to School

### Top 20 Action Items

The *Top 20 Security Program Action Items for Transit Agencies* provides the most important elements identified by the FTA that transit agencies should incorporate into their System Security Program Plans.

FTA has produced a guidance document, *Immediate Actions (IAs) for Transit Agencies for Potential and Actual Life-Threatening Incidents*, intended to help them reinforce and improve how well their front line employees quickly react & respond to potential and actual life-threatening incidents.

 <http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Security/Default.asp>

## Action Tips

### Key People:

- MPO staff charged with safety planning
- Local transportation department safety experts
- Local police department
- Local/regional transit agency security experts
- State DOT safety office

### Key Questions:


- Where are the major safety problems in your community for pedestrians, children, older citizens, and people with disabilities?
- Do the metropolitan and statewide LRTPs include a comprehensive section on safety? If not, how do transportation planners intend to develop a safety plan, and what elements do they propose to include in it?
- How is your local transit agency planning for greater security?
- Are there programs in your community to train transit personnel in emergency preparedness?

## Safety and Security Project

**Salt Lake City Pedestrian Safety Program, Salt Lake City, UT.** Salt Lake City's long blocks, unusually wide streets, and the spotlight of hosting the 2002 Olympics helped spur an impressive pedestrian safety initiative that has dramatically cut pedestrian fatalities.

The Salt Lake City Police Department instituted an enforcement program called Police In The Crosswalks (P.I.C.) to deter unsafe behaviors and educate both pedestrians and drivers to pedestrian safety law. Among other measures, the city has implemented a flag program that supplies brightly colored flags to pedestrians at mid-block crossings or intersections where pedestrian safety is a special concern. This allows the pedestrian more visibility to motorists and serves to remind drivers of the priority of civil driving behaviors. Other significant infrastructure improvements planned or built include in-street lighting at crosswalks for additional visibility at night, countdown timers for crosswalk signals that let pedestrians know how much time remains to get across the street, increased signage reminding drivers that yielding to pedestrians is the law, and adding "pedestrian refuges" to medians to allow people to stop halfway if they do not have time to go all the way across the street.

 [www.slcgov.com/transportation/PedestrianTraffic/PDF/PedSafe.pdf](http://www.slcgov.com/transportation/PedestrianTraffic/PDF/PedSafe.pdf)

 [www.usmayors.org/uscm/us\\_mayor\\_newspaper/documents/03\\_06\\_01/salt\\_lake\\_BP.asp](http://www.usmayors.org/uscm/us_mayor_newspaper/documents/03_06_01/salt_lake_BP.asp)

## LIVABILITY OPPORTUNITY #3

### Improve multi-modal transportation and public health through bicycling and walking.

Federal transportation law recognizes bicycling and walking as legitimate means of transportation and as valuable activities for the nation's public health. Funds are available from a number of programs to provide sidewalks, trails and greenways.

During the past 20 years the link between exercise and public health has been firmly documented. Adverse health impacts of obesity and depression—hypertension, coronary heart disease, cancer, respiratory problems, diabetes and more—are costing our society billions of dollars in health care costs and lost productivity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has defined obesity among adults and children as one of the nation's top public health issues. The latest data from the National Center for Health Statistics shows that 30 percent of U.S. adults 20 years of age and older—over 60 million people—are obese. The percentage of young people who are overweight has more than tripled since 1980. Mental depression is also widespread, afflicting 9.5 percent of adults 18 and older—approximately 18.8 million people. Fortunately, for most people, increasing physical exercise can substantially reduce these disease rates.

🌐 <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/>

Since 1991, transportation funds have helped create a stronger national network of biking and hiking trails and greenways throughout America. For example, local governments and private groups have converted 13,150 miles of abandoned rail lines to long-distance trails and have constructed thousands of miles of trails through parks and along waterfronts, encouraging people to get outdoors, travel to work and errands, exercise and improve their health.

Sidewalks, trails and greenways provide routes from home to work and shopping, and links to transit services. In fact, 85 percent of all transit users walk to a bus stop or train station. These facilities also support a wide range of popular activities including walking and running, biking, bird watching, cross-country skiing, and inline skating. Further, sidewalks and trails can improve the physical appearance of communities.

🌐 <http://www.trailsandgreenways.org/>

🌐 <http://www.americabikes.org/>

🌐 <http://www.bikewalk.org/>

Federal transportation funds are available for trail maintenance and restoration, trailhead facilities and linkages, acquisition of easements to property for recreation trails and corridors, pedestrian and bicycle safety education, rail-trails and much more.

#### Federal Programs That Can Help

- ➔ Core Highway Programs, especially CMAQ, Equity, HSIP and STP
- ➔ Recreational Trails
- ➔ Safe Routes to Schools
- ➔ Transportation Enhancements (TE)



**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention actively promotes National Trails Day**

In 2005, the CDC supported National Trails Day with the theme of "Take the Path to a Healthier You," and promoted trail use as an opportunity for physical activity.

The CDC noted: "The evidence is more convincing than ever: people of all ages who are generally not active can improve their health through physical activity. Physical activity can help to control weight; control high blood pressure; reduce risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, and colon cancer; reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety; reduce arthritis pain and disability; and prevent osteoporosis and falls.

"Although regular physical activity offers many health benefits, people who are seeking ways to become more active often overlook the opportunities that trails offer. Trails can be found everywhere, from national and state parks to urban areas."

"Hitting the nation's many trails and pathways is a great way for all Americans to have fun and, at the same time, get some valuable exercise," says Julie L. Gerberding, MD, MPH, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**Action Tips**

**Key People:**

- MPO bicycle/pedestrian coordinator
- State DOT Transportation Enhancements (TE) coordinator
- State DOT bicycle/pedestrian coordinator
- State DOT Safe Routes to School coordinator
- State natural resources agency, Recreational Trails administrator

**Key Questions:**

- Does the MPO have a sidewalk inventory?
- Does the MPO have a sidewalk plan? A bike network plan?
- How does the metropolitan LRTP envision opportunities for increased biking and walking?
- Are their goals for bikes and pedestrians in terms of percentage of housing and jobs with access to bike/pedestrian facilities?
- How much money have the state & MPO committed to biking facilities and trails? How much has actually been spent?
- Have state funds from all categories been applied to bike and pedestrian projects in the past?
- Are there any earmarked High Priority Projects in SAFETEA-LU for bikes and pedestrian facilities in the state?
- What bike and pedestrian projects are in the current STIP?
- Are there any plans for new or rehabilitated bike and pedestrian trails along National Highway System (NHS) roads?
- Who will be in charge of statewide safety planning for bicycles and pedestrians? How will the state DOT involve the public in safety planning?
- What are the design standards that the state uses for bike & pedestrian facilities?
- Are bike & pedestrian systems included in the metropolitan and state LTRPs?



## Bicycling and Pedestrian Projects

**Historic Union Pacific Rail Trail State Park, “The Rail Trail”, UT.** The Historic Union Pacific Rail Trail State Park is a 28-mile trail for non-motorized use. The trail begins at Park City and follows Interstate 80 through Wanship and Coalville to Echo Reservoir. Facilities include hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, jogging, Nordic skiing and wildlife watching. The trail surface is primarily gravel, except for a half-mile section that is paved, and it is suitable for wheelchairs and in-line skaters.

🌐 [http://www.traillink.com/TL\\_Active\\_Pages/TrailSearch/default.asp?Action=DisplayDetails&ID=357](http://www.traillink.com/TL_Active_Pages/TrailSearch/default.asp?Action=DisplayDetails&ID=357)

The **East Coast Greenway**, an urban trail connecting cities, spans 2,600 miles from Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida. Frequently likened to an urban Appalachian Trail, this remarkable trail has the potential to enhance the lives of millions of Americans for generations to come. All of the 14 states through which the Greenway passes have plans to use a variety of transportation funds for a broad range of projects. These include connecting pedestrian walkways to parks and plazas, constructing bike and pedestrian paths, and reconstructing interchanges to provide for pedestrian access. With the trail now 20 percent open for public use, individuals and communities all along the East Coast are beginning to enjoy the Greenway’s many health and economic benefits.

🌐 <http://www.greenway.org/>


## LIVABILITY OPPORTUNITY #4

### Protect the environment


Transportation projects, particularly road expansions that increase auto use, can cause many environmental problems—dirty air, polluted rivers and lakes, noise, and destruction of wildlife habitat. While the relationship between air quality and transportation has long been recognized in federal policy, the effects of transportation on water quality and habitat destruction have not been as clearly defined. Federal transportation law has begun to address these issues.

SAFETEA-LU includes additional eligibilities to use federal highway funds to address stormwater runoff in highway projects, but Congress stopped short of requiring them to dedicate specific amounts to these projects. Yet, in many areas, storm water is the leading source of water pollution, with highways contributing significantly to these problems. Harmful pollutants, such as nitrogen and phosphorous, cause algae blooms and dead zones in lakes and bays. Zinc and other toxic heavy metals cause serious health problems. Runoff from roads also can raise water temperature in rivers and streams and adversely affect aquatic life.

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/envrestore.htm>

 [http://www.americanrivers.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AMR\\_natstormwatermanagement](http://www.americanrivers.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AMR_natstormwatermanagement)

Other new environmental protection provisions will help to protect wildlife by funding projects for wildlife underpasses and other measures to ensure safe passage for animals across highways.

 <http://www.defenders.org/habitat/highways/secondnature.html>

#### Federal Programs That Can Help

- Core Highway Programs, especially CMAQ, Equity, and STP
- Clean Fuels Grant Program
- Transportation Enhancements (TE)

### Action Tips

#### Key People:

- MPO staff in charge of environmental compliance
- State and local air quality coordinators in environmental protection agencies
- Staff in charge of environmental issues at state and local departments of transportation
- Staff in charge of transportation issues at state natural resources agency

#### Key Questions:

- Do your community and state meet the Clean Air Act (CAA) standards? If not, how are they classified (extreme, severe, serious, etc.)?
- What steps has your MPO taken to bring your community into compliance with the CAA standards?

- What air quality projects have been funded in your community?
- Is your state spending all of its CMAQ money?
- Do state and local new or rehabilitated road projects routinely include storm water mitigation, wildlife crossings and habitat protection?
- How are environmental issues discussed in the metropolitan LRTP?
- Is noise considered to be an issue? If so, what steps has your DOT or your MPO taken to address this issue?
- Are your state and community in compliance with the federal Clean Water Act standards?

## Environmental Projects

**Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)** encompass a broad range of wireless and wire line communications-based information and electronics technologies that can help protect the environment. When integrated into the transportation system's infrastructure, and in vehicles themselves, these technologies can help to relieve congestion, improve safety, reduce traffic congestion, enhance transit bus performance and improve air quality. ITS technologies with the greatest potential to improve air quality include regional multi-modal traveler information systems; traffic signal control systems; freeway management systems; transit management systems; incident management programs; electronic fare payment systems; and electronic toll collection systems.

🌐 [http://www.its.dot.gov/its\\_overview.htm](http://www.its.dot.gov/its_overview.htm)

**Bartlett Brook Stormwater Treatment System, Vermont.** Rainwater runoff from U.S. Route 7 in South Burlington pollutes local streams that feed into Lake Champlain. The city of South Burlington and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources constructed a stormwater treatment system along Bartlett Brook to control the pollution. A \$112,600 Transportation Enhancements award helps finance the system that includes a restored stream channel and constructed wetland.

🌐 [http://www.enhancements.org/factsheets/te\\_11.htm](http://www.enhancements.org/factsheets/te_11.htm)

### ***Second Nature: Improving Transportation Without Putting Nature Second***

Since transportation infrastructure necessarily precedes development, current transportation planning will shape future urban growth. State transportation agencies and planners can steer investment toward greater mobility for better communities and away from our remaining natural areas. Mobility does not have to come at the expense of biodiversity.

Innovative programs featured in this publication can improve transportation infrastructure while protecting biodiversity, and they can become "second nature" to transportation and resource professionals across the nation.

**–Defenders of Wildlife and the Surface Transportation Policy Project, April 2003**

🌐 <http://www.defenders.org/habitat/highways/secondnature.html>

## LIVABILITY OPPORTUNITY #5

### Protect and enhance scenic, historic and cultural assets.

All too frequently, transportation projects have a substantial negative impact on community character. Poorly planned roads can open beautiful landscapes to unsightly sprawl development. New highways can destroy historic buildings, cultural and archaeological sites. Compromising irreplaceable community assets in the name of “progress” is both unnecessary and economically unwise.

Increasingly, conservation of scenic, historic and cultural resources is a core strategy in creating jobs, attracting tourists and gaining investment in homes and small businesses. The economic benefits of historic preservation are well documented in recent studies:

- Historic preservation activities generate more than \$1.4 billion of economic activity in Texas each year.
  - Rehabilitation of historic properties in Georgia during a five-year period created 7,550 jobs and \$201 million in earnings.
  - Each dollar of Maryland’s historic preservation tax credit leverages \$6.70 of economic activity within that state.
  - In one year, direct and indirect expenditures by heritage tourists in Colorado reached \$3.1 billion.
- <http://www.achp.gov/economicstudies.html>
- [http://hpd.dnr.state.ga.us/assets/documents/profitting\\_from\\_the\\_past.pdf](http://hpd.dnr.state.ga.us/assets/documents/profitting_from_the_past.pdf)

#### Federal Programs That Can Help

- Core Highway Programs, especially Equity and STP
- Transportation Enhancements (TE)
- National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program
- National Scenic Byways Program

Similarly, research on the benefits of National Scenic Byway designation, resource protection and marketing shows byways have a positive impact on local economies. The *New Mexico Scenic Byway Economic Impact Study*, published in 2003, reported that 4.7 million travelers visited the state’s byways in 2002, generating \$1.3 billion in gross receipts; 37,000 New Mexicans earned \$783 million in jobs generated by scenic byway travelers; and the average traveler spent \$600 during their stay in local areas along the byways.

Federal transportation law recognizes that transportation projects need not destroy the places we love. Transportation funds are available to protect and to promote scenic, historic, and cultural assets including rehabilitation of historic railroad stations, acquisition of scenic easements, billboard removal, tourist welcome centers, archaeological planning and research, establishment of transportation museums, and marketing and promotion of scenic byways.

#### Action Tips

##### Key People:

- Staff at state DOT responsible for historic preservation
- State transportation enhancements (TE) coordinator

- State DOT scenic byways coordinator
- State historic preservation officer (SHPO)
- City or county historic preservation officer

#### Key Questions:

- Has your community conducted an inventory of cultural, scenic or historic resources? Is it available to the public?
- Does the MPO or state DOT have a list of how TE funds been applied to historic and scenic preservation projects in the past?
- Is there material that explains how TE funds can be applied to scenic, historic, and cultural resource protection?
- Which roads are on the state scenic byways system? Of these, which ones are nationally recognized America's Byways?
- What is the state DOT process for designating a state scenic byway? Who makes the final decision?
- Has the state applied for National Scenic Byway Program (NSBP) funds in the past? If not why not?

## Scenic, Historic and Cultural Resources Projects



**Cultural Corridors Project, NM.** The Cultural Corridors Project used nearly \$1 million in Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds to enhance and celebrate the communities along historic Route 66, a National Scenic Byway; "The Mother Road" (I-40); and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (I-25). Artists built unique public sculptures along these popular travel routes. The art works have become popular at rest stops and encourage travelers to visit local communities.

 [http://weeklywire.com/ww/11-10-97/alibi\\_feat1.html](http://weeklywire.com/ww/11-10-97/alibi_feat1.html)

**Danville Train Station Complex, Danville, VA.** The historic Danville Train Station, freight depot, and rail trestle, were acquired and rehabilitated in conjunction with a multi-phase Transportation Enhancement (TE) award. The century-old station continues to serve Amtrak rail passengers. It also contains the Danville Science Center, the first satellite facility of the Science Museum of Virginia.

TE funds also helped renovate the freight depot for use as a farmers market (open April–December) and festival area. The renovations have encouraged greater use of the station and surrounding business areas, and several new businesses have opened as a result of the Danville Station renovations.

The former rail yard is now home to shops, entertainment, and recreational opportunities. TE funds have been used to convert the former rail trestle to a rail trail. Through federal transportation funds, Danville has been able to preserve its rail transportation history while providing transportation options, goods and services to meet today's needs.

 <http://ostpxweb.dot.gov/preserveamerica/stories/virginia/index.cfm> 

# Creating Greater Transportation Choice and Access

## Cars at the Tipping Point

"Has the American way of life, especially our love affair with big cars as symbols of individual freedom and technological mastery, reached a tipping point?" asks columnist John Buell in the *Portland (ME) Press Herald*.

Citing media images of vast gridlock as citizens try to evacuate cities threatened by hurricanes and rising costs of fuel he writes: "An effective response to the increasing crisis of our auto and oil dependent society will require our taking some lessons from Madison Avenue. Important as it is to provide hard data about the costs of the auto, it is also necessary to enter the symbolic battles. We need an image of what transit can be that emphasizes the value of free time and enhanced recreational opportunities enabled by the conservation of space and natural resources."

<http://pressherald.maine.com/insight/stories/051016buell-transi.shtml>

Chapter V focuses on federal transportation funding that can help realize five opportunities to create greater transportation choice and access for people and freight:

- **Access Opportunity #1:** Integrate public transportation into the community fabric.
- **Access Opportunity #2:** Improve all aspects of rural transportation, including transportation on federal lands.
- **Access Opportunity #3:** Provide for all users of the transportation network.
- **Access Opportunity #4:** Relieve traffic congestion.
- **Access Opportunity #5:** Improve movement of freight.

**Action Tips** included in each opportunity statement identify key players to contact and key questions to ask as you learn more about transportation in your community. These questions are not exhaustive; rather they provide a starting point for your interaction with elected officials and transportation planners.

Transportation choice requires a view of alternatives to the car that emphasize access for people who do not drive; expand options for people in rural communities; provide alternative means of visiting our national parks and public lands; promote other modes such as transit, biking, walking, and rail; to build efficient, economically strong communities.

As discussed in Chapter III, federal transportation funds can be used for all types of investment: new buses, trains, and equipment to improve safety and security; new and expanded transit service targeted to older Americans and individuals with disabilities; a new program to make it safer for children to walk and bike to school; substantial expansion of rural service over the next few years; and water-borne transportation. In addition, transportation law now addresses a number of long-standing issues related to moving freight more efficiently and safely. These investments will improve the mobility of millions of Americans; reduce congestion and improve air quality; and foster safer, more livable communities.

## ACCESS OPPORTUNITY #1

### Integrate public transportation into the community fabric.

Public transportation benefits everyone, even those who do not personally use transit:

- Every \$1 invested in public transportation projects generates from \$4 to \$9 in local economic activity.
- For every mile traveled, public transportation uses about one-half of the fuel consumed by automobiles, and about one-third of that used by sport utility vehicles and light trucks.

Since 2000, public transportation use has risen 21 percent, faster than vehicle miles traveled and airline passenger miles logged over the same period. Compared to roads, transit systems are significantly safer and substantially better for the environment and public health. Investments in public transportation significantly increase business revenues and profits; expand access to the labor pool; and save businesses on employee time lost to delay, crashes, and injury on the road.

*Rail Transit In America—A Comprehensive Evaluation of Benefits* by the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, published in October 2004, found significantly safer conditions in communities with well-developed transit systems. Researchers evaluated rail transit benefits based on a comprehensive analysis of transportation system performance in major U.S. cities.

The report found that cities with large, well-established rail systems have significantly higher per capita transit ridership, lower average per capita vehicle ownership and annual mileage, less traffic congestion, lower traffic death rates, lower consumer expenditures on transportation, and higher transit service cost recovery than otherwise comparable cities with less or no rail transit service. This indicates that rail transit systems provide economic, social, and environmental benefits, and that these benefits tend to increase as a system expands and matures. The report discusses best practices for evaluating transit benefits, and it examines criticisms of rail transit investments, finding that many are based on inaccurate analysis.

 [http://www.apta.com/research/info/online/rail\\_transit.cfm](http://www.apta.com/research/info/online/rail_transit.cfm)

#### Federal Programs That Can Help

- Core Highway Programs, especially CMAQ, Equity and STP
- Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands Program (Transit in the Parks)
- Bus and Bus-Related Equipment and Facilities
- Ferry Boats and Terminals
- New Starts Program
- Small Starts Program

### Action Tips

#### Key People:

- Staff at MPO in charge of transit planning
- Staff at local or regional offices and planning staff at headquarters of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Planning staff at the local transit agency



### Key Questions:

- Do metropolitan and statewide LRTPs include strategies for greater transit choices and access in your community?
  - Are there strategies to expand transit in your community?
  - Does the state DOT support flexible use of federal highway funds for transit investment?
  - What process exists to involve the public in transit planning and operations monitoring?
  - Is transit planning done in conjunction with land-use plans?
  - How are transit and highway planning integrated?
- 

### Examples of Public Transportation Projects

**Transit Village Program, NJ.** The state of New Jersey has designated 16 communities as public transit villages. To foster redevelopment and investment in areas near transportation centers—and to simultaneously promote the use of public transit—the communities agreed to create mixed-use developments within one-fourth of a mile of a bus terminal or rail station. These mixed-use communities were to combine residential components with retail, office, parking, and public uses within easy walking distance of each other.

One of the communities, South Orange, teamed private-sector and local officials with NJ TRANSIT to rehabilitate closed-up storefronts in the station. A transformed and revitalized downtown center emerged with an ice cream parlor, coffee shop, dry cleaner, bakery, clothing store, and diner. Local officials also used federal transportation funds to implement an ambitious streetscape project, and NJ TRANSIT added parking, landscaping and kiosks. In addition, more than 200 high-density housing units are now within walking distance of the bustling center.

 <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/village/faq.shtm>

**Denver Regional Council of Governments, CO.** The Denver Region has embarked on an ambitious effort to construct rapid transit in nine regional corridors along with other improvements associated with this construction by the year 2017. As the MPO for the region, the Denver Regional Council of Governments, or DRCOG, adopted a set of criteria to evaluate the rapid transit plans, examining finance, technology, the environment, consistency with the Metro Visioning Plan, and many other pertinent factors. DRCOG defined the scope of the improvements to be undertaken in each corridor and then examined several factors in the ultimate determination of the best options for the Denver region. Based on the multitude of factors, DRCOG's Board of Directors approved the FasTracks plan in April 2004.

The FasTracks project has fostered excellent technical cooperation between DRCOG, the Regional Transportation District, and the Colorado DOT and has generated significant regional coalition-building efforts among municipalities, counties, and participating agencies. The close connection between the FasTracks Plan and the DRCOG Metro Visioning Plan has provided substantial credibility to the FasTracks plan. The information provided to the public by DRCOG helped to enable a vote in favor of a tax increase to help fund this new rapid transit initiative. FasTracks received a 2005 Honorable Mention National Award for Outstanding Achievement in Metropolitan Transportation Planning—MPOs Over 200,000.

🌐 <http://www.ampo.org/awards/>

🌐 [http://www.lightrailnow.org/news/n\\_den\\_2004-01.htm](http://www.lightrailnow.org/news/n_den_2004-01.htm)

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission, San Francisco Bay Area Housing Incentive Program, San Francisco, CA.** The Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Housing Incentive Program (HIP) provides transportation funds to reward local governments that build housing near transit stops. The key objectives of this program are (1) to increase the housing supply in areas of the region with existing infrastructure and services in place; (2) to locate new housing where non-automotive transportation options are viable transportation choices; and (3) to establish the residential density and ridership markets necessary to support high-quality transit service.

🌐 [http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart\\_growth/HIP\\_6-22-05\\_memo.doc](http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/HIP_6-22-05_memo.doc)

## ACCESS OPPORTUNITY #2

### Improve all aspects of rural transportation, including transportation on federal lands.

A 2004 National Association of Development Organizations survey of states regarding the most pressing transportation needs of small town and rural America found that in rural areas, an overwhelming majority of respondents cited upgrading and maintaining the existing highway and bridge system as the first priority; development of transportation corridors for economic development as the second priority; and establishment of public transit in close place as third priority.

🌐 <http://www.nationalrtap.org/nationalprogram.asp>

In a special series on welfare reform in the South, the Southern Rural Development Center 1998 *Information Brief* lists four challenges to public transportation in rural areas:

- Distance to jobs
- Distance between households
- Irregular work hours
- Cost of service provision

Challenges to private vehicle ownership include:

- Costs for vehicle and insurance
- Maintenance
- No license

The report noted that because of low-population density, many rural areas are almost entirely dependent on cars to get to jobs, health care, job training, or shopping. While some states have implemented private vehicle ownership programs, one out of 14 rural households still do not own a car. Poor road conditions in many areas, particularly in the rural South, complicate auto dependency. As more people transition off welfare and enter the workforce, transportation choices in rural areas will assume new importance (See *Access Opportunity #3: Provide for all users of the transportation network*).

In Alabama, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee, among others, school buses and off-hours senior citizen vans are being used to transport adults to training classes and jobs. By pooling the resources from different social service agencies, these programs avoid replicating service routes and provide more efficient and cost-effective use of public transportation vehicles.

🌐 <http://www.ruraltransportation.org/library/index.shtml#rail>

🌐 <http://srdc.msstate.edu/>

To be competitive for job development, rural communities must modernize their infrastructure, including transportation, to attract future economic development.

## Transportation Planning and Funding for Federal Lands

All federal land management agencies (FLMA) are required to develop transportation plans and improvement programs. Projects that are “regionally significant” are to be developed in cooperation with the relevant state and MPO if the park, forest, or Indian reservation, etc. is within an MPO jurisdiction. These regionally significant projects must be incorporated in the state and metropolitan LRTPs and TIPs.

In practice, each of the FLMA has developed its own planning procedures and has incorporated the transportation planning requirements into the general agency planning with varying degrees of success. For example, the National Park Service (NPS) funds stand-alone transportation plans and other transportation information, as well as transportation elements of each park unit’s general management plan.

Each FLMA has established its own funding priorities based on an analysis of needs. Under transportation law, the use of the funds for each agency is quite broad, but the agency analysis may narrow the funding to a more limited set of project types. Federal transportation funds are available for public lands highways, park roads and parkways, and Indian reservation roads. They can be applied to transportation planning, research, engineering, and construction of the highways, roads, and parkways, or of transit facilities within public lands, national parks, and Indian reservations.

In fact, FLMA can use funds available for each class of federal lands highways for any kind of transportation project eligible for assistance under federal transportation law that is within, adjacent to, or provides access to, the areas served by the federal lands highways.

SAFETEA-LU created a new program, Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands Program (Transit in the Parks), to address congestion, enhance visitor mobility, and preserve sensitive areas in national parks and on other federal lands.

### Federal Programs That Can Help

- Core Highway Programs, especially Bridge, Equity and STP
- Appalachian Development Highway System Program (ADHS)
- Elderly and Persons with Disabilities
- Federal Lands Highways (FLH)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program for High Risk Rural Roads (HSIP)
- Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC)
- National Rural Transportation Assistance Program
- New Freedom
- Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program
- Public Transportation on Indian Reservations

## Action Tips

### Key People:

- Federal land managing agency unit staff with transportation planning/coordination responsibilities
- Planners with the county transportation agency
- Local social services agencies
- Local elected officials
- Local school staff charged with transportation responsibilities
- State DOT staff responsible for rural planning
- Regional development organization (RDO) transportation staff

### Key Questions:

- How does the statewide LRTP reflect the transportation needs of your area?
- Does your state DOT report on the condition of rural roads and bridges? Is the information readily available?
- How well is the consultation process working between the state DOT and the rural elected officials?
- Is your area taking advantage of the Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program?
- Does your area utilize Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program funding to provide transit trips?

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## Rural and Federal Lands Projects

**Prairie Hills Transit, Prairie Hills, SD.** Prairie Hills Transit operates out of Hickory House, a senior congregate housing unit in Spearfish, S.D., a town of more than 7,000 people on the northern edge of the Black Hills. From meager beginnings serving just seniors, Prairie Hills Transit has grown to a full-service rural transit agency serving the general public. Prairie Hills Transit serves what is known locally as the Northern Hills including Deadwood, Lead, Sturgis, and Belle Fourche. Medical appointments are still the top destination, though jobs and after-school programs are becoming increasingly popular.

The transit service is also an important lifeline for nearby Newell's 646 residents, keeping the town connected to the rest of the region and providing citizens who do not drive the opportunity to access services not found in town. The agency serves Newell twice weekly, mostly taking seniors into Sturgis for nutrition services, shopping, and medical appointments.


The agency has funding from several Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs as well as funds from the Older Americans Act Title III(b).

## **Transit and Intelligent Transportation Systems in National Parks**

Visitors to national parks too often have negative experiences with overcrowding and traffic congestion. Alternative transportation systems (ATS) are now in place at a number of parks including shuttle buses, rail systems, passenger ferries and tour boats, in addition to walking and bike trails and greenways. Another approach uses intelligent transportation system (ITS) that focuses more specifically on traffic congestion and on moving vehicles to and through the parks safely and efficiently. For example, Denali and Zion National Parks use mandatory shuttle systems that are free of charge. Some parks have a voluntary transportation system, such as Yosemite's YART (Yosemite Area Regional Transportation). Visitors to some parks, such as Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco, may reach various destinations with the parks by local public transportation.

Acadia National Park has implemented an Advanced Traveler Information System (ATIS) designed to provide visitors with needed information on the Internet, radio and roadside signs to help them set realistic expectations for their visit. ATIS objectives include reducing demand for parking at key locations, eliminating unsafe and illegal overflow parking, reducing congestion, and improving traffic flow.

(From *Visitor Perceptions of Alternative Transportation Systems and Intelligent Transportation Systems in National Parks*, a dissertation by Virginia Ann Dilworth.)

 <http://txspace.tamu.edu/bitstream/1969.1/509/1/etd-tamu-2003B-2003070714-Dilw-1.pdf>

## ACCESS OPPORTUNITY #3

### Provide for all users of the transportation network.

Millions of Americans do not drive. Either they have no car or they are not able to drive. How are they to get to the doctor, buy food and clothing, or go to school, jobs, day care centers, therapy, or recreation?

The transportation needs and concerns of today's **older adults** will loom much larger over the next few decades. The Administration on Aging (AOA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services notes that by the year 2030, the number of Americans over age 65 will be more than double what it is today, up to 71.5 million. As the older population grows, it will be important to ensure that all individuals can drive as long and as safely as possible, and that alternatives are available to those who must limit or who do not drive.

**People with disabilities** also face tangible obstacles such as bus stops with no roofs to protect them from weather, ticket machines at inaccessible heights, transit stops that are not paved properly for disabled access, unreliable van pickup services, lack of any transportation in some rural areas, and sidewalks that are uneven and un-navigable for wheelchair users, to name a few. In St. Louis, MO, 80 percent of transit stops are not accessible to wheelchairs because they do not have an easily navigable, clear, paved path of travel from the stop to their vehicle or destination.

🌐 <http://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/stories/2005/09/12/focus5.html>

For **children**, there are many barriers to walking to school. Efforts to overcome these barriers include addressing the “four Es”—engineering, enforcement, education, and encouragement. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cites one creative approach to walking to school:

*Schools can arrange for children to meet within a mile of school and proceed to school in “walking school buses,” in which an adult “driver” and an adult “caboose” escort several children walking together. This strategy might also alleviate fear of crime. To address the traffic barrier, programs might use engineering and enforcement approaches, such as crossing signals (engineering) and better enforcement of speed limits (enforcement). To further allay parental fears of traffic danger, programs might teach children pedestrian skills in the classroom (education).*

🌐 <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5438a2.htm>

A new SAFETEA-LU program, Safe Routes to School, provides funds for infrastructure-related projects for better engineering for sidewalks, traffic calming, and bicycle facilities; and non-infrastructure projects to promote public awareness, education, enforcement and to encourage children to walk and bike to school.

#### Challenge of Immobility

“Imagine your life without mobility. Imagine not being able to shop, socialize, enjoy recreational or spiritual activities, work, go to school or even leave your home because of mobility impairments and a lack of appropriate transportation options. For the nation's 56 million people with a disability, this is not an imaginary exercise but a daily reality. Mobility is the key to independence in our fast moving, automobile dependent society. But future needs are daunting. While the Americans With Disabilities Act transformed public transportation in important ways, challenges remain if we are to ensure that all people have access to a life of dignity and meaning.”

—Lenna Kottke, Executive  
Director, Special Transit,  
Boulder, CO



**Welfare recipients and low-income people** who must travel long distances from where they live to inaccessible jobs also have special transportation needs. Some approaches to this problem in rural areas are noted in *Access Opportunity #2: Improve all aspects of rural transportation, including transportation on federal lands*.

 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants\\_financing\\_3715.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3715.html)

Federal transportation law recognizes the transportation needs of older Americans, the disabled, children and low-income people and offers several funding sources to address these needs.

## Action Tips

### Key People:

- Staff in charge of special services with the local public works/transportation agency and transit operator
- Local aging and social services agencies
- Local elected officials including city and county council members, state legislators, the mayor
- Local school officials
- MPO staff charged with special service planning

### Key Questions:

- What special transportation services and facilities are offered in your community?
- Where do they fall short? What needs are not being addressed?
- What do safety statistics show about the safety of children walking and biking to school?
- Are the travel needs of specific groups considered in the statewide and metropolitan LRTPs? What projects in the STIP and TIP address these needs?

### Federal Programs That Can Help

- Core Highway Programs, especially Equity, HSIP, and STP
- Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Grants
- Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC)
- National Rural Transportation Assistance Program
- New Freedom Program
- Non-Urbanized Formula Program
- Safe Routes to School Program

## Targeted Transportation Projects


**FASTRAN, Fairfax County, VA.** FASTRAN was created in the 1980s to consolidate and satisfy the transportation requirements of 14 human services agencies. Before FASTRAN was established, riders with different conditions each rode to programs in separate vehicles including seniors, low-income residents, the mentally retarded, mentally ill, kidney dialysis patients, adult day health care consumers, and grocery shoppers.

In 1985, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recommended consolidating these transportation resources into one system that could satisfy the needs of the various human services agencies. The resulting FASTRAN system gives better service, relieves the agencies of

maintaining their own transportation systems and saves money by eliminating duplication through consolidation and coordinated scheduling; a win-win situation. Destinations include work-sites and day support programs for adults with mental retardation; mental health and traumatic brain injury day treatment programs; adult day health care; senior centers; dialysis, chemotherapy, radiation and other regularly recurring medical appointments; and dial-a-ride trips to medical appointments, grocery stores/shopping centers, and social service appointments.

 [http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/rec/Fastran/General\\_Info.htm](http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/rec/Fastran/General_Info.htm)

**Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), Charlotte, NC.** CATS provides a series of initiatives to educate older adults about its bus service, and to demonstrate the convenience of public transportation. By partnering with local churches, senior centers and community groups, CATS sponsors “demonstration rides” for older residents, scheduled seven or eight times a year, to shopping malls and social events. In addition, CATS developed a database of bus stop features that identifies elements needing improvement and installed new trip-planning systems to show photographs of stops to riders. Through funds from the Elderly General Purchased Transportation Program, CATS and the Department of Social Services subsidize vouchers for use on local taxis for older residents who neither live near a bus route nor are eligible for transportation assistance through human service programs. Seniors in Charlotte also pay only half fare, are guaranteed reserved seating, and have access to low-floor or “kneeling” buses for easier boarding and exiting.

 <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/DSS/Services+for+Seniors+and+the+Disabled/Transportation/Home.htm>

**Safe Routes to School Programs.** A comprehensive Safe Routes to Schools program in **Marin County, California** that uses all of the “four Es”—engineering, enforcement, education, and encouragement—experienced a 64% increase in walking and a 114% increase in bicycling by the second year of their program. The Safe Routes to School program in **Tempe, Arizona**, has made engineering improvements to enhance pedestrian safety and has promoted walking through an annual Walk to School Day in which more than 8,000 students from 20 elementary schools participate. The program has contributed to a decrease in automobile traffic near elementary schools during morning and afternoon rush hours.

 <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5438a2.htm>

## ACCESS OPPORTUNITY #4

### Relieve traffic congestion.

One of the biggest transportation challenges facing the nation is traffic congestion on highways and streets. Congestion affects mobility and productivity, the environment, and our quality of life. Congestion has clearly grown—it now affects more trips, more hours of the day on more of the transportation system.

Congestion is largely thought of as a big city problem, but delays are becoming increasingly common in small cities and some rural areas as well. The Texas Transportation Institute estimates that in 2000, the 75 largest metropolitan areas experienced 3.6 billion vehicle-hours of delay, resulting in 5.7 billion gallons in wasted fuel and \$67.5 billion in lost productivity. And traffic volumes are projected to continue to grow. The volume of freight movement alone is forecast to nearly double by 2020.

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/congestion/congest2.htm>

🌐 <http://www.actweb.org/mc/page.do>

From a combination of recent studies and analytical work, FHWA estimates that roughly half of the congestion experienced by Americans is recurring congestion caused by daily demands that exist where road use exceeds existing capacity. The other half is due to non-recurring congestion caused by temporary disruptions: traffic incidents (ranging from disabled vehicles to major crashes), work zones, weather, and special events. Non-recurring events dramatically reduce available capacity and reliability of the entire transportation system. Travelers and shippers are especially sensitive to the unanticipated disruptions to tightly scheduled personal activities and freight logistics.

One approach to managing congestion is to provide alternate modes of transportation so that commuters have choices about how they will travel. (See *Access Opportunity #1: Integrate public transportation in the community fabric.*)

Another approach is **value pricing**, also known as **congestion pricing** or **peak-period pricing**, which entails fees or tolls for road use that vary by level of congestion. Fees are typically assessed electronically to eliminate delays associated with manual toll collection facilities. This concept of assessing relatively higher prices for travel during peak periods is the same as that used in many other sectors of the economy to respond to peak-use demands. Airlines offer off-peak discounts and hotel rooms cost more during peak tourist seasons.

Road-use charges that vary with the level of congestion provide incentives to shift some trips to off-peak times, less-congested routes, or alternative modes, or to cause some lower-valued trips to be combined with other trips, or eliminated. A shift in a relatively small proportion of peak-period trips can lead to substantial reductions in overall congestion. Congestion charges create incentives for more efficient use of existing capacity; protect high speed road capacity from congestion during peak hours; and can provide funding to expand travel options

#### Federal Programs That Can Help

- ➔ Core Highway Programs, CMAQ, Equity, NHS and STP
- ➔ Value Pricing Pilot Program

in a corridor, such as improved transit services, and to mitigate the adverse impacts of expanded mobility.

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/valuepricing.htm>

## Action Tips

### Key People:

- MPO staff charged with congestion mitigation
- State DOT staff responsible for pricing, demand management, and traffic operations
- Local public works/transportation department
- Transit agency planning staff
- Transportation management agency staff
- Parking managers and car-sharing groups

### Key Questions:

- What are the congestion issues in your community?
- What measures does the LRTP propose to deal with congestion? Do they include use of market incentives to help manage capacity and demand?
- If toll projects are contemplated, will toll revenues be eligible for improving public transportation services in the corridor, or will tolls go solely to building new and faster lanes?
- Can underused HOV lanes be made more productive by allowing solo drivers to use them for a toll, while using tolls to pay for improved transit?
- Can road expansion proposals be scaled back by applying value pricing to some existing lanes plus any new lanes?
- Do you have options for pay-as-you-drive car insurance or cash-in-lieu-of-parking incentives or car-sharing to help reduce traffic growth?

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## Traffic Congestion Relief Projects

### Value Pricing Projects, US and International

- In **San Diego, California**, drivers of single occupant vehicles are allowed to use the HOV lanes on Interstate 15 by paying a toll that varies directly with the level of congestion.
- In **Houston, Texas**, drivers of vehicles with two occupants can pay a fixed toll during rush hour to use an HOV lane on Interstate 10 that is otherwise restricted to vehicles with three or more occupants.

→ In **Lee County, Florida** a project involves the use of peak and off-peak toll variations to provide an incentive to shift travel out of the most heavily traveled time.

→ **Internationally**, pricing projects have been implemented recently on a new beltway in Toronto, Canada, in three cities in Norway, on intercity toll roads in France and in the central area of Singapore. Numerous cities in the European Community (the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Sweden and Greece) as well as Hong Kong are currently conducting feasibility and implementation studies and field tests of pricing concepts. In London, traffic has been cut by 30 percent due to “cordon pricing” for drivers entering a congested part of the city; and the volume of traffic entering the priced zone in London has decreased by 18 percent since pricing started in 2002.

→ A number of additional cities across the United States are evaluating the feasibility of value pricing to improve traffic flows and to enhance mobility. Several of these are expected to move toward implementation in the near future.

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/vppp.htm>

**TransitChek.** One example of a commuter choice program is TransitChek, a federal tax incentive, subsidizes the cost of a transit pass. With the TransitChek program, employees can save more than \$400 a year by using pre-tax dollars to buy transit passes. Everyone wins: employers pay less in payroll taxes, employees get a cheaper ride to work, and the environment benefits when the incentive encourages people to leave their cars at home and use mass transit.

🌐 <http://www.environmentaldefense.org/pressrelease.cfm?ContentID=2692>

## ACCESS OPPORTUNITY #5

### Improve movement of freight.

Moving freight is one of the most critical national transportation issues. With moderate growth in the economy—about three percent per year—domestic freight tonnage is projected to increase by 57 percent by 2020 and import-export tonnage by nearly 100 percent. For major port cities like Los Angeles/Long Beach, CA; New York/New Jersey; Norfolk; and Seattle, moving freight is both a key transportation issue and also a major public health concern, due to the toxic air pollution burdens imposed on those living near port terminals and major truck and rail corridors. Asthma, cancer, and heart disease typically affect residents of such communities at many times the rate experienced by those living farther from such pollution sources.

Roads carry 60 percent of freight tonnage, contributing to wear and tear and congestion. Some transportation experts have suggested that getting more freight off the roads and onto rails could solve the nation's traffic congestion problems and dramatically reduce costs of highway and bridge repair.

The *Freight-Rail Bottom Line Report*, a 2005 publication of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), notes that, while trucks move most of the nation's freight and will continue to do so, "... freight rail is critical to the freight transportation system, the competitiveness of many industries, and the economies of most states."

The Report cites several public benefits of the freight-rail system:

→ **Transportation system capacity and highway cost savings.** If all freight-rail were shifted to trucks tomorrow, it would add 92 billion truck vehicle-miles-of-travel (VMT) to the highway system and cost federal, state, and local transportation agencies an additional \$64 billion for highway improvements over the next 20 years, excluding the costs of improvements to bridges, interchanges, local roads, new roads, or system enhancements. If these were included, the estimate could double.

→ **Economic development and productivity.** Freight rail provides shippers with cost-effective transportation, especially for heavy and bulky commodities, and it can be a critical factor in retaining and attracting industries that are central to state and regional economies.

→ **International trade competitiveness.** Freight rail, in partnership with the trucking industry, provides intermodal transportation connecting U.S. seaports with inland producers and consumers. Freight rail also carries 16 percent of the nation's cross-border North American Free Trade Agreement trade. Intermodal freight-rail service is crucial to the global competitiveness of U.S. industries.

🌐 <http://freight.transportation.org/doc/freightrailreport.pdf>

#### Federal Programs That Can Help

- Core Highway Programs
- Capital Grants for Rail Line Relocation Projects
- Freight Intermodal Distribution Pilot Program
- Idling Reduction Facilities on Interstate Rights-of-Way
- National Corridor Infrastructure Improvement
- Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing
- State Infrastructure Banks (SIB)
- Tax-exempt Financing of Highway Projects and Rail Truck Transfer Facilities (Private Activity Bonds)
- Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA)
- Truck Parking Facilities

Environmental Defense's 2004 report, *Investing in Mobility: Freight Transport in the Hudson Region*, shows that investment in freight rail would relieve highway congestion and improve regional air quality. The report recommends using roadway pricing that varies by time of day to maintain free-flow traffic speeds.

 [www.environmentaldefense.org/go/railfreight](http://www.environmentaldefense.org/go/railfreight)

## Action Tips

### Key People:

- MPO and state DOT staff charged with freight planning
- Local transportation department
- Air quality planning agencies
- Chamber of Commerce staff charged with transportation issues

### Key Questions:

- What are the issues of moving freight through the community?
- What kinds of freight does the community generate? How does it travel out of the jurisdiction?
- Do the metropolitan and statewide LRTPs deal with freight issues?
- How does the regional air pollution control plan deal with freight issues? Is there adequate monitoring of air pollution hot spots and "doorstep emissions" experienced by people living close to freight corridors? What is being done to clean up dirty diesel equipment that harms public health?

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## Freight Project

**Southern California Association of Governments' Goods Movement Program.** Southern California is a global gateway for freight, but it receives more of the burdens and fewer of the benefits than it should. Freight volumes are expected to at least double and maybe triple in the next two decades. Concurrent with this demand is a rising tide of community pressure to reduce the traffic congestion and related public health impacts of freight movement. New studies have associated impaired lung growth in children with air pollution arising from mobile sources such as trucks.

The Southern California Association of Governments' Goods Movement Program seeks to optimize the region's transportation system through increases in economic efficiency, congestion mitigation, safety and air quality improvements, and enhancements to system security. In doing so, all modes of freight are being evaluated, ultimately resulting in a series of new recommendations and policies regarding infrastructure improvements.



The region has taken many steps to keep goods moving smoothly. One of the most noteworthy accomplishments is the Alameda Corridor, a freight rail “expressway” completed in 2002, linking the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to the transcontinental rail network in downtown Los Angeles that speeds freight through in less than half the previous time and in an environmentally friendly manner. The state and regional transportation agencies have financed and implemented highway improvements to facilitate goods movement and reduce highway congestion. Similarly, the two ports have spent close to \$800 million over the past six years for on-dock rail facilities and regionally significant highway improvements.

 <http://www.scag.ca.gov/goodsmove/> 

How can transportation advocates move *from the margins to the mainstream*? The answer is by building strong **coalitions**.

While individuals may initiate change, organized groups and coalitions sustain change over time by defining issues, gaining support, and holding everyone—elected and appointed officials, private contractors, transportation operators, and themselves—accountable for results.

Transportation reform has the potential to coalesce many talented people and diverse interests, including:

- Advocates for older Americans, children, and persons with disabilities
- Public transit riders, workers, and operators
- Urban and rural developers and planners and architects
- Bicyclists, pedestrians, and safety advocates
- Historic preservationists and scenic conservationists
- Environmentalists and public health officials
- Promoters of good government and fiscal accountability
- Neighborhood activists and civic leaders
- Local business leaders
- All transportation users

This chapter offers broad strategies for organizing local and state coalitions, with examples of regional organizations that are experiencing success in shaping state and local transportation policies.

### Strategy 1. Assess the Situation

Begin by convening a few thoughtful allies who are also concerned about transportation and related issues in your community or region. Assess where you are, and start a process that addresses these issues.



**“I always skate to where I think the puck is going to be.”**

**—Wayne Gretzky**

#### To Move from the Margins to the Mainstream ...

1. Assess the situation
2. Develop a Transportation Action Agenda
3. Organize for local and regional action
4. Engage the media
5. Know the players
6. Organize a statewide coalition



“Apathy can be overcome by enthusiasm, and enthusiasm can only be aroused by two things: first, an ideal, which takes the imagination by storm; and second, a definite intelligible plan for carrying that ideal into action.”  
—Arnold Toynbee,  
British economic  
historian

**Understand what’s already going on.** The first step is to understand what’s already in the works. Find one person—a local planner, transportation reform advocate, or elected official—who can provide perspectives on the current state of affairs in your area.

Review key documents, such as your community’s Master Plan, the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) developed by your Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and even your State’s LRTP and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Many states and local governments now post these online. Learn what other planning activities are underway at your MPO and at the state DOT.

These documents represent the starting point for your efforts to make further reforms and improvements that further your vision. What do these documents convey about the big picture vision? How are transportation problems defined? How well do the specific capital projects in the TIP and STIP further the goals and broader vision set forth in the LRTP?

**Assess your potential allies, community assets and liabilities, and desired improvements.** *Chapter IV. Designing Safe, Healthy Livable Communities* and *Chapter V. Creating Better Transportation Choice and Access* list 10 opportunities to use transportation funds to achieve community goals. Use the worksheet on page 79 to help you analyze what you want to achieve.

**Potential Allies:** Find out who are the leaders on transportation and seek them out. Get their ideas on who might help in furthering an agenda.

**Community Assets:** What are the physical assets you want to protect (e.g., historic downtown, open space and scenic views, or existing transit services)? Does your community recognize these assets and have a plan to protect them? Reach out to effective leaders, outstanding public professionals and talented citizen leaders who might be allies in achieving better transportation outcomes.

**Liabilities:** What are the chronic needs affecting people every day that require attention—broken and dangerously uneven sidewalks or no sidewalks at all; drainage ditches that routinely overflow; bus shelters with graffiti; stop lights that aren’t well timed for pedestrians; potholes in the streets, etc.? Are public officials engaged and responding to these problems?

**Improvements:** Identify those facilities and services that can make your community a better place to live and work. The list might include more accessible buses, a network of trails, missing sidewalk segments, or traffic calming measures to slow traffic through the downtown.

Sample Worksheet				
GOAL/OPPORTUNITY	ALLIES	ASSETS	LIABILITIES	PROJECTS/POLICIES
Design Safe, Healthy, Livable Places				
#1: Reinvest in existing community transportation infrastructure.				
#2: Enhance community scenic and historic assets.				
#3: Improve personal health through bicycling and walking.				
#4: Protect the environment.				
#5: Improve transportation safety and security				
Create Greater Transportation Choice and Access				
#1: Relieve traffic congestion.				
#2: Provide for people with special needs.				
#3: Build an integrated public transportation system.				
#4: Improve movement of freight.				
#5: Improve all aspects of rural transportation.				

## Strategy 2. Develop a Transportation Action Agenda

A **Transportation Action Agenda** can embrace issues and opportunities that attract people and organizations to your coalition.

Identify the key actors who can make things happen—local public works directors, elected officials, metropolitan transportation planning staff, state legislators, and state DOT engineers—and look for ways to involve them in your agenda.

Compare your agenda to the metropolitan LRTP and TIP. This will show you where you need to work with your MPO and state going forward. Show the discrepancies between what you have defined as community priorities and those reflected in official documents.

## Strategy 3. Organize for Local and Regional Action

**Create a big tent.** A big tent offers opportunities for people to focus on the issues that are most important to them within a common framework. Decide on **early actions** that have a high likelihood of success; **mid-range actions** that need to get started; and **long-range actions** that may require substantial thought, study and persuasion.



“When planning for a year, plant corn. When planning for a decade, plant trees. When planning for life, train and educate people.”

—Chinese proverb



“The times, they are a changing.”

—Bob Dylan

**Ask for support.** Transportation is a public issue and public officials, both elected and appointed, control planning, priorities and projects. MPOs, generally made up of **local elected officials**, are a good place to start. Build relationships with local officials and others who are central to achieving the transportation outcomes your coalition wants.

#### Strategy 4. Engage the Media

Engage the media on all levels: the larger outlets (regional newspapers and broadcast stations), grassroots traditional media (neighborhood newspapers, organization newsletters); electronic and peer-to-peer media (internet news sites, blogs and chatboards); and your own media (newsletter, website, flyers, etc.). The Thunderhead Alliance, a national bicycling and pedestrian coalition, offers this advice:

As in many political activities, having relationships with media professionals is invaluable. Become a reliable source. Return reporters’ calls immediately. Never exaggerate or lie. Practice crafting good quotes and sound bites.

#### Strategy 5. Know the Players

*Chapter II: Getting In the Game: Planning is Fundamental* outlined the role of the state in planning and capital programming that affects your community, and showed how even the best laid plans can go awry when actions lag behind public will. *Chapter III: Paying for What You Want: Money Matters* discussed the role of the state DOT in spending federal funds. In this sense, all roads really do lead to the state DOT because they control so many levers in transportation planning and funding.

**Know your state legislators, transportation committee staff, and key players in the Governor’s office.** State legislators are a good point of entry into the system, given their lead role in initiating state transportation legislation and in allocating state and federal transportation funds. In most states, the state transportation agency is under the direction of the Governor. It is useful to **map the state roles, responsibilities, and relationships** and to define clearly each part of the transportation puzzle.

**Know the players at the state DOT.** Understanding the structure of the state DOT is important, starting with who appoints the secretary of the state DOT or state transportation board. Usually, the governor makes the appointment, but not always. Reach out to professionals in the department, who have vast experience and often welcome your interest. Check the state DOT Web site to understand staff organization and responsibilities. Also look at the projects and accomplishments the Web site showcases. Do they reflect a broad approach to choice and access? Look for clues to tie your issues and proposals to the DOT’s stated priorities. The more you know, the more effective you will be.

## Strategy 6. Organize a Statewide Coalition

In organizing a statewide coalition, recruit partners that are well connected and important to legislators and state leaders. Work with them on common elements in your agenda. It also helps to work with partner groups that have a staffed presence in the state capital and that can be particularly helpful in moving an agenda.

**Plan a campaign to achieve your goal(s).** Identify legislative opportunities that the coalition believes can succeed. For example, a few statewide coalitions are having some success in pressing for state laws requiring context sensitive solutions (CSS) for all transportation projects in their state. This approach ensures these practices become a permanent part of the state DOT's program and doesn't change with a new governor or state DOT head.

### CELEBRATE!

A good coalition takes on a life of its own, greater than the sum of its individual parts. Members recognize and celebrate success; this motivates people to work together to achieve even greater success

### Successful Transportation Coalitions

**Chicagoland Transportation and Air Quality Commission (CTAQC), Chicago, IL** is a coalition of northeastern Illinois organizations that encourages advocacy, monitoring, and public involvement to ensure that transportation and land use planning agencies are responsive to the public's desire to create communities that promote the health of people and the environment, accessibility, safety and equity.

Born out of the nonprofit Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), CTAQC was founded to focus on opportunities for the public to shape regional transportation planning. With enactment of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991, CNT recruited seven core partners dedicated to applying federal policies in northeastern Illinois. By 1994, CTAQC was formed with 33 members. Today, more than 190 organizations have endorsed the ideals of the updated Citizen Transportation Plan first published in 1995 calling for more community-building projects, with greater emphasis on maintaining existing communities and more transit, bicycle, and pedestrian investment.

"Neighborhood Transopoly," a game CTAQC plays to generate community views on needed transportation improvements, has been a tremendous success in engaging and educating citizens to become transportation advocates.

🌐 [www.cnt.org](http://www.cnt.org)

🌐 [www.civicfootprint.org](http://www.civicfootprint.org)

🌐 [lists.cnt.org/pipermail/cnt-update/2005/000062.html](http://lists.cnt.org/pipermail/cnt-update/2005/000062.html)



**"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe."**

**—Anatole France,  
author**

**Coalition for Smarter Growth, Washington, DC Metropolitan Area.** With more than 40 local, regional and national environmental and civic organizations, the Coalition for Smarter Growth employs three major strategies to support and cultivate community participation in growth and transportation decisions: a media campaign; outreach and organizing efforts; and involvement in specific transportation, land use and development plans. The Coalition has produced the award-winning *Blueprint for a Better Region*; worked with the business community and other community leaders to support good development projects in the right places; and supported thousands of residents and civic organizations in their efforts to engage in transportation and growth issues.

 [www.smartergrowth.net](http://www.smartergrowth.net)

**Advocating for transportation reform is an opportunity to make your community more livable. ●**



“Organizing, not to be confused with mobilizing, is ultimately what changes people’s minds. Whereas mobilizing is about moving people to take certain actions, organizing is about developing the skills, confidence and practice among ordinary people to speak out in their own voice.”

**–Jean Hardisty and Deepak Bhargava  
of the Center for Community Change\***

\*“Wrong About the Right,” The Nation, November 5, 2005.



# Federal Transportation Funding Programs

*Appendix A* provides brief descriptions of federal transportation funding programs in three categories. At the end of each program description is information on how to access funds and a Web link(s) for more details.

## I. Core Federal Highway Funding Programs

- Bridge Program
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Equity Bonus
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- Interstate Maintenance (IM)
- National Highway System (NHS)
- Surface Transportation Program (STP)

## II. Major Federal Transit Funding Programs

- Bus and Bus-Related Equipment and Facilities
- Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Grants
- Fixed Guideway Modernization Program
- Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC)
- New Freedom Program
- New Starts Program
- Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program
- Urbanized Area Formula Grants

### III. Specific Purpose Transportation Funding Programs

Programs in this section cover funding sources for environmental, historic, financing, limited purpose, or limited recipients programs.

- Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands Program (Transit in the Parks)
- Appalachian Development Highway System Program (ADHS)
- Capital Grants for Rail Line and Relocation Projects
- Clean Fuels Grant Program
- Federal Lands Highways (FLH)
- Ferry Boats and Terminals
- Freight Intermodal Distribution Pilot Program
- Idling Reduction Facilities on Interstate Rights-of-Way
- National Corridor Infrastructure Improvement
- National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program
- National Scenic Byways Program
- Public Transportation on Indian Reservations
- Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing
- Recreational Trails
- Roadway Safety Improvements for Older Drivers and Pedestrians
- Safe Routes to School Program
- State Infrastructure Banks (SIB)
- Tax-exempt Financing of Highway Projects and Rail Truck Transfer Facilities (Private Activity Bonds)
- Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP)
- Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA)
- Truck Parking Facilities Program
- Value Pricing Pilot Program

## I. CORE FEDERAL HIGHWAY FUNDING PROGRAMS

As noted in *Chapter III: Paying for What You Want: Money Matters*, federal highway funds are very flexible. The largest and most flexible core funding programs are:

### Bridge Program (Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program or HBRRP).

Provides funding to states for improving the condition of their highway bridges through replacement, rehabilitation, and systematic preventive maintenance.

States can use 100 percent of their available Bridge funds to repair any bridge. The new law expands eligible activities to include systematic preventative maintenance. States may carry out projects for preventative maintenance without regard to whether the bridge is eligible for rehabilitation or replacement.

**Access to funds:** State DOT

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/bridge.htm>

### Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

Provides a flexible funding source to state and local governments for transportation projects and programs that help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. Funding is available to areas that do not meet applicable National Ambient Air Quality Standards (non-attainment areas) as well as former non-attainment areas that are now in compliance (maintenance areas).

A wide range of activities are eligible to help communities improve air quality including programs for improved public transit (including operating costs during the startup phase – three-year period – of new transit services), HOV lanes, employer incentive plans, traffic flow improvements that achieve emissions reductions, parking facilities serving transit, public-private partnerships, alternative fuels, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs, travel demand management, outreach and rideshare activities, telecommuting, fare/fee subsidy programs, inter-modal freight, new rail technologies and experimental pilot programs.

SAFETEA-LU gives priority to the use of CMAQ funds for retrofitting diesel engines, but it does not require states and local areas to change existing spending plans. Also, the new law further clarifies the eligibility of projects that improve transportation systems management and of operations that mitigate congestion and improve air quality.

Projects are eligible for 80 percent federal share; however, some activities, such as car and vanpool projects, and signal pre-emption systems for transit, are eligible for 100 percent federal share.

**Access to funds:** State DOT; MPO

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cmaqpgs/>

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/cmaq.htm>

## Equity Bonus

Provides funding to states to assure a minimum rate of return on contributions to the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund, and a minimum increase in each state's total funding relative to TEA-21. More than two-thirds of each state's Equity Bonus funding is distributed among the core program categories, with the remaining funds available to each state as STP program funds (reserved to the state, not distributed to Transportation Enhancements and local area categories).

**Access to funds:** State DOT; MPO

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/equitybonus.htm>

## Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

Provides funding for a new core federal-aid program to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries. Funds may be used for projects on any public road, including county roads and local streets.

Eligible projects must be described in the state Strategic Highway Safety Plan and correct or improve a hazardous road location or feature, or address a highway safety problem. Highway safety improvement projects on any public road, bicycle or pedestrian pathway, or rail crossing is eligible; safety-conscious planning; improvement in the collection and analysis of crash data; the addition or retrofitting of structures or other measures to eliminate or reduce crashes involving vehicles and wildlife; construction and operational improvements on high-risk rural roads; improvements for safety of the disabled; installation and maintenance of signs at pedestrian-bicycle crossings and in school zones.

**Access to funds:** State DOT

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/hsip.htm>

## Interstate Maintenance (IM)

Provides funds for resurfacing, restoring, rehabilitating and reconstructing (4R) most routes on the Interstate System. Construction of new lanes is not eligible under this program. Under certain conditions, states may transfer 50 percent of their IM funds to the other major core program categories.

**Access to funds:** State DOT

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/im.htm>

## National Highway System (NHS)

Provides funds for improvements to rural and urban roads that are part of the NHS, including the Interstate system and designated connections to major intermodal terminals. NHS funds may also be used to fund transit improvements in NHS corridors, if it can be shown that the transit improvement(s) provides relief to the corridor. The 1996 NHS Act provided for "...access for other modes of transportation" as

a permissible factor in design or redesign of highways on the NHS. This could include a wide range of facilities for bicycling and walking.

States may transfer up to 50 percent of their NHS apportionment to the other core highway programs; up to 100 percent may be transferred to any of these programs (Bridge, CMAQ, IM and/or STP) if approved by the Secretary, subject to sufficient notice and opportunity for public comment. Each state DOT decides how these funds will be allocated and has the choice to spend them on fixing existing NHS roads, adding new lanes or new NHS highways.

SAFETEA-LU expands funding eligibility to include environmental restoration and pollution abatement, including stormwater management improvements, and control of terrestrial and aquatic noxious weeds and establishment of native species.

**Access to funds:** State DOT

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep10/nhs/>

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/nhs.htm>

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/envrestore.htm>

## Surface Transportation Program (STP)

Provides flexible funding that may be used by states and localities for eligible projects such as bridge projects on any public road; transit capital projects; intracity and intercity bus terminals and facilities; historic preservation; landscaping and mitigation of construction impacts on scenic, historic and cultural assets; bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways and safety improvements both on and off the federal-aid highway system. Further, roads can be retrofitted so that they better accommodate buses, and bus stops, trolleys, bikes and pedestrians.

SAFETEA-LU expands eligibilities to control noxious weeds and aquatic noxious weeds, and establishes a preference to the extent practicable for planting native species. Stand-alone stormwater projects remain eligible as well as those undertaken as part of a highway resurfacing, rehabilitation or rehabilitation project (limited to 20 percent of total).

**Access to funds:** State DOT; MPO

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/stp.htm>

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tea21/factsheets/stp.htm>

🌐 [http://www.americanrivers.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AMR\\_content\\_39bf](http://www.americanrivers.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AMR_content_39bf)

## Transportation Enhancements (TE)

A subset of the Surface Transportation Program, this program provides funds for a broad array of projects to enhance communities. Twelve activities are eligible for funding as part of a comprehensive approach to surface transportation. These include: bike and pedestrian facilities, pedestrian and bicycle safety education, and rail-trails; acquisition of scenic or historic easements and sites, scenic or historic highway pro-

grams including tourist and welcome centers, landscaping and scenic beautification (including native plantings, light fixtures, public art and street furniture); control of outdoor advertising including billboard inventory and removal; historic preservation, rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities, archaeological planning and research, and establishment of transportation museums; projects to protect the environment including those that address water pollution due to highway runoff such as wetlands acquisition and restoration, detention and sediment basins, water pollution studies, channel stabilization, storm drain stenciling and river clean-ups; wildlife under or overpasses, including bridge extensions to provide or improve wildlife passage and habitat connectivity. In addition, monitoring and data collection on habitat fragmentation and vehicle-caused wildlife mortality are eligible for funding.

Projects are eligible for 80 percent federal share; however, some activities, such as certain pedestrian and bicycle safety projects, are eligible for 100 percent federal share.

**Access to funds:** State DOT; MPO

🌐 <http://www.enhancements.org/>

🌐 [http://www.enhancements.org/12\\_activities.asp](http://www.enhancements.org/12_activities.asp)

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/>

🌐 <http://www.enhancements.org/eligibility.asp>

🌐 [http://www.enhancements.org/factsheets/te\\_11.htm](http://www.enhancements.org/factsheets/te_11.htm)

## II. MAJOR TRANSIT FUNDING PROGRAMS

The programs described in this section list the key sources for transit capital and operating funding support.

### Bus and Bus-Related Equipment and Facilities

Provides grants to assist in financing bus and bus-related capital projects. Eligible projects include acquisition of buses for fleet and service expansion, bus maintenance and administrative facilities, transfer facilities, bus malls, transportation centers, intermodal terminals, park-and-ride stations, acquisition of replacement vehicles, bus rebuilds, bus preventive maintenance, passenger shelters and bus stop signs, mobility management, and costs incurred in arranging innovative financing for eligible projects.

**Access to funds:** Congressionally directed

🌐 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/grant\\_programs/specific\\_grant\\_programs/buses\\_facilities/4249\\_7958\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/grant_programs/specific_grant_programs/buses_facilities/4249_7958_ENG_HTML.htm)

🌐 <http://www.aot.state.vt.us/publictrans/5311appropriation.htm#5311>

### Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Grants (Section 5310 Program)

Provides transit capital assistance, through the states, to organizations that provide transportation services to elderly persons and to persons

with disabilities. State DOTs receive the funds which they may sub-allocate to local private non-profit organizations and public agencies.

Most funds are used to purchase vehicles, but acquisition of transportation services under contract, lease, or other arrangements and state program administration are also eligible expenses. Funds are allocated by a formula that considers the number of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities in each state.

**Access to funds:** State DOT

🌐 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/legal/federal\\_register/2004/16290\\_17889\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/legal/federal_register/2004/16290_17889_ENG_HTML.htm)

## Fixed Guideway Modernization Program

Provides formula grants for capital costs to modernize or improve existing “fixed guideway” systems - that is, any transit service that uses exclusive or controlled rights-of-way or rails, entirely or in part - including heavy or light rail, HOV lanes, or bus service with dedicated lanes.

Eligible purposes are capital projects to modernize or improve existing fixed guideway systems including: purchase and rehabilitation of rolling stock, track, line equipment, structures, signals and communications, power equipment and substations, passenger stations and terminals, security equipment and systems, maintenance facilities and equipment, operational support equipment including computer hardware and software, system extensions, and preventive maintenance.

**Access to funds:** Regional or local transit agency

🌐 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/grant\\_programs/specific\\_grant\\_programs/rail\\_fixed\\_guideway\\_modernization/4306\\_9213\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/grant_programs/specific_grant_programs/rail_fixed_guideway_modernization/4306_9213_ENG_HTML.htm)

## Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC)

Provides competitive grants to local governments and non-profit organizations to develop transportation services to connect low-income persons to employment and support services. A coordinated transportation/human service planning mechanism is required; transit agencies must approve these programs. The law also authorizes a reverse commute program, to provide services to suburban employment centers from urban centers, rural areas and other suburban locations. Under SAFETEA-LU, these funds are now distributed to the larger urbanized areas (more than 200,000 population) and states (for areas under 200,000 population), with each local area and state developing a program for the use of these funds. Importantly, specific emphasis is given to coordination among the various transportation and human service providers in each of these areas.

**Access to funds:** Transit agency (areas above 200,000); State DOT (areas under 200,000)

🌐 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA\\_JARC\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Sept05.pdf](http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_JARC_Fact_Sheet_Sept05.pdf)  
🌐 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003_ENG_HTML.htm)



## New Freedom Program

Provides for services and facility improvements to address the transportation needs of persons with disabilities that go beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act through a new formula grant program for associated capital and operating costs. States and designated recipients must select grantees competitively. Matching share requirements are flexible to encourage coordination with other federal programs that may provide transportation, such as Health and Human Services or Agriculture. Projects must be included in a locally developed coordinated public transit–human services transportation plan beginning in FY 2007. Ten percent of funds may be used for planning, administration, and technical assistance.


**Access to funds:** Transit agency (areas above 200,000); State DOT (areas under 200,000)

 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003_ENG_HTML.htm)

## New Starts/Small Starts Program

The New Starts program funds new and extensions to existing fixed guideway systems in every area of the country. These projects include commuter rail, light rail, heavy rail, bus rapid transit, trolleys and ferries. A subset of the New Starts program—**Small Starts**—provides federal funding up to \$75 million for projects with total costs of \$250 million or less. Grants are for capital costs associated with new fixed guideway systems, extensions, and qualifying bus corridor improvements. Small Starts has a separate funding authorization beginning in FY 2007, starting at \$200 million per year, and the approval process will be streamlined.

**Access to funds:** State/regional/local transit agency/FTA

 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA\\_New\\_Starts\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Sept05.pdf](http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_New_Starts_Fact_Sheet_Sept05.pdf)

 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003_ENG_HTML.htm)

## Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program

Provides apportioned funds based on areas with a population less than 50,000. States must spend 15 percent of the apportionment to support rural intercity bus service unless the governor certifies that the intercity bus needs of the state are adequately met.

Funds may be used for capital, operating, and administrative purposes to improve access in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation; to assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas; to encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all federal funds used to provide passenger transportation in non-urbanized areas through the coordination of programs and services; to assist in the development and support of intercity bus transportation; and to provide for the

participation of private transportation providers in non-urbanized transportation to the maximum extent feasible.

State and local governments, non-profit organizations (including Indian tribes and groups), and public transit operators are eligible to receive funds.

**Access to funds:** State DOT

<http://www.aot.state.vt.us/publictrans/5311appropriation.htm#5311>

## Urbanized Area Formula Program (UZA)

Provides grants for public transportation capital investments in urbanized areas for planning, engineering design and evaluation of transit projects and other technical transportation-related studies; capital investments in bus and bus-related activities such as replacement of buses, overhaul of buses, and rebuilding of buses; crime prevention and security equipment and construction of maintenance and passenger facilities; and capital investments in new and existing fixed guideway systems including rolling stock, overhaul, and rebuilding of vehicles, track, signals, communications, and computer hardware and software. All preventive maintenance and some Americans With Disabilities Act complementary paratransit services are considered capital costs.

**Access to funds:** Transit agency

[http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003_ENG_HTML.htm)

<http://www.aot.state.vt.us/publictrans/5311appropriation.htm#5307>

## III. SPECIFIC PURPOSE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING PROGRAMS

A number of federal transportation funding programs are designed to meet specific transportation objectives including those outlined in *Chapter IV: Designing Safe, Healthy, Livable Communities* and *Chapter V: Creating Greater Transportation Choice and Access*:

### Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands Program (Transit in the Parks)

Provides funds for transportation projects such as public transit, facilities for pedestrians, bicycles, and non-motorized water craft in parks and public lands to relieve traffic congestion and parking shortages; enhance visitor mobility and accessibility; preserve sensitive natural, cultural, and historic resources; provide improved interpretation, education and visitor information services; reduce pollution; and improve economic development opportunities for surrounding communities.

The Act encourages federal land managers to work with state, regional, and local transportation agencies through the metropolitan and state-wide transportation planning processes to secure additional financing.

**Access to funds:** Department of Interior

<http://www.nps.gov/transportation/alt/ats-study.htm>

## Appalachian Development Highway System Program (ADHS)

Provides funds for construction of the Appalachian corridor highways in 13 states to promote economic development and to establish a state-federal framework to meet the needs of the region. A share of these funds is apportioned to each of the 13 states by a formula, as set forth in SAFETEA-LU.

**Access to funds:** State DOT

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/appalachia.htm>

## Capital Grants for Rail Line Relocation Projects

Provides federal grants for relocating rail track or grade separating rail track that is interfering with a community's motor vehicle traffic flow, its quality of life, or its economic development. The program authorizes \$350 million for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2009. At least half of the grants awarded must not be more than \$20 million each, and the federal share is not to exceed 90 percent of the total cost of a project.


**Access to funds:** FTA

 [www.ruraltransportation.org/library/crstealu.pdf](http://www.ruraltransportation.org/library/crstealu.pdf)

## Clean Fuels Grant Program

Provides grants for air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas, to support emerging clean-fuel technologies, and to create markets for new clean fuel technologies. The Clean Fuels Program funds may be made available to any urbanized area that is designated as maintenance or non-attainment area for ozone or carbon monoxide as defined in the Clean Air Act. Funds are available to support emerging clean-fuel technologies and to create markets for new clean fuel technologies through the purchase of clean fuels buses, including clean diesel vehicles (up to 25 percent of grants annually), in certain non-attainment areas and areas trying to maintain compliance with clean air standards.

**Access to funds:** Regional Transit Agency/congressionally directed

 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/grant\\_programs/specific\\_grant\\_programs/clean\\_fuels\\_formula/4535\\_7990\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/grant_programs/specific_grant_programs/clean_fuels_formula/4535_7990_ENG_HTML.htm)

 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/legal/statutes/49\\_usc\\_53/501\\_2115\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/legal/statutes/49_usc_53/501_2115_ENG_HTML.htm)

## Federal Lands Highways (FLH)

Provides for transportation planning, research, engineering, and construction of highways, roads, and parkways and transit facilities that improve access to or within public lands, refuges, national parks, and Indian Reservation Roads (IRR). New eligible uses of Public Lands funds include up to \$20 million per year for maintenance of Forest Highways, \$1 million per year for signage identifying public hunting and fishing access, and \$10 million by the Secretary of Agriculture to

facilitate the passage of aquatic species beneath roads in the National Forest System.

**Funding for Indian tribes** for a highway, road, bridge, parkway, or transit facility program or project on an Indian reservation may now be provided directly to the tribe or to a consortium (of two or more tribes) in accordance with the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. Other provisions of the law affecting tribes include a comprehensive national inventory of transportation facilities, use of funds for road maintenance and creation of a new Deputy Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Tribal Government Affairs to plan, coordinate, and implement DOT programs serving Indian tribes.


**Access to funds:** FHWA

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/fedlands.htm>

## Ferry Boats and Terminals

Provides funds for construction of ferry boats and terminals. Priority will be given to ferries that carry the greatest number of passengers on ferries used only for passengers.

**Access to funds:** FTA

 [http://www.apta.com/government\\_affairs/safetea\\_lu/brochure.cfm#link42](http://www.apta.com/government_affairs/safetea_lu/brochure.cfm#link42)

## Freight Intermodal Distribution Pilot Program

Provides grants to states to facilitate and support intermodal freight transportation initiatives.

Projects are to reduce congestion into and out of ports and to establish and expand intermodal facilities and inland freight distribution centers. Selection criteria will be developed by the U.S. DOT as required by law. The criteria will be coordinated with those for projects of national and regional significance and will provide a basis for the future evolution of freight programs.

**Access to funds:** Congressionally directed

 [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/freightplanning/safetea\\_lu.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/freightplanning/safetea_lu.htm)

## Idling Reduction Facilities on Interstate Rights-of-Way

States may provide facilities in Interstate System rights-of-way that allow operators of commercial vehicles to reduce truck idling or to provide alternative power to support driver comfort while parked in a rest or recreation area. The idling reduction facilities may not reduce the existing number of truck parking spaces at a given rest or recreation area. States may charge a fee, or permit charging of a fee, for parking spaces actively providing idling reduction measures.

**Access to funds:** State DOT

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/idlereduction.htm>

## National Corridor Infrastructure Improvement Program

Provides funding for construction of highway projects in corridors of national significance to promote economic growth and international or interregional trade. Priority will be given with consideration to the extent to which:

- the corridor links two existing segments of the Interstate System;
- the project facilitates major multi-state or regional mobility, economic growth, and development in areas underserved by highway infrastructure;
- commercial traffic in the corridor has increased since enactment of NAFTA and where traffic is projected to increase in the future;
- international truck-borne commodities move through the corridor;
- the project will reduce congestion on an existing segment of the Interstate;
- the project will reduce commercial and other travel time through a major freight corridor;
- federal funds will be leveraged; and
- the value of the cargo carried by commercial vehicle traffic in the corridor and the economic costs arising from congestion in the corridor.

**Access to Funds:** Congressionally directed

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/corridors.htm>

## National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program

Provides funds for covered bridges listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Eligible uses of funds are the rehabilitation or repair of a historic covered bridge, or the preservation of such a bridge, including installation of a fire protection system, installation of a system to prevent vandalism or arson, or relocation of a bridge to a preservation site.

**Access to funds:** State DOT/FHWA discretionary grant

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/histcovbridges.htm>

## National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP)

Provides recognition and funding for roads having outstanding scenic, historic, cultural, natural, recreational, and archaeological qualities. Eligible roads may be designated as National Scenic Byways, All-American Roads or America's Byways. Grants are available for eight categories of activities: state and tribal programs, corridor manage-

ment plans, safety improvements, byway facilities (including bicycle and pedestrian facilities and rest areas), access to recreation, interpretive information and marketing, and resource protection.

SAFETEA-LU puts Indian tribes on an equal footing with states. Tribes may now go directly to FHWA instead of through the states to receive grants and to submit nominations to become nationally recognized America's Byways.

**Access to funds/nominations:** FHWA through state DOT or state tourism agency

🌐 <http://www.byways.org/>

🌐 <http://www.bywaysonline.org/grants/guidance/categories>

## Public Transportation on Indian Reservations

Provides direct grants to Indian tribes for public transportation on Indian reservations. The Secretary of Transportation will determine allocations and terms and conditions for awarding grants after outreach to stakeholders.

**Access to funds:** FTA

🌐 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003_ENG_HTML.htm)

## Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing

Provides direct loans and loan guarantees up to \$35.0 billion at the discretion of the Administrator. Up to \$7.0 billion is reserved for projects benefiting freight railroads other than Class I carriers. The funding may be used to acquire, improve, or rehabilitate intermodal or rail equipment or facilities, including track, components of track, bridges, yards, buildings and shops; refinance outstanding debt incurred for the purposes listed above; and develop or establish new intermodal or railroad facilities.

Eligible borrowers include railroads, state and local governments, government-sponsored authorities and corporations, joint ventures that include at least one railroad, and limited option freight shippers who intend to construct a new rail connection.

**Access to funds:** Federal Railroad Administration

🌐 <http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/268>

## Recreational Trails (RTP)

Provides funds to the states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Seventy percent of the funds will be applied to non-motorized trails suitable for bicycling and walking; no less than 30 percent must be spent on motorized trails.

Permissible uses of funds include maintenance and restoration of existing trails; development and rehabilitation of trailside and trail-head facilities and linkages; purchase and lease of recreational trail

construction; maintenance equipment and construction of new recreational trails; acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property for recreation trails and corridors; trail condition assessment; and educational publications to promote safety and environmental protection. The law also encourages use of youth conservation or service corps members to construct and maintain recreational trails.

**Access to funds:** Usually the state parks or natural resources agency

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/>

## Roadway Safety Improvements for Older Drivers and Pedestrians

Provides funds to improve traffic signs and pavement markings in all states consistent with the FHWA publication, The Highway Design Handbook for Older Drivers and Pedestrians. The Handbook provides highway engineers, safety specialists and advocates for older Americans with practical information on highway design, operation, and traffic engineering.

**Access to funds:** State DOT

🌐 [http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/older\\_driver/index.htm](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/older_driver/index.htm)

🌐 <http://www.tfhr.gov/humanfac/01103/coverfront.htm>

🌐 [http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped\\_bike/ped/saferjourney.htm](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped/saferjourney.htm)

## Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S)

Provides demonstration funds to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and to facilitate planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

Projects eligible for funding include infrastructure-related projects for better engineering for sidewalks, traffic calming, and bicycle facilities; and non-infrastructure projects to promote public awareness, education, enforcement and to encourage children to walk and bike to school. Each state will have a full-time Safe Routes to School Coordinator.

**Access to funds:** State DOT

🌐 <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/index.htm>

🌐 <http://www.americabikes.org/SRTS.asp>

## State Infrastructure Bank Program (SIB)

Gives states the capacity to significantly leverage federal resources by attracting non-federal public and private investment. States and territories may enter into cooperative agreements with the Secretary of Transportation to establish financial entities that provide various types of transportation infrastructure credit assistance.



Public and private transit and rail entities may receive non-grant financial assistance including below-market rate subordinate loans, bond insurance, guarantees and other forms of credit enhancement. Many loans rely on user fees for principal and interest repayment. For transit projects, this could include fares, advertising revenues, right-of-way leases, or concessions.

**Access to funds:** State DOTs (Approved by U.S. DOT)

🌐 [http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003_ENG_HTML.htm)

🌐 [http://www.innovativefinance.org/topics/finance\\_mechanisms/state\\_credit/statecredit.asp](http://www.innovativefinance.org/topics/finance_mechanisms/state_credit/statecredit.asp)

## **Tax-exempt Financing of Highway Projects and Rail Truck Transfer Facilities (Private Activity Bonds)**

Provides the opportunity for new sources of investment capital to finance the nation's transportation infrastructure system. SAFETEA-LU expands bonding authority for private activity bonds by adding highway facilities and surface freight transfer facilities to a list of other activities eligible for exempt facility bonds. Qualified projects, which must already be receiving federal assistance, include surface transportation projects, international bridge or tunnel projects for which an international entity authorized under federal or state law is responsible, and facilities for the transfer of freight from truck to rail or rail to truck (including any temporary storage facilities related to the transfers).

**Access to funds:** State DOT/FHWA

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/summary.htm>

## **Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP)**

Underwrites pilot and other innovative programs, including programs to improve the efficiency of the transportation system, reduce transportation impacts on the environment and the need for costly future investments in public infrastructure, promote better job access and connections between community development and transportation investment. SAFETEA-LU allows TCSP funds to be used for any highway or transit eligibility.

**Access to funds:** Congressionally directed

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/tcsp.htm>

🌐 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp/>

## **Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA)**

Provides federal credit assistance to nationally or regionally significant surface transportation projects, including highway, transit and rail. The program is designed to fill market gaps and leverage substantial private co-investment by providing projects with supplemental or subordinate debt.

The TIFIA credit program consists of three types of financial assistance, designed to address requirements throughout a project's life cycle:

- Secured loans are direct federal loans to project sponsors offering flexible repayment terms and providing combined construction and permanent financing of capital costs.
- Loan guarantees provide full-faith-and-credit guarantees by the federal government to institutional investors, such as pension funds, that make loans for projects.
- Lines of credit represent contingent sources of funding in the form of federal loans that may be drawn upon to supplement project revenues, if needed, during the first 10 years of project operations.

**Access to funds:** State DOT/FHWA

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/tifia.htm>

## Truck Parking Facilities Program

Addresses the shortage of long-term parking for commercial vehicles on the National Highway System including: constructing safety rest areas that include commercial vehicle parking; constructing commercial vehicle parking facilities adjacent to commercial truck stops and travel plazas; opening existing facilities to commercial vehicles; promoting the availability of publicly or privately provided commercial vehicle parking on the NHS using ITS systems and other means; constructing turnouts for commercial vehicles; making capital improvements to public commercial vehicle parking facilities to allow year-round use; improving the geometric design of interchanges to improve access to parking facilities.

**Access to funds:** State DOT/FHWA

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/truckpark.htm>

## Value Pricing Pilot Program (VPPP)

Provides funding for an experimental program aimed at learning the potential of up to 15 variable pricing approaches for reducing congestion. VPPP replaces the Congestion Pricing Pilot Program authorized under ISTEA.

**Access to funds:** State DOT

 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/valuepricing.htm>

**Area Sources.** Small stationary and non-transportation pollution sources that are too small and/or numerous to be regulated in the same manner as larger point sources (e.g., powerplants, certain manufacturing facilities) but may collectively contribute significantly to air pollution (e.g., dry cleaners).

A

**Arterial Street.** A class of street serving major traffic movements (high-speed, high volume), for travel between major points.

**Attainment Area.** An area considered to have air quality that meets or exceeds U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) health standards used in the Clean Air Act.

**Budget/Spending Authority.** In the federal highway program, budget authority is contract authority or spending authority, which often means the funding that is apportioned to the states each year under the various highway program categories. In order to obligate federal funds to a specific project, each dollar of spending authority must be paired with a dollar of obligation authority.

B

**Capacity.** A transportation facility's ability to accommodate a moving stream of people or vehicles in a given time period.

C

**Clean Air Act (CAA).** Although the Clean Air Act was first enacted in 1970, the 1990 CAA Amendments were the most recent changes in the law, with a focus on transportation-related pollution.

**Complete Streets.** Streets that provide for safe, convenient, efficient, and accessible use by pedestrians of all ages and abilities, bicyclists, transit vehicles and motor vehicles. Communities with complete streets policies are making sure that their streets work for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as for older adults, children, and persons with disabilities.

**Congestion Management System (CMS).** Systematic process for managing congestion. Provides information on transportation system performance and finds alternative ways to alleviate congestion and

enhance the mobility of people and goods, to levels that meet state and local needs. This is required in larger metropolitan areas (populations of 200,000 or more).

**Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS).** CSS is a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to project development and design that underscores the importance of community and environmental values that transportation projects can reinforce.

**D Department of Transportation (DOT).** When used alone, generally indicates the U.S. Department of Transportation. In conjunction with a place name, indicates state, city, or county transportation agency (e.g., Illinois DOT, Los Angeles DOT).

**E Emissions Budget.** The part of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) that identifies the allowable emissions levels, mandated by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), for certain pollutants emitted from mobile, stationary, and area sources. The emissions levels are used for meeting emission reduction milestones, attainment, or maintenance demonstrations.

**Environmental Justice (EJ).** Identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of transportation programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).** The federal regulatory agency responsible for administering and enforcing federal environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act.

**F Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).** The agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers the Federal-Aid Highway Program, principally providing financial assistance and technical and programmatic support to states to construct and improve highways, urban and rural roads, and bridges.

**Federal Transit Administration (FTA).** The agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation that provides financial and other resources to transit agencies (i.e., known as transit providers) in developing and improving public transportation equipment, facilities, services, techniques, and methods.

**Financial Planning.** The process of defining and evaluating funding sources, sharing the information, and deciding how to allocate the funds.

**Fiscal Constraint.** Making sure that a given investment program or a specific project can reasonably expect to receive funding within the time allotted for its implementation.

**Formula Capital Grants.** Federal transit funds allocated by FTA to transit providers; these funds are very flexible and can fund a range of transit-related improvements.

**Geographic Information System (GIS).** Computerized data management system designed to capture, store, retrieve, analyze, and display geographically referenced information. **G**

**High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV).** Vehicles carrying two or more people. The number that constitutes an HOV for the purposes of HOV highway lanes vary by facility. **H**

**Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).** The application of advanced technologies to improve the efficiency and safety of roads and transit services. **I**

**Intermodal.** The ability to connect, and make the connections between, modes of transportation.

**Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA).** Federal law that restructured funding for transportation programs; authorized an increased role for regional planning agencies/MPOs in funding decisions; required comprehensive regional and statewide long-term transportation plans; and provided for a uniform federal match for highway and transit projects.

**Interstate Highway System.** The system of federal highways that connects the principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers of the United States. Also connects the United States to internationally significant routes in Canada and Mexico.

**Land Use.** Refers to the manner in which portions of land or the structures on them are used, i.e. commercial, residential, retail, industrial, etc. **L**

**Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).** A multi-year transportation plan developed by state DOTs and MPOs in collaboration with a range of stakeholders that defines a vision for the region's or state's transportation systems and services. For metropolitan areas, it includes all transportation improvements proposed for funding over the next 20 years.

**Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).** A regional policy agency serving urbanized areas with populations over 50,000, which is es- **M**

established by the state. Responsible in cooperation with the state and other transportation providers for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning requirements of federal highway and transit legislation.

**Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).** The official intermodal transportation plan that is developed and adopted through the metropolitan transportation planning process for the metropolitan planning area.

**Mode.** A specific form of transportation, such as automobile, subway, bus, rail, or air.

**N National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).** Federal standards that set allowable concentrations and exposure limits for various pollutants, as required under the Clean Air Act. Air quality standards have been established for the following six criteria pollutants: ozone (or smog), carbon monoxide, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, lead, and sulfur dioxide.

**National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).** Federal law established a national environmental policy requiring that any project using federal funding or requiring federal approval, including transportation projects, examine the effects of proposed and alternative choices on the environment.

**National Historic Preservation Act.** Section 106 of the Act requires federal agencies to work with the state and federal officials to determine whether a proposed project will have an adverse effect on historic sites listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places, and to seek ways to mitigate any adverse effects.

**Nonattainment Areas.** Areas considered not to have met Clean Air Act standards for designated pollutants. An area may be an attainment area for one pollutant and a nonattainment area for another. In the transportation debate, nonattainment usually refers to areas that do not comply with applicable federal air quality standards for ozone, carbon monoxide and particulate matter. CMAQ funding is allocated to states based on the population of areas within the state in non-compliance with carbon monoxide and ozone standards (adjusted for severity of ozone noncompliance).

**O Obligation Authority.** The amount of federal funds allocated to state DOTs, which can actually be spent (i.e., federal highway funds that states can actually commit or “obligate” to projects).

**Ozone (O3).** While not a direct emission from transportation sources, ozone is a secondary pollutant formed when certain compounds

(e.g., VOCs and NOx) combine in the presence of sunlight. Although ozone in the upper atmosphere protects us from harmful ultraviolet rays, ground-level ozone produces an unhealthy environment and adversely affects public health.

**Performance Measures.** Indicators of how well the transportation system is performing with regard to such things as asset management, on-time performance, system access/availability, and accident rates. Used as feedback in the decision-making process.

**P**

**Planning Funds (PL).** Primary source of funding for metropolitan planning designated by the FHWA.

**Public Participation.** The active and meaningful involvement of the public in the development of transportation plans and programs.

**Regional Councils of Government/Planning Organizations.** Regional councils of government are multipurpose, multi-jurisdictional, public organizations. Created by local governments to respond to federal and state programs, regional councils bring together participants at multiple levels of government to foster regional cooperation, planning and service delivery. They have a variety of names, ranging from councils of government to planning commissions to development districts.

**R**

**Rural Planning Organization (RPO).** RPOs serve as the forum for local engagement in rural transportation issues. RPOs comprised primarily of local elected officials serving as the link between state DOTs and citizens.

**Smart Growth.** Smart growth is a set of policies and programs designed by local governments to protect, preserve, and economically develop established communities and natural and cultural resources. Smart growth encompasses a holistic view of development.

**S**

**Sources.** Refers to the origin of air contaminants. Can be point (coming from a defined site) or non-point (coming from many diffuse sources). Point sources can be both stationary sources and area sources. Mobile sources include on-road vehicles such as cars, trucks, and buses, and off-road sources such as construction equipment. A non-point source in the transportation area generally refers to pollutants from highway runoff.

**Sprawl.** Urban form that depicts the movement of development from the central city and built areas to the suburbs and exurbs. Concerns associated with sprawl include loss of farmland and open space due to low-density land development, increased public service costs,



environmental degradation and reliance on the automobile for transportation.

**Stakeholders.** Individuals and organizations involved in, or affected by, the transportation planning process. Includes federal/state/local officials, MPOs, transit operators, freight companies, shippers, and the general public.

**State Implementation Plan (SIP).** Produced by the state environmental agency. A plan mandated by the Clean Air Act that contains procedures to monitor, control, maintain, and enforce compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Must be taken into account in the transportation planning process.

**State Planning and Research Funds (SPR).** Primary source of funding for statewide long-range planning.

**State Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).** A new requirement under SAFETEA-LU requiring state DOTs to prepare a highway safety plan focused on strategies to reduce fatalities and injuries, including how HSIP funds are to be expended.

**State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).** A multi-year, statewide, intermodal program of transportation projects, consistent with the statewide transportation plan and planning processes as well as metropolitan plans, TIPs, and processes.

**Statewide Transportation Plan.** The official statewide intermodal transportation plan that is developed through the statewide transportation planning process.

**Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).** New federal surface transportation law enacted in August 2005 that continues most ISTEA reforms but places added emphasis on safety, security, and freight issues.

**Section 4(f).** Reference to a section of the 1966 USDOT Act (i.e., law that established the U.S. Department of Transportation) providing protection for parks, recreation areas and wildlife or waterfowl refuges as well as historic and cultural resources.

T

**Telecommuting.** Communicating electronically (by telephone, computer, fax, etc.) with an office, either from home or from another site, instead of traveling to it physically.

**Transportation Conformity.** Process to assess the compliance of any transportation plan, program, or project with air quality attainment plans, mostly affecting local areas or regions, not states.

**Transportation Control Measures (TCM).** Transportation strategies that affect traffic patterns or reduce vehicle use to lower air pollutant emissions. These may include HOV lanes, provision of bicycle facilities, ridesharing, telecommuting, etc. Such actions may be included in a SIP if needed to demonstrate attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

**Transportation Demand Management (TDM).** Programs designed to reduce demand for transportation through various means, such as the use of transit and of alternative work hours, and changes in land use patterns.

**Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).** Enacted in 1998, TEA-21 renewed the 1991 ISTEA law and authorized a significant increase in federal funding commitments for fiscal years 1998–2003.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).** A document prepared by a metropolitan planning organization that lists projects to be funded with FHWA/FTA funds over a four- or five-year period.

**Transportation Management Area (TMA).** An urbanized area over 200,000 in population.

**Trust Fund.** A fund credited with receipts that are held in trust by the government and earmarked by law for use in carrying out specific purposes and programs in accordance with an agreement or a statute. In the context of surface transportation, it refers to the Highway/Transit Trust Fund where revenues from dedicated federal excise taxes are deposited to support funding commitment to federal highway and transit programs.

**Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).** The management plan for the metropolitan planning program. Its purpose is to coordinate the planning activities of all participants in the planning process.

U

**Urbanized Area.** Area that contains a city of 50,000 or more population plus incorporated surrounding areas meeting size or density criteria as defined by the U.S. Census.

**Acknowledgements:** This glossary is drawn largely from a publication of the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration entitled *The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues*.

## APPENDIX

# C

# Key National Organization Resources

AARP

 [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

Amalgamated Transit Union

 [www.atu.org](http://www.atu.org)

America Bikes

 [www.americabikes.org](http://www.americabikes.org)

America Walks

 [www.americawalks.org](http://www.americawalks.org)

American Heart Association

 [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

American Institute of Architects

 [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org)

American Planning Association

 [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

American Public Health Association

 [www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org)

American Public Transportation Association

 [www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org)

American Public Works Association

 [www.apwa.net](http://www.apwa.net)

American Rivers

 [www.americanrivers.org](http://www.americanrivers.org)

American Society on Aging

 [www.asaging.org/drivewell](http://www.asaging.org/drivewell)

American Society of Landscape Architects

 [www.asla.org](http://www.asla.org)

Association for Commuter Transportation

 [www.actweb.org](http://www.actweb.org)

Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals

 [www.apbp.org](http://www.apbp.org)

Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

 [www.ampo.org](http://www.ampo.org)

Bikes Belong

 [www.bikesbelong.org](http://www.bikesbelong.org)

Center for Community Change

 [www.communitychange.org](http://www.communitychange.org)

Center for Livable Communities

 [center@lgc.org](mailto:center@lgc.org)

Center for Neighborhood Technology

 [www.cnt.org](http://www.cnt.org)

Center for Transportation Excellence

 [www.cfte.org](http://www.cfte.org)

Community Transportation Association of America

 [www.ctaa.org](http://www.ctaa.org)

Congress for New Urbanism

 [www.cnu.org](http://www.cnu.org)

Defenders of Wildlife

 [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)

Environmental and Energy Study Institute

 [www.eesi.org](http://www.eesi.org)

Environmental Defense

 [www.edf.org](http://www.edf.org)

Friends of the Earth

 [www.foe.org](http://www.foe.org)

International Downtown Association

 [www.ida-downtown.org](http://www.ida-downtown.org)

League of American Bicyclists

 [www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org)

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

 [www.n4a.org](http://www.n4a.org)

National Association of Counties

 [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org)

National Association of Development Organizations

 [www.nado.org](http://www.nado.org)

National Association of Railroad Passengers

 [www.narprail.org](http://www.narprail.org)

National Association of Regional Councils

 [www.narc.org](http://www.narc.org)

National Center for Bicycling and Walking

 [www.bikewalk.org](http://www.bikewalk.org)

National Complete Streets Coalition

 [www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org)

National Conference of State Legislatures

 [www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org)

National Governors Association

 [www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org)

National League of Cities

 [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org)

National Neighborhood Coalition

 [www.neighborhoodcoalition.org](http://www.neighborhoodcoalition.org)

National Parks Conservation Association

 [www.npca.org](http://www.npca.org)

National Trust for Historic Preservation

 [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)

National Urban League

 [www.nul.org](http://www.nul.org)

Natural Resources Defense Council

 [www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org)

Partners for Livable Places

 [www.livable.com](http://www.livable.com)

Project for Public Spaces

 [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

 [www.railstrails.org](http://www.railstrails.org)

Reconnecting America

 [www.reconnectingamerica.org](http://www.reconnectingamerica.org)

Scenic America

 [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org)

Sierra Club

 [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

Smart Growth America

 [www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org)

Smart Growth Network

 [www.smartgrowth.org](http://www.smartgrowth.org)

Surface Transportation Policy Partnership

 [www.transact.org](http://www.transact.org)

Thunderhead Alliance

 [www.thunderheadalliance.org](http://www.thunderheadalliance.org)

Transportation and Community Development Center

 [www.transportcenter.org](http://www.transportcenter.org)

Union of Concerned Scientists

 [www.ucsusa.org](http://www.ucsusa.org)

U.S. Conference of Mayors

 [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org)

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## Federal agencies

Department of Agriculture

 [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

Department of Health and Human Services

 [www.dhhs.gov](http://www.dhhs.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

 [www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces)

Department of the Interior

 [www.dio.gov](http://www.dio.gov)

Fish and Wildlife Service

 [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)

National Park Service

 [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

Department of Transportation

 [www.dot.gov](http://www.dot.gov)

Federal Highway Administration

 [www.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov)

Federal Railroad Administration

 [www.fra.dot.gov](http://www.fra.dot.gov)

Federal Transit Administration

 [www.fta.dot.gov](http://www.fta.dot.gov)

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

 [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)

Environmental Protection Agency

 [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)





# From the Margins to the Mainstream

## The Surface Transportation Policy Partnership Coalition's Goals for Transportation

- I Promote Travel Choices and Make  
Our Communities More Livable
- II Improve Safety, Security, and  
Public Health
- III Assure Equitable Sharing of  
Economic Prosperity and Cost  
Effective Use of Limited Resources
- IV Reduce Resource Consumption and  
Impacts on the Environment
- V Build a Citizen Movement to Drive  
Transportation Reform



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