

Transportation Planning Update

Spring Edition 2005

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With this edition, we would like to welcome Jody McCullough as one of the Co-Editors of the "Transportation Planning Update" newsletter. Jody works with the Planning Capacity Building Team in the FHWA Office of Planning. She has worked for the Central Federal Lands Division, Pennsylvania Division and PennDOT. In the Office of Planning, Jody has responsibility for land use and transportation issues, scenario planning and smart growth. Items for future issues of the Transportation Planning Update Newsletter can be sent to Jody or Ben.

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What's New for FHWA's Vital Few?

The Vital Few priorities are the focus areas that show the biggest performance gaps in the transportation system and present opportunities for FHWA to make the greatest difference. We are committed to being successful in these focus areas. This section features the activities currently being undertaken in FHWA's Vital Few focus areas. FHWA's Vital Few priorities are:

- Safety
- Environmental Stewardship and Streamlining
- Congestion Mitigation

Safety Conscious Planning

On April 1, 2005, the Safety Conscious Planning (SCP) lead within Planning, Environment and Realty transferred from the Office of Interstate and Border Planning to the Office of Planning. Under the leadership of Office Director Gloria M. Shepherd, Rob Ritter, Sherry Ways and Lorrie Lau will work closely with FHWA Division Offices and Resource Center, the Safety Conscious Planning Working Group and various stakeholders to continue the agency's initiatives in this area.

Several SCP activities are coming up. SCP Forums will be held in Montana, June 6-7 and in Poughkeepsie, NY, June 9-10; bringing the total number of SCP Forums to 25.

For more information on SCP, including a recently completed Domestic scan focused on rural areas and small and medium MPOs, contact Lorrie Lau at 415-744-2628 or Rob Ritter at 202-493-2139



Environmental Stewardship & Streamlining

Linking the Transportation Planning and NEPA FHWA/FTA Program Guidance Processes:

On February 22, 2005, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration issued voluntary guidance intended for use by State Departments of Transportation,

Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and transit agencies on how information, analysis, and products from metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes (pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134-135 and 49 U.S.C. 5303-5306) can be incorporated into and relied upon in the National Environmental Policy Act process under existing Federal statutes and regulations. A companion legal analysis/opinion outlining authority under current law also was issued on February 22, 2005.

For more information on the program guidance, please contact Larry Anderson, FHWA Office of Planning, at (202) 366-2374 or Carol Adkins, FHWA Office of Project Development and Environmental Review, at (202) 366-2054 or see <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/index.htm>.

Transportation Conformity Rule for PM 2.5 Signed

On May 2, 2005, EPA signed a final rule identifying four transportation-related PM2.5 precursors - nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), sulfur oxides (SOx), and ammonia (NH3) - for consideration in the transportation conformity process in PM2.5 nonattainment and maintenance areas. Prior to a PM2.5, a State Implementation Plan (SIP) is submitted, NOx will have to be included in all regional emissions analyses, unless EPA and the State find that it is not a significant contributor to the PM2.5 problem. VOCs, SOx, and NH3 will only need to be included in the analysis prior to a SIP, if EPA or the State finds that they are significant. Once a PM2.5 SIP is submitted, a regional emissions analysis will be required for a given precursor if the SIP establishes an adequate or approved budget for that particular precursor.

The new rule is available for download on EPA's website: <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/transp/traqconf.htm>. The updated complete transportation conformity regulations will be available at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/conformity/rule.pdf>.



Interstate Highway System Section 106 Exemption

For nearly 50 years, the Interstate Highway System has enhanced mobility and economic development across the country. Yet, last year, for many State and Federal

transportation professionals, the approaching 50th anniversary of the Interstate System was cause for concern rather than celebration. The increasing recognition of its historic significance raised the possibility that the Interstate System was potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). Because Section 106 of

the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires that Federal agencies assess impacts to eligible sites, even basic maintenance and improvements to any element of the Interstate System could have created enormous administrative compliance burdens.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and FHWA negotiated an administrative exemption, the Historic Preservation Exemption for the Interstate Highway System. The Exemption became effective on March 10, 2005. FHWA is scheduling facilitated meetings in each State to discuss elements of the Interstate System that should be excluded from the Exemption. The deadline for designating exclusions is June 30, 2006. For more detail see: <http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/strmlng/newsletters/may05nl.htm>

Congestion Mitigation



New Freight Workshop: Engaging the Private Sector in Freight Planning - Techniques for Identifying and Working With Freight Stakeholders

A lack of understanding of BOTH private sector business needs and the public sector transportation planning process hinders the effective integration of freight into many statewide and regional plans and transportation investment decisions. Developing and sustaining relationships, either formally or informally, with key private sector stakeholders are critical to effective freight planning.

This 1-day workshop is designed for planners addressing freight issues at metropolitan planning organizations, state departments of transportation, and local governments. As a practical application, there is the possible opportunity to attend an evening meeting of a private sector industry group.

By the end of training, participants should be able to:

- Understand the value freight stakeholders can add to their planning process
- Use tools/resources to identify freight stakeholders in their area
- Learn techniques for engaging freight stakeholders in their planning process

Participants should be familiar with general freight terminology, modes, and trends before taking this workshop. The NHI course, Integrating Freight In the Transportation Planning Process #139001, can provide the fundamentals needed to prepare for this workshop. For more information, see www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/fpd/Docs/sector.htm or

contact: Jocelyn Jones 410-962-2486
jocelyn.jones@fhwa.dot.gov



Transportation Planning Excellence Awards

The Open nomination period will be announced in December 2005 for the 2006 Transportation Planning Excellence Awards! Consider submitting projects in the following categories:

- Asset Management and Planning
- Context Sensitive Solutions and Planning
- Freight Planning
- Homeland and Personal Security
- Modeling and Technology Applications
- Planning and Operations
- Planning It Safe: Safety Conscious Planning
- Planning Leadership
- Public Involvement, Education, and Outreach
- Transportation and Land Use Integration
- Transportation Planning and Environment
- Tribal Transportation Planning

Check back frequently for upcoming news and information www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/tpea06/.

2004 Transportation Planning Excellence Awards

These Outstanding transportation planning practices initiatives will be featured in the **March/April edition of FHWA's Public Roads magazine!** The FHWA & FTA with the American Planning Association recognized 2004 Transportation Planning Excellence Awards for Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Oregon, and Texas. For additional information on the 2004 Excellence Awards Program see: www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/tpea04/.

Childcare Services at Transit

Citizen's Guide to Providing Childcare Services at Transit

The Federal Transit Administration's Office of Planning and Environment (TPE-12) has recently completed the *Citizen's Guide to Providing Childcare Services at Transit Stations*

project with the National Council of Negro Women. Instead of a written final report, the final report is a CD brochure that will be valuable to both the transit industry and to those considering providing childcare services in conjunction with a transit project. This CD explains how community organizations, local officials, metropolitan planning organizations, and transit agencies can partner to plan, fund, and build childcare facilities at transit facilities. By providing the opportunity for on-site childcare at transit facilities, be it Head Start with extended day care, 24-hour day care to accommodate shift workers, or classic day care, these centers will assist parents in accessing jobs, reduce trip-chaining, and can reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Those interested in planning to build a childcare facility within a transit center or transit hub should contact and work with their FTA regional office.

The report will be available soon on FTA and FHWA's Planning Capacity Building websites. A limited supply of CDs will be available from FTA regional offices and at stakeholder conferences. For more information, please email Effie.Stallsmith@fta.dot.gov.

Context Sensitive Solutions



Training Course Available

Since World War II, the greatest transportation infrastructure in the world was built. Although community and environmental values were part of the mission, they were often lost in the implementation. Given the policy framework provided by NEPA, ISTEA, TEA-21 and related State initiatives, communities and local governments are now calling for more sensitive design in transportation projects. Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is an approach that considers the total context within which a transportation improvement project will exist.

Using the flexibility principles of CSS to solve highway problems has become an integral part of highway planning and engineering, and there are many excellent courses dedicated to the topic. So, why develop a course that focuses on alternative modes within highway and transit rights-of-way that reflect the greater awareness of the land-use and community impacts of transportation projects, and of the community development opportunities presented by transportation projects?

First, all transportation projects directly intersect with and have visual impacts on communities and regions. This course provides for and builds upon the premise that context sensitive solutions must begin at the planning stages for not only highway, but for transit and inter-modal projects. This is where core environmental, historic, cultural resources, aesthetic and visual quality, scenic and socioeconomic, safety, multi-modal mobility, and local value issues and concerns

come into play. By understanding and using CSS tools, transit and highway project sponsors can:

- Stimulate creativity by offering **opportunities rather than limitations or boundaries** in the design of transportation facilities.
- Identify ways to **develop solutions that respond to community sensitivities**.
- **Foster dialog among all stakeholders** to arrive at consensus on acceptable solutions - including transportation planners and engineers; environmental, safety, historic, land use, and outreach specialists; modal advocates; and private and civic groups.

CSS provides an overarching framework from problem definition through design and into construction and maintenance, bringing all needs, issues, interests, ideas, options and choices to bear in each phase of project development. And, CSS promotes an understanding of the roles of the federal and state partners in the transportation planning and implementation process.

Further, using CSS concepts and techniques in the planning process can save money and reduce project delays, resulting in significant benefits to transportation agencies. Beyond being useful as a public involvement strategy to foster improved community participation in the transportation planning process, CSS in planning can better identify community needs and potential problems (and solutions) well before the project development stage. Identifying and considering these features early can avoid delays and make for better, more cost-effective project design later, as well as the added bonus of allowing for more streamlined decision-making.

For more information on this course and its benefits, go to: <http://www.ntionline.com/CourseInfo.asp?CourseNumber=ID817> or contact Ginny Stern at 732-932-1700 ext. 226, gstern@nti.rutgers.edu.

Certification Reviews

TMA Planning Certification Review Primer

FHWA and FTA have developed a reference document on the Transportation Management Area certification process. Entitled the "TMA Planning Certification Review Primer," this document is primarily targeted to MPOs, State DOTs, transit agencies, and other State and local partnering agencies involved in transportation planning for urbanized areas over 200,000 population. This document is intended to provide an overview and basic understanding of the key concepts and expectations from a TMA certification review, along with references to pertinent Federal laws, regulations, policies, and other resources.

The Primer is now available at www.planning.dot.gov/(under "What's New"). A version of the Primer will soon be available on CD for easier distribution to interested agencies.

For more information, please contact Robin Smith, FHWA Office of Planning, at (720) 963-3072.

Rails-with-Trails



RAILS-WITH-TRAILS REPORT AVAILABLE

The Federal Railroad Administration, FHWA's Recreational Trails Program, FHWA's Highway Safety Research and Development Program, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration produced a new report: Rails-with-Trails: Lessons Learned. This report describes safety, design, and operational issues relating to Rails-with-Trails (RWT): shared use paths or other trails located along or near active railroad and transit corridors. The USDOT does not endorse, support, or recommend rails-with-trails. This report is intended to provide information so that RWT decisions are made with safety and security as top priorities: both for railroad and transit operations, and for trail users.

This report is available online at www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/rwt. A PDF version is available at www.altaplanning.com/focus/rails_lessons.html. Additional printed copies are available through the FHWA Report Center. See www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/trailpub.htm for the order form, or send a fax to 301-577-1421 and request publication FTA-MA-26-0052-041. For more information about this report, please contact Christopher Douwes, Trails and Enhancements Program Manager, at 202-366-5013 or christopher.douwes@fhwa.dot.gov; or Pamela Caldwell Foggin, Highway-Rail Crossing Safety and Trespass Prevention Programs, Federal Railroad Administration, at 202-493-6291, pamela.caldwell.foggin@fra.dot.gov.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS

Guiding Principles and Questions

FHWA posted Guiding Principles and Questions to supplement its Transportation Enhancement (TE) guidance and to assist potential project sponsors, the States, and FHWA divisions in resolving project eligibility questions arising under the TE activities. The guiding principles clarify the general parameters of eligibility. The guiding questions are intended to help the decisionmaker assess how the proposed project meets the principles, and to assess some aspects of project viability. These guiding principles and questions provide a framework to help determine project eligibility and viability, when reviewing and advancing proposed projects. See www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/principles_pt1.htm for more information.

FHWA and the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse will hold the next TE Managers meeting on July 26-27, 2005, at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis MN. See www.enhancements.org for more information.

Tribal Planning

Tribal Transportation Planning Case Studies

FHWA's Office of Planning and Federal Lands Highways' Office of Program Development will be developing a series of brief case studies that highlight innovative processes and practices for consulting with Native American Tribal governments in the development of transportation plans and programs. These case studies will focus on two primary areas: (a) consultation between State DOTs and Tribal governments in the development of transportation plans and programs and (b) coordination of Federal Lands, BIA, FTA and FHWA Division Office transportation planning programs. Completion and posting of these case studies is expected in September 2005.

For more information, please contact Robin Mayhew, FHWA Office of Planning, at (360) 753-9416.

RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The FHWA Office of Planning, in partnership with the National Association of Counties (NACO) and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) continues to identify resources targeted for local elected officials and staff to help them better understand the role they need to be taking in the statewide transportation planning process.

Starting in May a series of training events will be held to target specific regions, such as the New England Roundtable for rural planning in Portland, ME and a session on the local consultation rule at the Western Interstate Region Annual Conference in Tacoma. Other events include midwestern and southeastern roundtables as well as sessions at the NACO and NADO annual meetings.

Rural Transportation Planning List Serve

One of the most visible products to date has been the Rural Transportation Planning List Serve. NADO & NACO staff combined their membership and outreach lists, including FHWA and FTA staff, for the first several editions. You may opt out if you choose, but we recommend that you keep in touch with the needs of local planners. The current questions ask: How do various states try to coordinate planning activities between MPO's and RPO's (urban and rural)? How do various states balance transportation investment dollars (not planning dollars) between urban and rural interests? Here's your chance to share your state's experience and expand your own knowledge. For more information or to join the list serve, visit <http://www.ruraltransportation.org/peers/index.shtml>

New and Updated Websites

Rural Transportation Planning Website

FHWA and FTA planners are encouraged to check out the NADO/NACO website: www.ruraltransportation.org, sponsored by FHWA. Here, you will find resources and information targeted specifically for rural transportation planning. Among these is the Rural Transportation Primer (www.ruraltransportation.org/primer.pdf), targeted specifically to local elected officials. A limited number of hard copies are available upon request from Liz Fischer. For more information contact Liz Fischer 202-366-0349 or elizabeth.fischer@fhwa.dot.gov

HEPGIS

FHWA's Office of Planning's GIS has recently been upgraded and is now accessible to the general public. Current geo-spatial databases include: highways, airports, railroads, intermodal terminals, metropolitan planning areas, urban and urbanized areas, federal lands, FHWA and State DOT offices, and selected Census geography.

The Volpe National Transportation Systems Center is hosting the web site, and will be making additional updates and enhancements to it over the next several months. Expected enhancements include additional thematic maps of Census demographic characteristics and HPMS attributes; updates to the metropolitan planning areas, adjusted urbanized areas and non-attainment area boundaries; a new rural transportation application; and additional user functions. Check it out at <http://hepgis.fhwa.dot.gov>.



New Scenario Planning Web Site

FHWA now has a website for scenario planning issues, resources and activities. You can find it at

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

"Statewide Transportation Planning" course

The long awaited Statewide Planning course is now available through NTI. The next sessions will be at New Brunswick, NJ June 13-14, 2005 & Denver, Colorado June 28-29, 2005. If you have any questions, please contact Ginny Stern Tel: 732-932-1700 ext. 226 or gstern@nti.rutgers.edu or www.ntionline.com

Capacity Building Peer Reviews

The FHWA Capacity Building Program supports a wide variety of peer exchanges, roundtable discussions and peer workshops. Here are some up-coming exchanges:

06.06-08.05	Spokane, WA	Peer Exchange on Partnerships with Tribes	Invitational Peer Exchange
06.14-15.05	Lansing, MI	Peer Exchange on State Long Range Planning	Invitational Peer Exchange

For more information about the Peer Review Program, contact Liz Fischer, elizabeth.fisher@fhwa.dot.gov 202-366-0349.

Resource Center Activities



*Southern Transportation and Air Quality Summit (STAQS '05)
Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston
South Carolina
August 23 - 25, 2005*

The FHWA Resource Center in conjunction with EPA will host the next Southern Transportation and Air Quality Summit. STAQS is an event sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration and EPA Regions 3, 4 and 6. The purpose of the summit is to bring together stakeholders from both the transportation and air quality communities to discuss the current and coming regulatory environment, technologies and current practices vital to the field of air quality and transportation. The summit is geared to practitioners involved with public agencies at all levels. A host of speakers from within the southern and eastern regions will present a number of key topics, best practices and latest information vital to transportation, planning and air quality professionals. Go to <http://rc.fhwa.dot.gov/resourcecenter/staqs>

**Transportation Finance Workshop
June 27 - 30, 2005
Sir Francis Drake Hotel, San Francisco, CA
Sponsored by: FHWA Resource Center**



The Transportation Finance Workshop is a national workshop intended for State DOT officials, Federal Highway Division Offices, and others involved in transportation project finance. Hot topics for this event will include Public-Private Partnerships, Innovative Revenue Sources, updates on the Transportation Infrastructure and Innovation Finance Act

(TIFIA), State Infrastructure Bank (SIB), Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles (GARVEE) tools, and the decision framework for use of financing tools.

At this conference, you will have the opportunity to learn about the specialized topics and tools. The event will host breakout sessions that will discuss creating financial plans for megaprojects, financing on tribal lands and rural areas, and identifying new revenue sources.

Additional information including agenda, registration and workshop hotel can be found at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/resourcecenter/finwrkshop/index.htm> or you may contact Jennifer Mayer (415) 744-2634.

FY 2006 Call for Training/Technical Assistance

An updated version of the status of FY 2005 Division requests for assistance by Headquarters and the Resource Center has been posted on the Resource Center intranet site at <http://rc.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/>. It is only available to FHWA users.

On May 13, 2005 the Resource Center Managers sent an email to the Divisions with the annual call for Division training and technical assistance requests. The Division response is due back to the Resource Center on June 6th, 2005. To help with the request, Division Planners were emailed the FY06 Planning, Air Quality and Environment Menu of Training, Technical Assistance and Peer Review Offerings. Please make sure you review your needs for planning training and technical assistance, and that these are included in your Division's official request list. If you have any questions about the process or the FY06 Planning Menu, feel free to contact any of the RC-Planning team members.

Let's Talk Planning Session on Statewide Planning Findings

June 9, 2005, is the next date of the next FHWA Division staff "Let's Talk Planning" Videoconference. It will focus on Statewide Planning Findings. Videoconference sessions will be held at 12:00 and 3:00 pm eastern time.

Future Let's Talk Planning Sessions are scheduled for September 8, 2005 and December 8, 2005. For more information or to suggest a session topic or speaker, contact Bob Radics (404-562-3692) or Rob Ritter (202-366-2139).

News From Our Partners

AASHTO Meeting on Planning & Operations

A Joint Committee Meeting of the Standing Committees on Planning and Operations will be held June 5-9, 2005 at the

Sheraton Overland Park hotel in Overland Park Kansas. The topics of the meeting are:
Goal Setting and Performance Measurement for Operations
Operations – Funding and Prioritization
Operations in the planning processes
Planning, Traffic and ITS modeling tools and applications
Research Implications and Next Steps
Contact: Dave Clawson 202-624-5807 davec@aaashto.org or see: <http://transportation1.org/calendar/planning> .

GIS Tools Key to Organizational Performance

Executive Level GIS Scan Tour

FHWA with a group of transportation community members will be visiting cutting edge organizations to illustrate near term technology applications, and specifically visiting and sharing information about State DOT and MPOs with advanced transportation applications. The goal is to expose members of the tour to future (5-years out) technology and solidify champions for geospatial technologies. This will build upon the recent NAS study, *Geospatial Information Infrastructure for Transportation Organizations*, and is being planned for August / September 2005, led by Ysela Llorca of the Florida DOT and David Ekern of the Idaho DOT. For more information please contact Mark Sarmiento (mark.sarmiento@fhwa.dot.gov) or Lindsay Banks (lindsay.banks@fhwa.dot.gov)

Training Opportunity for Focus States

FHWA will be hosting two sessions of the NHI Course (Applying GIS and Spatial Data Technologies to Transportation) 151039A and the Resource Center's workshop on GIS for Environmental Streamlining & Stewardship. The audience for the sessions will be FHWA's 2005 GIS focus States (Arkansas, Arizona, Idaho, Maine, Minnesota, New Mexico, Missouri, South Carolina and Wisconsin) and their Division Offices. The sessions will be held September 13-15, 2005, in Atlanta, GA and September 27-29, 2005 in Lakewood, CO.

Calendar of Events

June 6-9, 2005
Southwest Community Impact Assessment Workshop
Scottsdale, AZ See:
www.azdot.gov/Highways/EEG/documents/cia_workshop.asp

June 18-22, 2005
10th Conference on National & Scenic & Historic Trails
Embassy Suites Hotel Las Vegas, NV Contact: Liz Warren
702-874-1410 or Judy Trotta 352-378-8823

June 19-22, 2005
10th Long Distance Trails Conference, Las Vegas, NV
Contact: Gary Werner natrails@aol.com

June 24-28, 2008
National Association of Regional Councils Annual
Conference, Monterey, CA See: www.narc.org

July 10-12, 2005
TRB Summer Conference, Boston Seaport Hotel
This is a combined Ports, Waterways, Freight Trade and
Planning, Data, Finance Administration & Management
Committees Meeting. See:
www.trb.org/conferences/jointsummer

September 11-14, 2005
Northeast Community Impact Assessment Workshop
Newark, New Jersey
See: <http://gulliver.trb.org/conferences/2001Northeast.pdf>

Sept. 15-20, 2005 AASHTO Annual Meeting, Gaylord
Opryland Hotel, Nashville, TN See: Contact : [Hannah
Whitney](mailto:HannahWhitney) 202-624-5800

Sept, 20-22, 2005
State Trail Administrators, Newark, DE
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/stam2005/>

September 18-21, 2005
International ACT Conference , Sponsored by the Association
for Commuter Transportation Anaheim, CA See:
<http://tmi.cob.fsu.edu/act/conf/confmstr.asp>

October 11-14, 2005
AMPO Annual Conference
Hyatt Regency Denver, Denver, CO See: www.ampo.org/

For more information, review the following calendars for
upcoming transportation events:

FHWA Planning, Environment and Realty Calendar
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/calendar.htm>

FHWA Resource Center Calendar
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/resourcecenter/calendar.htm>

TRB Conferences & Workshops
<http://www4.trb.org/trb/calendar.nsf>