



Network News

AASHTO Multi-State Transit Technical Assistance Program
Summer–Fall 2017



Message from the MTAP Steering Committee Chair David Harris

I want to share my personal experience with MTAP and how our combined voices infuse our mission with deeper meaning. Personally, active and ongoing participation in MTAP has benefitted both the New Mexico DOT Transit and Rail Division and my own professional development. Working together with my colleagues at MTAP, and striving for long-lasting enhancements and progress to our work is deeply satisfying.

Before my career path took me to New Mexico DOT, I led production of the first Regional Transportation Plan for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of Northern New Jersey. At the New York City DOT, I represented the City of New York on its MPO's policy-making committee, the I-95 Corridor Coalition and the National Association of City Transportation Officials. Based on my experiences, I became well-versed in the techniques and politics of working with partnering agencies.

Depending on the situation and my agency's position on an issue, my partners were either competitors or allies. But regardless of the situation or my partners' allegiances, I always endeavored to do what was best for the region or group. Over the years, these relationships became immensely beneficial, and provided opportunities for peer exchanges that guided my work with policy makers and invaluable insight into the transportation industry.

When I came to New Mexico DOT over 12 years ago, I was tasked with reorganizing its transit bureau, rebuilding its technical capacity and improving overall performance. Members of MTAP and the Public Transportation Council (PTC), AASHTO's policy committee for public transportation, proved to be valuable allies and resources in the same way that my New York and New Jersey colleagues had strengthened me. Now, as the Transit and Rail Division Director, I continue to rely on my MTAP connections to stay on the cutting edge

of best practices in program management, connect with other state transportation officials who face the same challenges, and integrate my staff into the issues orbiting around our discipline.

For those who are new to the transit field, MTAP can provide peer exchanges and professional development resources to move an organization and career in a positive direction. Like-minded leaders from state DOTs across the country participate in MTAP and these professionals have an innate understanding of our challenges and stand ready to help answer questions—from the complex to the simple regarding administering state transit programs.

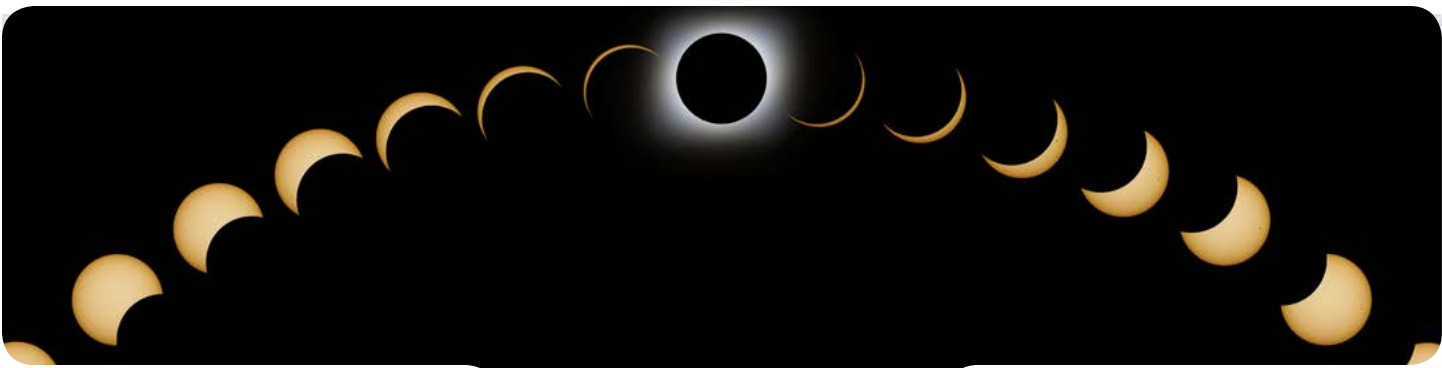
Thirty-three years ago, MTAP started as an ad hoc group of six Midwestern state DOT transit offices, called the State Accounting Consortium. The Consortium met to discuss mutually beneficial issues. In 1988, AASHTO adopted the program and it has thrived ever since, growing to 44 state DOT members. Each DOT transit office is at a different chapter in the story of its technical, financial, and policy capacity. MTAP must continue to excel in its usefulness for all DOT transit offices, allowing members to grow and learn regardless of what chapter in the story you are currently in.

Please make an effort to participate in the 2017 PTC/MTAP Winter Meeting, November 15–16 in Austin, Texas—sessions with FTA, succession planning and a TAM mini-workshop are on the agenda. More importantly, please reach out to me, AASHTO staff, or any of the steering committee members to get involved. We need to hear from you and your involvement in MTAP is critical to its success.

Thanks to those Midwestern state DOT transit offices that started MTAP, to AASHTO for bringing it under its umbrella and making MTAP a subcommittee/program of the PTC, and to all of our current members for your participation.

Together we have come a long way and together there is so much more that we can achieve.

– **David Harris**
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The Supernatural Summer of 2017: CHALLENGES FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPERATORS

If this summer had a title, it would be called “The Summer of the Supernatural.” Some supernatural events have been catastrophic while others have been awe-inspiring. But there is definitely one commonality these events shared; they were significant challenges for public transportation operators.

Here in the West, thankfully we have not had to deal with hurricanes or major earthquakes, like our colleagues and friends in Texas, Florida, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and California are dealing with. First and foremost, our thoughts and support are with them and all the people in areas impacted by recent hurricanes, fires, and earthquakes.

In Oregon, however, our transportation teams were placed front and center, and sometimes in the midst of, a “once-in-a-lifetime” celestial event and record-setting wildfires affecting the western United States. One supernatural event is enough to test an agency’s ability to respond to an emergency, but two can be overwhelming.

On August 21, 2017, the United States experienced a total solar eclipse, the first one visible from the contiguous United States (except for Alaska and Hawaii) since February 26, 1979. The last time before this that a total eclipse was visible from coast to coast was on June 18, 1918. The 2017 total eclipse was also the first exclusive to the United States since before the nation’s founding in 1776. More than one million tourists from around the globe were expected to visit the Pacific Northwest to experience the eclipse—most of them concentrated along the path of totality in Oregon.

Cities, counties, and public agencies in Oregon, particularly those around

the path of totality, scrambled to prepare. In Lincoln City, the first place the shadow of totality made landfall, Lincoln County Transportation District cancelled public transportation operations for August 21st. Salem Keizer Mass Transit District kept normal operations, but stood up an emergency command center to deal with expected delays. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) added two extra POINT buses between Portland and Salem, while Amtrak Cascades added an additional train. In Central Oregon, several small agencies did not operate. Cascades East Transit (CET), in Bend, ran a modified schedule, as did the High Desert POINT intercity bus service.

In eastern Oregon, Grant County, one of the most rural counties in the state, which just recovered from the Rainbow Family of Living Light annual gathering, was now faced a huge influx of eclipse watchers. In fact, Grant County had to turn off its only traffic signal to facilitate traffic flow in the city of John Day on August 21. Grant County Transportation District added several routes, borrowed buses and drivers from neighboring providers and even negotiated a shared bus agreement with their local school district, delivering 1,106 rides over four or five days (normally, this would be two to three weeks of volume).

From this experience with the solar eclipse, ODOT learned a number of lessons, of which the first was “plan for the worst, hope for the best.” Others included:

- **Start planning early.** ODOT started planning a year or more in advance (heads up, folks, in 2024 another total eclipse will traverse the eastern part of the country!) For the Amtrak Cascades service, before they could start running an extra train, they needed approvals from multiple stakeholders. Oregon had 1,386 passengers on trains and buses in the I5 corridor traveling through a station that usually experiences 245 passengers per day.
- **Operations flexibility is key.** Conventional wisdom before the event was that some routes would be blockbusters and others would be basic support lines. All impacted systems had to shift capacity on the fly when demand did not materialize on some routes but popped up in others. Some





trips took eight hours or more due to traffic, and some boarding sites and transit centers were immobilized with congestion.

- **Temporary bus stops are possible, but take work.** To set up temporary bus stops along a state highway takes a lot of work. Agencies must think about permitting and signage requirements (size, reflectivity, placement relative to line of site, etc.) before doing it. Overall, it is highly recommended if it is highly needed.
- **Finally... Be careful when naming the temporary bus stops during these events.** It is important to note that state DOTs should not use the name of the once-in-a-lifetime event on its bus stop signs. In this case, the word “eclipse” meant that the next potential use of the signs is more than 100 years away and they became highly attractive to visitors as souvenirs. About half of Grant County’s signs ended up being stolen.

In addition to ODOT’s response to the solar eclipse, the agency responded this past summer to the record-setting wildfires across Oregon. On the southwest coast, as the *Chetco Bar fire* threatened the isolated community of Brookings, Curry County



Public Transit was available to Incident Commanders for evacuation of elderly and disabled citizens. They arranged for bus storage, and an alternate operations center, in nearby Gold Beach, but thankfully did not have to institute those emergency procedures.

In the Columbia River Gorge, ODOT’s *Columbia Gorge Express* service made its last run on Labor Day, just before Interstate 84 was closed due to the *Eagle Creek Fire*. The Gorge Express operator and ODOT made their buses available to evacuate hikers, as well as elderly and disabled Hood River residents, if needed. Columbia Gorge Express service ended three weeks early, as the Interstate did not open in both directions until September 24th, and Multnomah Falls and other parks and tourist attractions, are still closed at the time of this article.

From this almost catastrophic event, ODOT learned another good lesson: Have your emergency plans in place, before you need them. Other lessons included:

- **Plan clear communication protocols.** Operating service involves multiple parties, so a coordinated response to any unexpected situation hinges on all parties being on the same page.
- **Interconnectedness means a service CAN adapt and act as more than “just a bus”.** In the Gorge, ODOT was prepared to send vehicles to assist with evacuation of hikers, or elderly and disabled residents, although in the end we did not need to.
- **Safety must always be the top priority for passengers and employees.**

Overall, ODOT’s preparation for these Supernatural events was absolutely worth it. We anticipated potential chaos throughout the state and the preparation helped avoid much of it. ODOT should be especially proud of its work assisting its sub-recipients and colleagues in local government and helping them make it through these events. We hope others learn from this article and the additional detail the author—and representatives of the Florida DOT and Texas DOT—will provide during the “Transit Safety/Emergency Transit Planning and Disaster Recovery” session at the PTC–MTAP Winter Meeting. ■



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At the FTA State Programs Meeting and Public Transit Partnerships Conference in Washington, DC

For three days in August (16th–18th) transit administrators, managers, planners, advocates, and agencies convened at the 17th biennial FTA State Programs Meeting and Public Transportation Partnership Conference to discuss the successes of and challenges facing rural transit and paratransit systems across the nation.

Beginning the conference was a discussion about the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM). Representatives from transit, health and human services, labor, and veterans affairs shared stories about how partnerships between and among agencies have been developing in an effort to better serve state and local transit programs. That session quickly segued into the moderated plenary session covering the collaboration of transportation and health care. Panelists from Michigan, Washington, Vermont, and Pennsylvania discussed how they have improved the coordination of non-emergency medical transportation services, increased mobility management efforts, and have found alternative sources of transit funding to better serve those who need these vital services.

Day 1's concurrent sessions included worthy program/policy discussions about National Transit Database (NTD); FTA Program oversight and grants management/FAST Act, a discussion on civil rights that included ADA, Title VI, DBE, and EEO; Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plans; and the future of automated/on-demand mobility. At the end of Day 1, the final session provided a rich discussion of transit system successes and best practices in the field of innovation. Moderated by National RTAP, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Colorado, North Carolina, and Arizona were joined by KHF Group to share the innovations used to strengthen rural transit networks and bring more rides to more people while maintaining high safety standards and services.

Day 2 began with a thought-provoking panel of seasoned transit leaders, including AASHTO's Executive Director Bud

Wright, FTA's Matt Welbes, CTAA's Scott Bogren, and APTA's Dick White, sharing their thoughts and advice on the future (near and long term) of transit. The Public Transportation Council and MTAP held its business session with more than **45 state** DOTs actively participating, either in-person or via teleconference. PTC and MTAP members received an update from Cambridge Systematics about the NCHRP 20-65, Task 67, "Multimodal Project Planning, Federal Transit Administration on safety, TrAMS and program oversight, and Vermont DOT about its Mobility on Demand sandbox grant. Rounding out Day 2 were concurrent sessions on TAM Planning; FTA grant programs update; performance management; procurement; TrAMS info sharing; and safety updates.

On the final day, the conference program concluded with an informal Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis conducted by Federal Transit Administration in an effort to determine what worked well and what could be modified for the next conference.

The author's key take-aways from the conference included the following:

- **Innovations in technology are changing every industry, including transit.** GPS locators, drones, automated/driverless vehicles, smart phone apps, Wi-Fi service on vehicles, coordinated dispatching services, and one-stop trip planning are among the many technology innovations affecting the transit industry. In addition to becoming more knowledgeable about how these innovations are changing the industry, transit must be open to considering how technology can increase the success of our transit systems.
- **Do not be afraid to ask for guidance.** With the wealth of knowledge, skills, and abilities currently guiding our programs, state DOT transit offices must not be afraid to ask for assistance from those in our field who might have a greater knowledge base



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and experience to guide us as we create the future of public transit.

- **Listen to newcomers to transit.** Similarly, many fresh faces are coming to the transit world. We should listen to what they have to say and consider their unique points-of-view as we develop a transportation system that not only serves today's riders, but the riders of the future as well.
- **Increasing participation in AASHTO's PTC and MTAP should be encouraged...if not mandatory.** Sharing knowledge and best practices during the PTC's and MTAP's business session was tremendously helpful and encouraging and ongoing participation within these groups has the greatest potential for iterative success. Webinars, conference calls, and alerts are key ways we share knowledge and information and these interactions are most valuable to helping manage our own transit programs and systems.

Overall, this conference provided excellent opportunities for one-on-one interactions and networking with colleagues from around the country. But the most valuable was the ability to engage with key federal regulatory agency officials at Federal Transit Administration, as well as other Federal officials in attendance, including the Department of Health and Human Services, Labor, Veterans Affairs, and more. Next year, we look forward to planning the State Partnership Conference with APTA and CTAA. ■

The “Trending Urban” Shift in Rural Transit

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), in 2016, only one in five Americans lived in rural areas in the United States, compared to 100 years ago when our urban and rural populations were evenly split. As our urban communities continue to grow in population and footprint, a new challenge is emerging for transit professionals—helping our rural transit systems transition to new urban funding sources and compliance and administrative requirements.

For several decades, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has used area population size and land development patterns (rural or urban) to organize its funding programs. In rural areas of less than 50,000 in population, the primary FTA funding source has been the FTA Section 5311 program, while in areas with populations greater than 50,000, the primary FTA funding source has been the FTA Section 5307 program. Depending on the urban area size, FTA has various program requirements on the use of Section 5307 funds and associated reporting and compliance requirements.

The next opportunity to reclassify a geographic area as rural, small urban, or large urban will happen after the release of the 2020 decennial Census, likely around 2022. As a result, any areas reclassified from rural to urban in the 2020 Census will need to switch their federal public transit funding source from FTA Section 5311 to Section 5307 and prepare for more complex FTA reporting and compliance requirements.

The transition from FTA Section 5311 (rural) funds to FTA Section 5307 funds (using the Small Urban Reduced Reporter) is straightforward; agencies need only to submit two additional forms (*FPA-10-Federal Funding Allocation Statistics and D10-CEO Certification*) and more detailed information on their current vehicle fleet. However, the transition from rural funding to large urban funding, such as rural transit systems becoming part of a large

urbanized area, like in Metro Atlanta, is much more challenging.

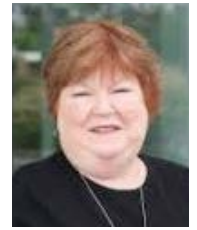
For transit systems, the rapid urbanization in some areas—moving from populations of 50,000 or less to populations of 50,000 to 199,999 or more than 200,000—may result in a significant funding shortage. Legally, these transit systems will no longer be eligible for the FTA Section 5311 program and will need to have the required information in place to qualify for the FTA Section 5307 program by in 2020.

In this transition, a major consideration is related to eligible expenses for FTA Section 5307 operating expenses. For rural transit and in small urban areas with populations of less than 200,000, FTA funding can financially support transit operating costs. However, for urbanized areas of 200,000 or more, Section 5307 funds may not be used for operating assistance unless identified by FTA as eligible under its Special Rule.

While areas with transit systems operating a small on-demand bus service with FTA Section 5311 (rural) funds are less likely to quickly urbanize and move to an urban system of more than 30 vehicles, the potential for the problem and the resulting funding dilemma are real. Moreover, if these rural transit systems are quickly moved into urban areas that have already programmed its FTA Section 5307 for existing urban transit systems, additional urban transit funds will be needed for these transit services, including identifying sufficient local matching funds.

In Metro Atlanta, this trending urban challenge is present now in six counties, including portions of Bartow, Cherokee, Coweta, Forsyth, Henry, and Paulding Counties. Based on preliminary analysis by Georgia Tech, after the 2020 Census, the number of counties transitioning to Section 5307 funding is likely to more than double and this trend is likely to expand beyond Metro Atlanta into other areas of the state.

To address these changing trends, in 2017, Georgia Department of Transporta-



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– **Dr. Laurie Garrow**

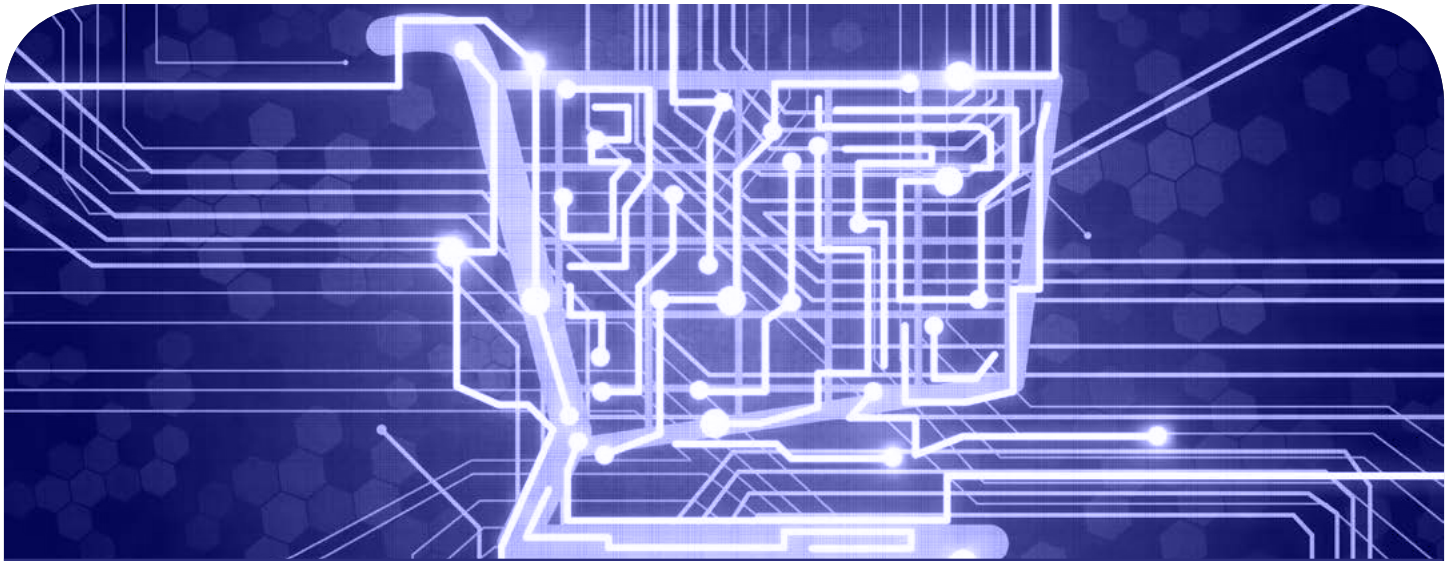
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tion (GDOT) is funding a research effort by Georgia Tech to identify strategies to help Georgia’s rural systems successfully “graduate” and become part of urban transit networks. The effort will include forecasts of future county populations in Georgia, a scan of trending urban issues across the nation, and identification of areas in the state where rural transit funding will be affected by the next census. Finally, the study will identify peer state strategies to address this challenge. The Georgia Tech research project will have some preliminary results by March 2018 and the study will be completed by mid-2019.

GDOT continues to engage FTA officials, representatives of the state’s metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and its rural and small urban transit subrecipients in the discussion of the funding implications of these shifts. It is important for states, MPOs, and transit agencies to recognize this challenge, collaborate with key officials, and identify effective measures to help local transit systems transition with FTA funding and be sustained financially as these demographic changes continue. ■



A-Ticket, A-Tasket

WHAT'S IN THE RESEARCH TASK BASKET?

At any given moment, a handful of research “tasks” are in process under the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) 20-65 project. These research tasks document best and emerging practices within each of our states and help state departments of transportation deliver state and federal transit programs, assist sub-recipients and advance transit as part of an integrated transportation system.

Here’s a taste of what is currently in the NCHRP 20-65 project basket.

Task 49: *Impact Assessment Indicators for Administration of Public Transportation Grants*

Research Purpose: This study examined the indicators that state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) use to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of their transit program administration activities.

Final Results Tidbit: An online survey and follow-up case studies gathered indicators from 27 state DOTs. The researcher identified the following commonly used indicators:

- Administration cost as a percentage of total annual expenditure
- Total transit-funding level
- Federal funding lapsed
- Timeliness of grant administration activities
- Provision of grantee support

Read the Full Report

Task 56: *Best Practices in Rural Regional Mobility*

Research Purpose: To identify and evaluate practices used by state DOTs, rural regional planning agencies, and transit providers to plan and provide for rural regional mobility.

Final Report Tidbit: The report includes a checklist for those interested in pursuing a new rural regional route. The 12 major steps suggested by the research are:

- Step 1: Identify Needs
- Step 2: Establish Planning Leadership
- Step 3: Goals/Vision—Public and Stakeholder Input
- Step 4: Identify Resources
- Step 5: Develop Alternatives
- Step 6: Assess Feasibility
- Step 7: Prioritize—Recommended Plan
- Step 8: Detailed Service Plan
- Step 9: Detailed Organizational Plan
- Step 10: Implementation Plan/Action Items
- Step 11: Initiate Service
- Step 12: Evaluate and Fine Tune—Iterative Process

Read the Full Report

Task 63: *DOT Oversight of Facility Projects*

Research Purpose: The researcher was tasked to develop a reference guide that can be used by state DOTs and their subrecipients to assist with the oversight and monitoring process of facility projects. The guide book is aimed at

individuals new to construction management and serves as a general orientation.

Final Results Tidbit: The reference guide provides a comprehensive introduction to construction project management, including all phases of project development from project initiation through planning, environmental clearance, real estate acquisition, design, construction, and closeout.

Read the Full Report (and Access the Reference Guide)

Task 67: Multi-Modal Project Planning

Research Purpose: This synthesis highlights examples of successful agency coordination to implement multimodal projects (and in some cases multimodal practices) that include both roadway and transit improvements. In addition to a full contractor's report, the researcher produced a flyer and quick reference guide that provides brief case studies and key lessons learned in user-friendly formats.

Final Results Tidbit: The researcher concluded: "Coordination for multi-modal projects is complicated and can be difficult—everyone needs to be on the same page as projects advance. In person meetings are critical, as the relationships that are developed are the backbone to successful project planning and delivery. Interagency face to face outreach must be prioritized early on—this is resource intensive up-front but it is very important for project success and effective use of funds over the long run."

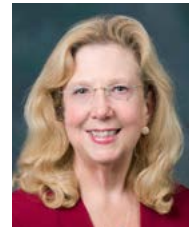
Read the Full Report (and Access the flyer and quick reference guide)

Task 70: Cross Modal Investment

Research Purpose: The researcher was asked to document examples of where funding from non-transit modes (e.g., roadways, highways, toll roads, freight, intercity passenger rail, port, and air) were used to help advance a transit project.

Final Results Tidbit: The research produced an interactive cross-modal funding database which provides examples of non-traditional transit funding options. Funding from other modes highlighted in the research include: Surface Transportation Block Grant; Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program; Toll Credits as credit for Non-Federal Share; State Gas Taxes; Local Parking Taxes; and Local Taxi Fees. Advice on how to approach cross-modal investment is also provided, including: "A project sponsor seeking cross modal funding should identify any potential jurisdictional partners, and then create a case for the partnership. This can include forecasts for increased ridership, improved infrastructure, and streamlined operational opportunities across modes."

Read the Full Report (and Access the Cross Modal Funding Database)



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For each task, a link to the Transportation Research Board (TRB) webpage that summarizes the task is provided. On that page, a link to the contractor's report and other deliverables is also provided. The results of these research tasks should be available in the coming months.

Task 68: Successful Mobility Management Practices for Improving Transportation Services in Small Urban and Rural Areas. As the title suggests this research will document the mobility management practices that are being effectively used in smaller transit agencies.

Task 69: Consolidation of Rural Transit Systems. This research is looking at formal and informal efforts that state DOTs are taking to encourage rural transit agencies to consolidate.

Task 71: Transit Network Balance, Efficiency, and Equity. The goal of this research is to document best practices being used by state DOTs in balancing efficiency with equity when funding local public transportation services.

Task 72: Small System Alternative Fuel Strategies. This research will result in a toolkit and guidance document that can be used by small bus operators to assess the impacts of deploying various alternative fuels. ■



Everything Is BIGGER in Texas Including 2017 Winter Meeting

Everything's BIGGER in Texas can be aptly applied to the upcoming Public Transportation Council (PTC) and MTAP 2017 Winter Meeting. PTC-MTAP members will have TWO full days with TWICE the number of sessions and speakers and at TWO hotels. With funding for public transportation and transit services for people with disabilities, seniors, and rural communities seemingly always at a critical juncture, members of PTC and MTAP need to DOUBLE their efforts at the state and Federal levels. And a great start would be at the upcoming Winter Meeting.

Here is what attendees will get to experience:

This year, we will be gathering in Austin, Texas, November 15–16 at the Courtyard by Marriott Austin Downtown (reminder: our hotel block is in the adjoining Residence Inn Austin Downtown).

On Day 1, we will open the Winter Meeting and hear from our organizational leaders, Jim Tymon, AASHTO's Chief Operating Officer and Director of Policy and Management; Charles Zelle, Commissioner, Minnesota DOT and Chair, Public Transportation Council; and Dave Harris, Director, Transit and Rail Division, New Mexico DOT, and Chair, MTAP, as well as from our host at Texas DOT, Marc Williams, Deputy Executive Director.

Top leaders from the Federal Transit Administration will then participate in a Regional Administrators Roundtable. Moderated by Henrika Buchanan, FTA's Associate Administrator, this session will provide an opportunity for a lively, interactive discussion with key regional leaders including Robert Patrick, Region 6, Mokhtee Ahmad, Region 7, and Ted Matley, Region 9. Following this session, members will explore the integral role of transit in connecting riders to health care facilities, housing communities, and places of employment. Yet, transit funding for these services remains a challenge. This session will discuss leveraging Federal, state, local and private/nonprofit partners to improve coordination with and funding for transit.

After the excellent opening and the morning sessions, the PTC and MTAP members will recognize the AASHTO Presidential Award for Public Transportation and then Charles Carr from Mississippi DOT, last year's winner, will present the 2017 MTAP Outstanding Service Award. The luncheon keynote address will be from Scott Bogren, Executive Director, CTA.

Transit Safety/Emergency Transit Planning/Disaster Recovery are first on the agenda for the afternoon of Day 1. Hurricanes Harvey and Irma and the forest fires in Montana and Oregon have focused attention on safety, emergency planning and disaster recovery by public agencies, especially state DOTs. State DOTs from Florida, North Carolina, Oregon, and Texas will provide lessons learned from handling these natural disasters.

Cutting-edge technologies are used in transit and transit agencies to help with grants management, schedule and route optimization, vehicle tracking, etc. The final session of Day 1 will be about Technology and Transit and state DOTs from Kansas, California, Washington, Mississippi, and North Carolina will highlight their success stories with useful technologies that help better manage their day-to-day work.

Our evening festivities, a chance to network and be social with colleagues from state DOTs from around the country, will be at Cooper's BBQ.

On Day 2, after a brief PTC and MTAP business session, members will head into a Transit Asset Management 2.0 Workshop. The session title is, "Where Are State DOTs on Transit Asset Management (TAM)?" and this third workshop in the MTAP-TAM workshop series will help state DOTs gain additional insight into and collectively answer critical questions and concerns about developing TAM plans. State DOTs will continue thinking critically about the final rule's implementation.

Finally, the final two sessions rounding out Day 2 are Getting Transit on Your AASHTO Regional Meeting's Agenda and Succession Planning and Cross Training. State DOT colleagues will explain how they negotiated a spot for transit on their AASHTO regional meeting's agenda. And since staff turnover, buyouts, promotions, and retirements have reduced the number of knowledgeable, seasoned staff, we will hear from speakers, who will provide successful strategies on how to deal with this knowledge management/personnel drain.

For state DOT transit professionals the PTC-MTAP 2017 Winter Meeting should not be missed. Thanks to Texas DOT for its extensive assistance in planning for the Winter Meeting and to the PTC and MTAP chairs, members, and their staff who will be presenting during the sessions. We hope to see everyone in Austin, actively participating in these sessions and working together to improve transit services for our communities. ■



The Motor City Welcomed Rural Transit/Mobility Pros at CTAA EXPO

During the week of June 10–16, 2017, America’s “Motor City” welcomed transit and mobility professionals as well as industry enthusiasts from across the nation. As host city for the **Community Transportation Association of America’s (CTAA) National Rodeo and Annual EXPO**, Detroit, more recently dubbed “America’s great comeback city,” was definitely the perfect “urban” setting to discuss, learn about and experience an array of access and mobility issues related to rural transit.

EXPO 2017 provided opportunities for highly interactive engagement with four days of educational and training opportunities. Topics of particular interest to the MTAP membership included *Regulatory and Policy Updates*, *Transit Asset Management for Tier II Providers*, *Technological Innovations and Building Funding Diversity*. The pre-conference intensives provided opportunities for one-, two- and three-day, highly focused and in-depth training sessions. Several meet the Certified Transit Program Administrator (CTPA), Certified Community Transit Supervisor (CCTS), Certified Safety and Security Officer (CSSO) as well as Certified Community Transit Managers (CCTM) program requirements. Specifically, the financial and asset management intensives provided very timely information that is useful for state DOT transit staff.

In addition to big picture keynote and general policy sessions, the *Mobility Rising Symposium*, and the *State DOT Roundtable* stood out as especially relevant resource sessions for state DOT transit staff. The *Mobility Rising: Shaping the Future of Community and Public Transportation Symposium* was a practical two-day seminar that immersed national, state and local stakeholders in discussions, debates and work sessions aimed at adopting new strategies. In addition to the continued debate about “transit being a privilege versus a right”, several presentations focused on current and future implication of technology. Two of the most significant takeaways were the growing impact of shared mobility strategies and the range of technology tools that are available.

During the State DOT Roundtable we were joined by senior level Federal Transit Administration (FTA) representatives and headquarters staff, along with CTAA and National RTAP leadership for two and half hours of timely presentations and discussions. For the first time, MTAP hosted the state DOT Roundtable as a webinar for its membership. As a result, more than 40 MTAP member states participated in the state DOT Roundtable, both in-person and online.

Moderated by Charles Carr (Mississippi DOT and CTAA Board member), this session offered national transit program updates led by Matthew Welbes, Acting Administrator of the FTA and his staff, as well as updates/presentations from CTAA’s Executive Director Scott Bogren and National RTAP Executive Director, Robin Phillips.

Leading off the roundtable, CTAA Executive Director Scott Bogren shared his association’s focus on key issues such as making sure that increased funding for buses will be included in infrastructure legislation. Scott also emphasized the importance of being engaged in the regulatory reform discussions.

Continuing their active engagement with state DOT transit staff, the FTA team discussed relevant information concerning circular updates, new policy initiatives, as well as funding opportunities from the following headquarters staff:

- Kimberly Sledge, Office of Transit Programs
- Marianne Stock, Office of Transit Programs
- Murat Omay, Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation
- Mshodoni Smith, Office of Budget and Policy
- Scott Giering, Office of Program Oversight

In addition to reassurances from the Acting Administrator of FTA’s commitment to working with states through MTAP and organizations such as CTAA and National RTAP, examples of noteworthy takeaways included:

- FTA continues to be actively engaged with the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) to develop a strategic plan.



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Technical Initiatives Corner 5310–5311 Program Managers Forum

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) hosted the past two AASHTO Multi-State Transit Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) forums for program managers who oversee FTA's section 5310 and 5311 programs. For those state DOTs involved in MTAP, these forums provide an opportunity to exchange information and ideas on topics affecting day-to-day challenges with implementing the Section 5310 and 5311 programs.

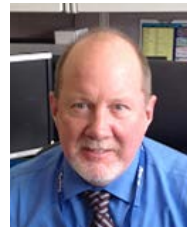
May Forum—How Can State 5310 Programs Work with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), like Uber, Lyft, etc.?

On May 5, 2017, Caltrans led a discussion for participants to learn more about working with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) like Uber, Lyft, and others. More specifically, this webinar highlighted how states are creatively weaving the services that TNCs provide with services offered through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310 program. Caltrans' 5310 program manager Bruce Plowman promoted ideas that could be considered by FTA for the Program's circular to provoke thought, including the concept of TNC vouchers in the 5310 program, shared use mobility technology, pilot projects, ADA accessibility for TNC vehicles, TNC first mile/

last mile, and cost sharing possibilities between TNCs and 5310 providers.

Rik Opstelten from the FTA Office of Mobility Innovation spoke about the tools and direction the Mobility on Demand (MOD) program may be taking in the near future. FTA's MOD vision is "An integrated, connected, multimodal network of safe, affordable, and reliable transportation options available to all" and Opstelten brought reality to this vision by describing several trends that are influencing why MOD is quickly becoming so ingrained with the transit services offered by the 5310 program. Opstelten then linked these trends to the goals of FTA's new MOD Sandbox Program, which aims to: 1) explore emerging technology solutions and new business approaches, 2) prepare the transportation industry to deliver innovative solutions, and 3) enable the widespread deployment of integrated mobility solutions. There are currently 11 MOD Sandbox pilot projects operating around the country. Each aims to evaluate different approaches to MOD, and highlight the possibilities for the program's stated goals.

Mike Spadafore from the Kansas DOT and Marsha Hoskins from the Oregon DOT gave some insight from the perspective of state DOTs. Spadafore and Hoskins shared information about a few pilot projects that are beginning to shed light on MOD concepts—both positive and negative lessons learned. Finally, Caltrans offered a hypothetical way in which state DOTs could partner with TNCs in an innovative way through a concept described as "ride shedding"—which would promote the use of TNCs for ambulatory riders through partnerships between 5310 providers and the TNCs. Barriers to this concept and others like it involve FTA compliance areas, such as: TNC



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driver training, background checks, drug and alcohol testing, and insurance. Other barriers may involve the agreements that would need to be solidified between the agency and the TNC so that there are no funds transferred between the two entities.

The May Forum provided an excellent perspective into the possibility of state DOTs integrating the TNCs into FTA Section 5310 program services. Caltrans's 5310 program certainly benefited from the discussion and we hope other state DOTs benefited as well.

September Forum—Vehicle Leasing

On September 28, Caltrans led the forum about capital/vehicle leasing and moderated a discussion about the pros and cons of leasing versus purchasing transit vehicles and equipment. The goal of the webinar was to highlight vehicle leasing as a viable procurement option for transit agencies.

Kimberly A. Gayle, Director of Policy Review and Development, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) started the discussion with her presentation about new capital leasing requirements outlined in FAST Act Section 3019(c). Lisa Rudder, the Transit Fleet Manager for the Georgia DOT, described Georgia's experience with vehicle leasing.

From California's perspective, this webinar was helpful in understanding the pros and cons of vehicle leasing and provided an opportunity for state DOTs to consider capital/vehicle leasing as a viable procurement option. Currently, California does not allow leasing as an option, primarily because of the potential delays that may occur in our grant application process if we had to wait for the FTA to approve the cost/benefit analysis of leasing versus purchasing, a requirement of the previous Federal transportation law, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. Based on FTA's presentation, Caltrans is now aware that FAST Act has removed the cost/benefit requirement for leasing and California may consider leasing as a procurement option, especially if an agency can show that they have a sustainable plan and have determined the purpose and need for leasing.

From the webinar, Caltrans leaders also realized the potential benefit of leasing electric batteries as a way for California agencies to meet their region's zero emission targets and support the green emission reduction, required by California's SB 375 legislation. Using leased zero emission buses would help California agencies meet their reduction targets and support the state climate goal. And finally, the additional benefit of the webinar is that the FTA has agreed to provide more technical assistance to state DOTs that would like to know more about capital/vehicle leasing.

As a result of hosting and participating in the webinar, Caltrans may now consider promoting leasing as a viable procurement option for its transit agencies. ■

Meet the Newest MTAP Steering Committee Members



Jamie Cochran currently serves as Transit Program Manager for the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), where she is responsible for overseeing the statewide transit planning, asset management, transit research, system development, and Federal program

compliance for Georgia's 85 rural and 7 small urban transit systems (under 200K in population).

Cochran has worked in many aspects of the field of planning, including community, regional, and statewide planning, as well as the planning and development of public transportation systems across the southeastern United States. Her career has been evenly split between time in the public sector (where she got her start at the Florida Department of Transportation) and the private sector, including operating her own consulting firm in Atlanta. She also served as an adjunct faculty member at the Georgia Institute of Technology's School of Urban and Regional Planning for more than 11 years. In 2016, Cochran was inducted into the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) College of Fellows.



Kimberly McGourty is in her first year as Manager for the Public Transportation Office at the Idaho Transportation Department and in her fourth year at the agency. She joined the department shortly after graduating from Boise State University with her Bachelor's degree in Psychology,

and worked for three years as a Grants Officer. Her primary responsibilities include the policies and compliance of Federal and state grant programs as well as spearheading transportation initiatives in partnership with other state agencies. McGourty was recently elected to the MTAP Steering Committee and is eager to learn and implement best practices from other states, as well as represent Idaho through this platform. Outside of work, she enjoys staying active by running and playing soccer, and is an avid country music fan.



Mike Spadafore is the Public Transportation Manager, MPO Liaison for the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), managing KDOT's public transit and paratransit programs and serving as the MPO planning liaison for the Topeka region. Prior to moving to Kansas six years ago, he worked at the Metropolitan Planning Council in Chicago, Illinois and in transportation planning at the city, region, MPO, and state levels.

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The Motor City Welcomed Rural Transit/Mobility Pros at CTAA EXPO

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- New Program Review Guide, Information Request Packages along with online training and Contractor Summit are intended to improve the program review processes.
- Mobility on Demand (MOD) remains a focus.
- Recognition that states have indeed made progress with meeting the Asset Management requirements.
- Multimodal connectivity and performance metrics are being considered in research activities

During the “Discussions with States” portion of the roundtable agenda, Sharon Edgar (Michigan DOT) led a discussion on shared mobility and Jamie Cochran (Georgia DOT) presented her research with Georgia Tech and insight into the “*Trending Urban Problem.*”

A sincere thank you to our members who participated in making the 2017 EXPO a resounding success. By sponsoring Roadeo drivers or judges, lending expertise to the mobility symposium and workshops, being presenters or session attendees, the active involvement of MTAP member states contributes to the value of our relationship with CTAA and improves not only management, education, advocacy and leadership resources but ultimately meeting local mobility needs through better access.

If you have any ideas for improving the *State DOT Roundtable* for the 2018 CTAA EXPO, feel free to contact *Richard Price* or *Charles Carr* with your suggestions. ■

Meet the Newest MTAP Steering Committee Members

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Spadafore holds Bachelor’s degrees in Art History (Carthage College) and Architectural Studies (Judson University) and a Master’s degree in Urban and Regional Planning with an emphasis in Community Development (University of Illinois at Chicago). He is also a LEED Accredited Professional through the U.S. Green Building Council and has trained in public engagement through the International Association of Public Participation. Spadafore is a classically trained urban planner with practical exposure to a variety of non-profit, commercial, municipal, and civic organizations. While currently living in Topeka, Kansas, he originally hails from Chicago and insists that deep dish is the only way to truly experience great pizza. ■

Upcoming Events and Training Sessions

Quality Assurance and Quality Control in Transit, National Transit Institute

Newington, Connecticut
November 29–30 ♦ [Info](#)
Fairfax, Virginia
December 5–6 ♦ [Info](#)

Managing the Environmental Review Process Seminar, National Transit Institute

Forth Worth, Texas
November 28–29 ♦ [Info](#)

Transit Maintenance Leadership Workshop, National Transit Institute

New Orleans, Louisiana
December 4–8 ♦ [Info](#)

Transportation Research Board (TRB) 97th Annual Meeting

Washington, DC
January 7–11, 2018 ♦ [Info](#)

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, National Transit Institute

Seattle, Washington
February 12–14, 2018 ♦ [Info](#)
Kansas City
Feb. 26–28 ♦ [Info](#)

AASHTO Washington Briefing

Washington, DC
February 27–March 3, 2018 ♦ [Info](#)

Save the Date

APTA’s Legislative Conference

Washington, DC
March 18–20, 2018

Additional information regarding the above upcoming activities can be found on the MTAP website at www.mtap.org.

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