The Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) deadline for State Safety Oversight (SSO) program certification is just over a year away. Many states have made significant progress toward certification, yet as of April 2018, there are still 22 states working to cross the certification finish line. Because state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) play a critical role in our nation’s transit programs, it is important that state organizations are aware of the upcoming certification deadline and what happens if a state misses it.

FTA’s SSO rule requires states with FTA-funded rail transit obtain certification of their SSO program by April 15, 2019. This includes states with rail transit systems in operation, in the engineering phase or under construction. If a state fails to meet the certification deadline, FTA is prohibited by law from awarding any federal transit funds to public transportation agencies in that state until certification is achieved. This includes all FTA funding across the state for bus, rail and other transit services, urban and rural.

By law, the deadline cannot be waived or extended. FTA has been strongly encouraging states to submit certification applications by April 15, 2018—a full year in advance—to allow ample time for evaluation and certification. Further, states should not assume that applications submitted after September 30, 2018, will receive a decision on certification by the deadline. In some cases, FTA may need to do onsite verifications, or states may need to correct and resubmit parts of their applications, all of which must be completed before the deadline.
FTA Reminds States of Key Deadlines for State Safety Oversight Program Certification (Continued)

There are 30 states that must meet the SSO requirements. As of April 2018, the FTA has certified eight SSO programs: Ohio, Minnesota, Utah, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Colorado, and Virginia. Separately, the District of Columbia, together with Virginia and Maryland, are expected to jointly submit to the FTA an SSO Program certification application for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrorail system, which will be overseen by the Metrorail Safety Commission.

FTA’s SSO certification web page includes a complete list of affected states, their certification status, and the minimum estimated funding that is at risk if a state fails to obtain certification by the deadline.

Since 2013, FTA has provided approximately $123 million in grant funds to all affected states to develop and implement an SSO Program that is compliant with federal requirements. In addition to one-on-one monthly and quarterly conference calls with SSO Program managers and staff, FTA hosts webinars and holds semi-annual SSO workshops, including one scheduled for May 15–17, in Washington, DC. FTA leadership has reached out to Governors, legislative leadership, state DOTs and rail transit agency CEOs to emphasize the importance of meeting this deadline. If you attended the AASHTO Washington Briefing in March, you may have heard me speak to this topic as well. Last December, FTA also hosted a webinar with AASHTO to highlight the importance of certification with state DOTs.

FTA will continue to work with the remaining states to support them in meeting the deadline to ensure they are in compliance with federal rail transit safety requirements and to ensure public transit services can continue to receive federal financial support. FTA remains committed to improving and strengthening SSO programs for improved state oversight of rail transit operations. If your state requires additional guidance or information to help get across the certification finish line, please contact Tom Littleton, FTA Associate Administrator for Safety & Oversight, at thomas.littleton@dot.gov.

Rail systems overseen by the certified states’ SSO agencies include, clockwise from upper left, the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation’s Honolulu Rail Transit project, which is currently under construction (photograph by Musashi1600 via CC BY 3.0 US license); the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority’s “T” train (photograph by Pi.1415926535 via CC BY-SA 3.0 license); Minnesota’s Metro Transit light rail (photograph by Michael Hicks via CC BY 2.0 license); the DC Department of Transportation’s DC Streetcar (photograph by Mario Roberto Duran Ortiz via CC BY-SA 4.0 license); the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority’s Cincinnati Bell Connector (photograph by schw4rz via CC BY-SA 2.0 license); and the Utah Transit Authority’s S-Line Streetcar (photograph by An Errant Knight via CC-BY-SA 4.0 license).
AASHTO keeps state DOT transit issues top of mind with Congress and the federal government. This last budget bill is a perfect example. In the recently adopted 2018 Omnibus budget bill, transit’s top priorities will receive significant federal funding, including FTA state-of-good-repair formula grants ($400 million) and high density state apportionments ($30 million). Bus and bus facilities grants also will receive $400 million, of which approximately $210 million will be directed to the funding formula, helping reverse the cuts to our small urban providers under MAP-21. Along with APTA and CTAA, AASHTO continues its work communicating our priorities for the next version of the FAST Act, which ends in 2020, and in future budget bills.

Another top priority for transit is safety. Thankfully, our small urban and rural transportation systems are among the nation’s safest systems, especially considering how much we work and travel. In 2016, the National Transit Database (NTD) documents that rural transit provided 27.5 million vehicle revenue hours of service, 128.7 million passenger trips, and 487.1 million vehicle revenue miles. From 2013-2016, according to NTD, an annual average of two fatalities were connected to transit driver or agency cause. By comparison, in 2016, vehicles traveled about 3.2 trillion miles with 37,461 fatal crashes (about 1.18 fatalities per 100 million miles traveled) while rural transit averaged nearly 247 million miles before a single fatality. For transit agencies with extensive coverage and service in rural and small urban communities, that is an astounding safety record.

Oversight helps us successfully minimize the safety risks of sub-recipients. We ensure compliance on drug and alcohol testing, vehicle specifications and standards, oversight and training programs, etc. Through MTAP, we’ll explore issues with the Transportation Network Companies and how their appropriate, safe and compliant integration within our transit systems can be achieved. Meanwhile, connected and automated transit vehicle testing must fully address any safety concerns before operating in our small urban and rural communities. Once these technologies can support and strengthen our transit systems, limiting their risks, then I expect transit’s safety record will be even better.

MTAP members are invaluable in implementing great technical programming, including the most recent discussions during the webinars Working with Regional Planning Agencies on Project Selection, 3rd Party Contracting—Making it Work, and State DOT Update—Transit Asset Management. Our recent monthly Steering Committee conference calls further demonstrate how engaged members are in the state DOT transit community.

With upcoming meetings in Pittsburgh (State DOT Roundtable at CTAA Expo) and Minneapolis (State Public Transit Partnership Conference), your input is greatly needed to create robust and dynamic agendas. And with discussions already starting on the next version of the FAST Act, we’ll need your thoughts and ideas on crucial transit policy for that bill.

Thanks again for your dedication to MTAP and the Council on Public Transportation. We are best at advancing transit programs, education and public policy when we work and learn together.

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David Harris
New Mexico DOT
Director, Transit and Rail Division
MTAP Chair
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Photo courtesy of Jake Schoellkopf, New Mexico DOT
State DOTs use a variety of transit-related technologies, including grant management software, demand response scheduling software, vehicle tracking, fare collection, etc., to serve their sub-recipients’ needs and benefit their transit customers. These excellent tools build on members’ business practices and assist them in turning data into information into knowledge. Kansas DOT and North Carolina DOT have successfully implemented technology projects, providing greater efficiency to current practices and effectively delivering services statewide.

From Antiquated Reporting to Black Cat Grants Management—Kansas DOT

While considered a small state population-wise, Kansas is a public transit powerhouse with 145 rural and small urban programs combined. Unfortunately, Kansas DOT’s rural and small urban sub-recipients are not the most tech capable. In terms of providing program reporting documentation, they range from modern, internet-based to snail-mail/fax on notebook paper. Here is how the old and grossly inefficient process worked:

- Providers visit KDOT’s website and print/download forms for costs/ridership/DBE reporting;
- They fill out the forms in Excel or longhand and fax/snail-mail forms to their Coordinated Transit District (CTD) Administrator (10 CTD administrators in Kansas);
- The CTD Admin reviews and approves, then faxes/snail-mails them to KDOT where staff reviews and makes any corrections, approves, and processes the payment separately via KDOT’s payment voucher system—one batch per CTD—and finally cuts a check to the CTD Administrator;
- The CTD Admin cuts a check to each sub-recipient in their region for the month’s expenses based on the reports received from KDOT; and
- ...this process starts again three weeks later.

The Black Cat software allows KDOT to consolidate training schedules for all statewide RTAP training sessions as well as trainings held by their team of approved trainers. Any sub-recipient can look on Black Cat and see the availability of classes, making it easier for staff to stay current and without relying solely on their official RTAP trainer.

The software is incredible and its benefits for KDOT’s sub-recipients are invaluable. Sub-recipients save hours of paperwork each month and the software makes it easier to apply for funds annually (reusing saved electronic files of certain documents, easily updated fleet inventories, etc.). KDOT has reduced a 10-work-day process for 3.5 full-time employees down to one- or two work days for its small staff and can draw out data from Black Cat for use in other applications, such as the NTD annual reporting. The Federal Transit Administration acknowledges that KDOT’s reporting has less errors than...

Now, KDOT uses Panther International’s Black Cat grants management software and has implemented a one-stop online shop to manage everything related to its grants processes, including monthly billing reports, vehicle fleet info, trip purposes, and annual grants applications, as well as transit agency staff RTAP trainings, contact info by CTD, and baseline inventories of all the fleets in the state (which they use to do our annual NTD reporting to the FTA). Needless to say, KDOT’s reporting/payment processes are markedly improved in terms of efficiency.

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PTD has implemented new technologies in the following three areas:

1. **Statewide implementations**
   a. Maintenance Software (Trapeze EMS)—primarily for FTA Section 5311 sub-recipients but some urban transit systems are able to participate.
   b. Electronic Grant Making (SAP EBS)
   c. Google Transit File Specification (GTFS) for all fixed routes (trip planner)

2. **Rural implementations**
   a. Scheduling / Dispatching Software
   b. Tablets
   c. Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone systems—call in and call out features
   d. Cameras in all rural vehicles

3. **Urban implementations**
   a. Real Time Passenger Information—interfacing through web and apps
   b. Electronic fareboxes and other in vehicle technologies such as Automatic Voice Annunciation System (Cleaver Devices), Automatic Passenger Counters (UTA and Trapeze), cameras
   c. Runcutting and scheduling software (Hastus by Giro, Trapeze)
   d. Scheduling and dispatching software for paratransit and fixed route
   e. Tablets
   f. Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone systems—call in and call out features
   g. Priority treatment at signalized intersections
   h. Electronic fare payment
   i. Rail technologies

PTD provides technical assistance and support for the technologies in facilitating different procurements. Primarily, PTD provides funding for the technologies. The urban technology program has continued while the rural program has moved into FTA Section 5311. Next, PTD conducts the procurement, assisting with the lead agency bids involving multiple vendors, providing the required statewide reports for paratransit software and conducting a statewide bid of vehicle equipment. Keeping these bids current reduces the vehicle procurement costs for these items by at least 30 percent. Third, PTD funds technology focused staff at one of the Universities. And fourth, PTD provides upkeep/maintenance of the regional ITS Architectures.

In 2017, PTD issued its first innovations award to Buncombe County’s Mountain Mobility. Buncombe County’s Mountain Mobility used their technology to improve the performance of the system. Most importantly, the technology procurement resulted in better worker productivity and better on-time transit system performance.

Kansas and North Carolina DOTs embrace developing technologies in the administration and operation of public transit and paratransit services. And the results are clearly victories for the state and the transit providers. These examples demonstrate how incorporating technology into transit programs does not have to be “on the cutting edge” or a massive undertaking. In both cases, efficiencies in public transit are achieved by decreasing processing time, improving data collection and centralizing datasets to inform. These improvements to a state’s respective programs can be accomplished while providing better customer service to sub-recipients and riders throughout the state.
With the advent of automated transit vehicle research and testing, state transit agencies and local public transportation and transit officials are thinking more about the future of transit services. For AASHTO’s members of the Council on Public Transportation and MTAP, that future involves understanding how small urban and rural providers, including riders with disabilities and seniors who need mobility assistance, would be affected.

This discussion over the future of transit is in response to the U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) request for comments on two notices in the Federal Register: Research: Automated Transit Buses (Docket Number FTA-2017-0024), and Removing Barriers to Transit Bus Automation (Docket No. FTA-2017-0025).

In a comment letter, AASHTO’s Council on Public Transportation and MTAP members highlight the challenges, uncertainties and opportunities presented by automated transit buses. The letter, dated March 2, 2018 and signed by AASHTO’s president John Schroer, Commissioner of Tennessee DOT, stresses that AASHTO’s top priority is the safety of the nation’s transportation systems. AASHTO urges USDOT and FTA to first consider the safety implications of any technology—including automated transit buses—before allowing them to operate in the right-of-way of any community. In terms of transit safety, small urban and rural transportation and transit systems are among the safest in the country.

Despite the initial cautionary tone, AASHTO members remain hopeful that FTA’s interest in automated transit buses can lead to further innovation while avoiding more federal regulations or legislation that would limit testing and demonstrations. To increase the chance of success, state DOTs will look to FTA and the automated transit vehicle industry for guidance and to serve as reliable partners, providing much needed funding while supporting the public infrastructure and business models necessary to accommodate them.

With the letter, AASHTO’s Council on Public Transportation and MTAP members include detailed responses to the questions in each notice, providing further insights into the association’s priorities for automated transit bus policies. Here are five key points highlighting the priorities of members:

• AASHTO encourages further discussions with the automated vehicle industry and academic partners about when and how each of these systems can be integrated into public bus fleets. More importantly, these discussions need to prioritize the safety of our rural and small urban transit systems, above all else, as well as consider the cost of integration imposed upon the public transportation providers.
• To improve rural transit service through transit bus automation, AASHTO suggests any new process focus on the following:
  ○ First/last mile connectivity to transit hubs using smaller automated transit buses;
  ○ De-centralization of transit stops to allow riders along the route to use mobile technology to hail rides from anywhere along a route, as opposed to designated transit stops; and
  ○ Greater opportunities to partner with mobility providers such as Transportation Network Companies.
• ...if the intent of a public transportation agency is to eventually launch level 4 or 5 automated buses...then passengers with disabilities and seniors who require mobility assistance would be at a severe disadvantage. Local public transportation providers would still be required to provide mobility assistance to passengers with disabilities on their buses and would likely require an operator and/or assistant onboard to help secure them safely, potentially negating any cost-saving benefits of achieving level 4 or 5 automation on transit vehicles.
• In coordination with the automated driving systems industry, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and FTA should provide a nationwide policy framework for automated public transit. Such a framework would give state departments of transportation and local public transportation providers a better sense of the infrastructure and capital requirements, as well as operations and maintenance of an automated transit fleet.
• Overall, AASHTO is hopeful that the benefits from the automation will outweigh the costs. However, public transportation agencies are supposed to serve all people in all communities, especially those communities without access to other modes of transportation. Significant concern still exists that many of the communities our members serve will be left behind as resources are consumed for infrastructure and capital requirements related to these technologies and their deployment will occur in more economically advantaged areas.

Overall, automated technologies (cars and buses) are being tested and initially deployed in several states that provide a positive regulatory environment. With its suggestions, AASHTO believes more states will be accepting of automated technology testing and deployment. For a copy of AASHTO’s letter and detailed comments, visit the Council on Public Transportation website or contact Shayne Gill, AASHTO’s Program Director for Multimodal Transportation at (202) 624-3630 or Richard Price, Program Specialist, MTAP, at (202) 624-5813.
With the burst of the baby boom bubble beginning to impact all employers, two major issues are becoming readily apparent: knowledge management is critical to the loss of staff with significant levels of institutional knowledge; and stemming the loss of knowledge management takes good succession planning to ensure a smooth transition and fill vacated positions. Knowledge management through good succession planning is key at all organizational levels, but particularly relevant for those positions with specific skill requirements.

Staff Turnover Results in Lost Knowledge—Oregon DOT’s Rail & Public Transit Division

Over the past two years, Oregon DOT’s Rail & Public Transit Division faced a severe staff accelerated turnover problem, bordering on a crisis. Forty-four percent of staff either retired, were promoted to different jobs or left the agency. Meanwhile, of those staff remaining, 20 percent had been in their positions less than one year. Faced with this level of attrition and a depletion of professional knowledge, Oregon DOT tackled this problem directly, quickly and with the understanding that transit staff need to learn and feel comfortable and confident with their roles.

Oregon Rail and Public Transit quickly implemented rotation/developmental assignments to deal with the mass attrition. Rotations and developmental assignments within the section allowed management to use current staff to help with onboarding new team members. Also, senior staff developed resource guides and tools to document the knowledge and processes that already existed. Retiring staff were asked to stay on as temporary employees to complete major projects and to help train new staff. Finally, management worked with Human Resources to expand recruitment efforts and promote positions in advertisements to a wider audience.

What did Oregon DOT’s Rail & Public Transit Division learn from this experience?

Documenting information proved critical to the strategies success. Those who were leaving the agency with significant institutional/project knowledge were ask to document their work and resources to accomplish the work in an organized, thoughtful way without reinventing the wheel or duplicating what already exists. New staff can only be effective if their resources are readily known and available.

People and partnerships (internal and external) are key to onboarding new staff. While lots of resources exist, from FTA and RTAP for local transit organizations, new staff needed to know where to go and who can help obtain that information.

More importantly, good succession planning is key to successfully navigating staff changes. Management should take the time and be prepared for any staff person to leave any position at any time. Waiting to prepare comes with peril. Start preparing now to meet the challenges of hiring excellent people who aspire to greater challenges, higher pay, or management. Succession planning must be discussed throughout the agency, engaging all staff in the process, especially those who like their jobs and want to stay in them.

And the results proved correct. Now, staffing at ODOT Rail and Public Transit is relatively stable. Of the eleven vacancies, ten position are now filled with the last opening being filled this spring. But in case of another mass exodus, the agency has plans to ease the effects and to keep remaining staff enthused and engaged. There is, indeed, a light at the end of the tunnel.

The Keys to Knowledge Management and Succession Planning

The story of Oregon DOT’s Rail & Public Transit Division is not different from other state DOT transit offices. Many staff, including those at state DOTs, started working in the field with the establishment of the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) grant programs in the 70’s and early-80’s. And these same staff remained in this positions for almost their entire careers.

Now staff are retiring en masse and state DOTs are scrambling to do succession planning documents, deal with the loss of knowledge of these experts and hire new personnel to fill the vacated positions. But proper planning will be key to their success. Key factors of successful succession planning include:

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MTAP enables state transit agencies to network and efficiently solve technical problems through a variety of peer exchange opportunities. The MTAP Steering Committee hosts peer exchanges for members, including managers of the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Section 5310 and Section 5311 programs. These “Technical Initiatives” help members exchange information and best practices, as well as help them solve problems. Here is a summary of the most recent webinars:

Transit Asset Management Workshop—Kevin Olinger, Moderator; New Mexico DOT

Transit Asset Management (TAM) is a subject very much on the minds of state DOT transit planning, especially with a looming deadline of October 1, 2018 for completing TAM plans. To continue the discussion and ensure all state DOTs will be meeting the deadline, MTAP held its second online TAM workshop on March 14, 2018. State DOTs across the country came together to share best practices and discuss the opportunities and challenges created by TAM planning.

Panelists on this webinar include:
- Brian Travis, California DOT
- Sreeparna Mitra, Iowa DOT
- Johnny Mmanu-ike, South Carolina DOT
- Mshadoni Smith, FTA

Each state DOT on the webinar panel spent a few minutes addressing his/her TAM planning efforts to date, including making decisions about individual versus group TAM plans; establishing Useful Life Benchmarks; engaging local transit providers, MPOs/RPOs, and tribal governments; and using new technology to collect data about facility and asset conditions, among many other factors critical to the success of TAM planning. Mshadoni Smith from FTA also answered questions and engaged participants in a discussion of how TAM planning informs setting targets for state of good repair and allocating resources among participants in a group plan.

Throughout the webinar, push-poll questions gave participants an opportunity to inform the discussion about their own TAM planning efforts. Highlights of the polling results include the following:
- About 45 percent of respondents are one-quarter to halfway through completion of their TAM plans.
- Almost 70 percent of respondents indicated that no Tier II providers have opted out of the group plan.
- A little over half of the respondents are using the default Useful Life Benchmarks established by FTA.
- While most respondents do not expect TAM planning to result in any additional resources, most believe that their TAM group plan will have an effect on how existing resources are allocated among local providers.

The entire TAM webinar, PowerPoint presentation slides and push-poll question responses are available on the MTAP webpage for Transit Asset Management.

- Kevin Olinger
  New Mexico DOT
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- Mark Codey
  California DOT
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Third party contracting is on the minds of public transit managers from state DOTs, especially for sub-recipients. Essentially, sub-recipients are contracting out to vendors for the purchase of equipment or operations with state DOTs involved in that process as well as in an oversight capacity. With federal regulations governing this process, FTA, in its oversight function, can issue findings during a state management review (SMR) of a transit agency.

To give members a refresher on the subject, MTAP organized a discussion on March 20, 2018 with the following panelist:

- Kim McGourty, Idaho Transportation Department
- Kirk Benson and Stephen Pereira, FTA
- Frank Nevitt, California DOT
- Rob Tassinari, National RTAP

Idaho Transportation Department set the stage for the webinar, presenting the challenges with third party contracting, including federal regulations and state oversight. FTA provided a brief overview of third party contracting, changes to 3rd party contracting included in the FAST Act, and issues related piggy backing, joint procurements and innovate procurements. Caltrans discussed its approach to the state’s oversight function. Finally, the National Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) gave an overview of its tool, Procurement Pro, a cloud-based software designed to guide users through FTA’s procurement procedures.

Through push-polling, participants weighed in on the discussion about their own third party contracting challenges. Here are some highlights from the polling:

- More than 60 percent of respondents review between 0-15 third party contracts per year.
- A little more than 10 percent of respondents were denied federal funding as a result of a substantially flawed third party contract while almost 90 percent were not.
- Almost 70 percent of respondents said they reviewed third party contracts during pre-solicitation, post selection and pre-award.
- About 25 percent of respondents said they received a finding on the SMR for the state’s third party contracting oversight procedures while the remaining had no SMR findings.

The entire webinar on third party contracting, including recording, PowerPoint Presentation, and push-poll results can be found on [MTAP website on its 5310/5311 Program Managers webpage](#).

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**Making Succession Planning/ Knowledge Management A Top Priority (Continued)**

- **Plan early and have contingencies.** Replacing staff is an on-going process that requires time, foresight and commitment for success.
- **Review the complete applicant, not just job duties**—The most qualified person “on paper” may not end up being the most successful. Other issues are the working environment and current employees, applicant’s long-term goals, and advancement opportunities.
- **Obtain new employee buy-in**—Demonstrate to the new employee why they are relevant to the organization, its mission and ultimately its customers. “Why” is critical.
- **Set realistic expectations for new hires**—FTA programs—and the regulations governing them—have become increasingly complex and take years to understand, along with the right coaching and commitment to training. Be patient, provide encouragement and lay the groundwork for success.
- **But also be clear about expectations**—define the position’s deliverables and make employees accountable for their responsibilities. New employees must be actively managed to thrive.
- **Do not fear marrying new and old work cultures**—while this can be tricky, new hires must have time and support through the transition to establish their credibility.
- **Create comprehensive standard operating procedures (SOP)**—and do this before the current employee leaves. Subsequently, review your SOPs, modify them, and continue simplifying the SOPs on a regular, ongoing basis.
- **Use retirees as a resource**—A retiree’s experience and insight is highly valuable to help select and train the right person.

Contractors can also play an important role while management searches for the most qualified and best “fit” for the job and organization. A contractor can be a temporary emergency measure to ensure continuity of job function without a loss of specialty knowledge. Most importantly, contractors can act as short-duration interim staff, providing on-going technical assistance for customers and performing specialized functions such as procurement, safety and security, compliance, DBE, Title VI, and other important regulatory functions. What makes a contractor really valuable is knowing that they are a good resource to meet a current need while at the same time working themselves out of a job.
More than 40 public transportation professionals representing twenty states gathered in Austin, Texas for the Council on Public Transportation and Multi-State Transit Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) 2017 Winter Meeting. Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) hosted the gathering from November 15–16 at the Courtyard by Marriott in downtown Austin.

The meeting kicked off on November 15th with quick welcoming remarks, starting with our TxDOT host and Deputy Executive Director Marc Williams. Mark was followed by AASHTO’s Chief Operating Officer Jim Tymon, Minnesota DOT Commissioner Charles Zelle (Chair, Council on Public Transportation) and New Mexico Transit and Rail Director Dave Harris (MTAP Chair).

Henrika, Kimberly and Marianne covered FTA funding issues and the ongoing work of the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) to improve mobility for people with disabilities, elderly, and individuals with low incomes. As always, interacting with FTA’s leadership is a useful exchange of information that truly benefits our day-to-day roles.

The agenda continued with a session titled, Transit Makes the Connection. Ohio DOT highlighted his technical analysis (and funding) of Ohio’s Public Transit/Human Services Transportation Coordination Plans to help connect people to health care. Two Texas case studies, one from Golden Crescent RPC’s Lisa Cortinas and the other from South Plains Community Action Association’s Brian Baker, showed how partnering with workforce development and local employers is working to extend service and using JARC funding and local contributions to connect people to jobs, healthcare, education, and a summer meals program for kids.

The Transit Safety/Emergency Transit Planning/Disaster Recovery session highlighted transit’s role in preparing and planning for natural disasters and then how to prepare to receive FEMA funding reimbursements for assisting in emergency services. North Carolina and Florida provided case studies outlining lessons learned for disaster preparedness and handling mandatory evacuations; Oregon discussed forest fire...
emergency plans and transit services for the viewing of the 2017 eclipse; and Fort Bend discussed emergency services for Hurricane Harvey.

The Technology and Training session included presentations from Debbie Collins (North Carolina DOT), Alaska DOT (Debbie Howard), and Mike Spadafore (Kansas DOT) about the various technology partnerships that have expanded their transit capabilities statewide. Technologies, such as routing software, a grant management system, and demand response scheduling, have essentially changed the way transit is provided in Alaska, Kansas and North Carolina.

Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), one of AASHTO’s key transit partners, participated in the two-day meeting with Scott Bogren delivering a keynote during the first day. Scott talked about CTAA’s work (in Washington, DC and in the states) representing the interests of transit providers nationwide. Chris Zeilinger, CTAA’s Assistant Director, also participated in the meeting, providing his unique perspective on transit programs and policy.

On Day 2, after a quick business session of the Council on Public Transportation and MTAP, the topic of Transit Asset Management took center stage with Don Chartock (Washington State DOT) facilitating a lively and informative discussion and Q&A for the group. FTA’s Mshadoni Smith also presented on the latest Transit Asset Management (TAM) guidance while Associate Administrator Henrika Buchanan clarified TAM rule interpretations.

Minnesota DOT provided insight to their approach and advancements into Automated Transit Vehicle usage, test tracks, and plans to provide rides at the 2018 Super Bowl in Minneapolis.

Ohio DOT’s Chuck Dyer and Virginia DRPT’s Jennifer DeBruhl talk about how to get transit on your AASHTO regional meeting’s agenda. Lastly, succession planning and cross training was discussed with Kansas DOT (Mike Spadafore), Oregon DOT (Marsha Hoskins), Idaho DOT (Kimberly McGourty) and RLS & Associates, Inc. (Robbie Sarles, President) presenting ideas to keep up with transit staff turnover.

For a copy of the meeting agenda, presentations and other meeting-related documents, visit the MTAP webpage for its 2017 Winter Meeting.

Congratulations to Caltrans’ Mark Codey 2017 MTAP Outstanding Service Award Recipient

In November 2017, Mark Codey, Office Chief, Federal Transit Grants, at the Division of Rail & Mass Transportation for California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), received the 2017 Multi-state Transit Technical Assistance Program’s (MTAP) Outstanding Service Award for his longstanding, exceptional and consistent service to the program and its members. Mark is currently a member of the MTAP Steering Committee.

“Mark has been a very active member of the MTAP Steering Committee, and he is extraordinarily helpful in educating members on a range of federal and state issues, including the Transit Asset Management program,” said David Harris, Director of the Transit and Rail Division, New Mexico Department of Transportation and Chair, MTAP. “It is no surprise that Mark is a leader and mentor for MTAP, since Caltrans has led the transit industry in dealing with TAM and other major policy issues and program requirements.”

As a Steering Committee member, Mark helps MTAP and AASHTO’s state DOT transit office members maintain a strong relationship with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), coordinates with FTA on multiple issues, especially on transit asset management, and guide the program’s technical initiatives, including MTAP’s 5310-5311 Program Managers Forum. Furthermore, Mark’s leadership epitomizes MTAP’s ideals of fostering partnerships and helping colleagues through peer exchanges. Mark uses his program knowledge and strong relationships with FTA to help his MTAP colleagues, including on one occasion where he organized meetings/peer exchanges for his transit colleagues from Florida who sought guidance on developing a multiple corridor New Starts program.

Since Mark could not attend the Council on Public Transportation and MTAP 2017 Winter Meeting, Dara Wheeler, Division Chief, at the Division of Rail & Mass Transportation for Caltrans presented him with the award.

Congratulations to Mark Codey for this significant achievement.
The National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) 20-65 Project Panel provides targeted research to meet the needs of state DOT transit offices and their programs and is guided by professionals from state DOTs, state transit associations, transit agencies and other industry experts. Unfortunately, the AASHTO Special Committee on Research and Innovation has recently decided to end the NCHRP 20-65 program, which started in 2004.

However, NCHRP 20-65 Project Panel still research projects in the pipeline and those projects will continue until completion. Here is what to expect:

Research Getting Started
The following research was started in 2018, with the results to be available in the next 12 to 18 months.

**Task 73: Best Practices and Marketing to Increase Rural Transit Ridership and Investment** will produce a Best Practices Guide that will cover the interconnected topics of practices to: (1) increase rural transit ridership; (2) measuring the Return-on-Investment (ROI) of rural transit investment and (3) communicate the importance of rural transit investment.

**Task 75: Baseline Research on Allowable In-Kind and Local Match Sources** will result in a resource guide that includes detailed descriptions of how in-kind and local match sources have been used successfully. The research should describe methods that have been used to set the value and then document in-kind match.

**Task 76: Opportunities for State DOTs (and others) to encourage Shared Use Mobility Practices in Rural Areas** will generate information that State DOTs and others, including planning and/or economic development agencies, could make use of to advance selected shared use mobility practices with a focus on those practices that could extend the reach rural transit services.

**Task 77: Lessons Learned and Impacts to Date of State DOT Implementation of New Federal Transit Asset Management and Public Transportation Agency Safety Requirements** will document the state of practice within state DOTs as they implement the new TAM rule—and if issued the Safety Agency Plan rule. The research should also determine the initial impacts of the rules on: asset condition, safety performance and the investment of federal transit funds.

Research Soon To Begin
On November 14, 2017, the NCHRP 20-65 Project Panel selected five new research tasks for the FY 2018 program. TRB staff will solicit research proposals from approved task order contractors for these five tasks and the NCHRP 20-65 Project.
Panel will select vendor proposals in June 2018. The research will begin in late 2018.

Task 78: Impact of Decline in Volunteerism on Rural Transit Systems will (1) research the decline in volunteers and (2) provide an assessment of the impact of this trend on the sustainability of transit operations that depend on volunteers.

Task 79: Program Management Insights for the 5310 Program (Including Sub-Grantee Consolidation and Urban 5310) will (a) survey states to determine the number sub-grantees per state, and (b) identify those states that have a well-structured program and limited number of 5310 sub-grantees.

Task 80: Capacity Building Options for State Dot Transit Staff will (a) identify generally applicable capacity building options and (b) identify strategies that will be of particular use to state DOT transit offices.

Task 81: Effective Local and Statewide Approaches to Rural Service Assessment will investigate effective local and stateside approaches to rural service assessment and (1) document, assess and determine lessons to be learned from the current state of the practice at the local and state levels and (2) develop recommendations for State DOTs and individual rural transit agencies.

Task 82: Providing Customized, Client-Based Transportation Services will identify the full range of local, state, federal and sponsor-based policies, regulations, and funding criteria that hinder (or have the perception of hindering) FTA-funded transit providers from providing customized services aimed at specific client/user groups.

2017 Completed Research, Final Reports Available

Task 68: Successful Mobility Management Practices for Improving Transportation Services in Small Urban and Rural Areas documents the mobility management practices that are being effectively used in smaller transit agencies.

Task 69: Consolidation of Rural Transit Systems looks at formal and informal efforts that State DOTS are taking to encourage rural transit agencies to consolidate and provides a guidebook that can assist transit agencies that are considering consolidation.

Task 72: Small System Alternative Fuel Strategies provides a toolkit and guidance document that can be used by small bus operators to assess the impacts of deploying various alternative fuels.
Ohio, like many other states, has a fragmented, siloed, and overly complicated human service transportation (HST) network with many transportation rules and policies dictated by county governments to 13 different state agencies. This siloed system, while it worked in the past, is not working now and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is leading the change with a statewide initiative called, the Mobility Transformation vision.

With transportation being the number one need within the human service industry, ODOT’s Mobility Transformation vision creates a shared vision and structure that aligns the elements of individual agency policies, funding, planning, and technology into a coordinated and enhanced mobility platform. This future state of mobility in Ohio is grounded in extensive research that has uncovered new opportunities for productive inter-agency relationships and created a platform for limitless mobility options for the residents of Ohio.

To start this initiative ODOT began researching and compiling a database of the federal, state, and agency transportation regulations and policies for the twelve different policy areas under human services transportation. The regulations and policies were analyzed and best practices identified. While a large policy group, with one representative from the 13 participating agencies, was created to oversee this process, a smaller working group, including ODOT, the state Medicaid office, Ohio Jobs and Family Service, and the Dept. of Public Safety, drove the process and helped provide recommended actions.

The Mobility Transformation vision initiative is moving forward at a quick pace with more than 90 percent of the research and analysis requirements currently completed. Now, the policy working group has been determined that ODOT should lead this effort as it moves into the implementation phase. Implementation will focus on the development of the administrative tools including policies, forms, and operating procedures, needed to ensure the success of the Mobility Transformation vision initiative. While transportation is usually a secondary consideration of most state agencies, ODOT’s expertise in transportation made it ideal to become the lead agency during implementation.

ODOT developed the initial project goals of (1) increasing transportation access for Ohioans and (2) to more efficiently and effectively administer human services transportation. To achieve these long-term goals, the following objectives were set:

1. Creating the environment for coordination to occur among all agencies
2. Developing a level playing field for all participating agencies
3. Use mobility managers in a regional implementation

While ODOT cannot predict Ohio’s future mobility landscape, the change that is taking place is very positive. Of course, for future change, the agency will need more time and more study and evaluation. With the continued dedication and commitment to change by State agency leaders, an effective and efficient regional model and a level playing field that provides equity for all providers, ODOT is confident that future of mobility in Ohio is moving in the right direction. The success is encouraging and ODT will continue to build on the opportunities for a more efficient and effective transit and human services transportation system that increases personal mobility for all Ohioans.
FindaRideFlorida.org provides an alphabetical listing of transportation service providers based on the specific information entered by a user of the online service. Users go online and enter information, such as where you are travelling from and to, and the purpose of the trip. FindaRideFlorida.org allows users to narrow the results of the online search, including by type of route, schedule, or time of day. Currently this online resource contains more than 800 resources and is maintained and updated by the University of Florida’s Institute for Mobility, Activity, & Participation (I-MAP) when new transportation providers become available.

FindaRideFlorida.org can help people transition from driving to learning how to get to their medical appointments, go shopping, or visit friends and family without their car. To alleviate the concern of older adults about maintaining their independence and staying connected to their community, this new resource provides quick information about the available transportation providers in their community. More importantly, FindaRideFlorida.org can easily connect these older adults with those providers, allowing them to remain independent and maintain their quality of life.

Florida DOT Teams Up to Create FindaRideFlorida.org
The Florida Department of Transportation’s (FDOT) Safe Mobility for Life (SMFL) Program helps aging road users stay safe behind the wheel and beyond the driver’s seat. The program provides information, resources and events that educate older adults achieve safe mobility by:
• Understanding the impact aging has on driving
• Staying proactive about safe driving skills
• Planning for a safe transition from driving

A critical component of the FDOT’s SMFL Program is its 2017 Aging Road User Strategic Safety Plan, developed by a statewide coalition of 27 partner organizations, including AARP, AAA Auto Club South, Florida Public Transportation Association, the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged and representatives from each FDOT district and various offices. Each organization is committed to the SMFL coalition’s mission of implementing “a strategic plan to increase the safety, access, and mobility for aging road users and eliminate fatalities and reduce serious injuries.”

One of the goals in the plan involves developing an online resource for Florida’s 67 counties and connecting individuals needing transportation to available community transportation providers. After teaming up with the University of Florida’s I-MAP, a SMFL coalition partner, FindaRideFlorida.org is that resource.

Older Adults Need FindaRideFlorida.org
Today’s older adults are not only living longer, they are driving longer than any other generation in history. Research, however, indicates that they can expect to outlive their ability to drive safely by seven to ten years. To help prepare older adults for a safe transition from driving, it is important to provide them and their family members access to their local transportation options.

FindaRideFlorida.org is designed to help them make informed transportation decisions to meet their individual mobility needs. To learn more about the SMFL Coalition and their efforts visit www.FLsams.org or contact Gail M. Holley, Safe Mobility for Life Program Manager.
Steering Committee Elections
In June, MTAP will hold elections to fill three seats on the Steering Committee; there are two open seats from outgoing members and one seat from a current Steering Committee member. Outgoing members are Debbi Howard, Alaska DOT & Public Facilities, and Marsha Hoskins, Oregon DOT. Shirley Wilson, Mississippi DOT, completed her first term and can seek re-election this year.

Nominations will begin in May with an email request for self-nominations or for members to nominate his/her staff. After the nomination period is complete, an online ballot with all nominations will be distributed to members and voting will take place. Only voting members of MTAP are permitted to vote and the candidates with the most ballots will be selected to fill the Steering Committee seats.

MTAP Dues/Networking Funds
Dues invoices for AASHTO's Technical Services Programs, including MTAP, will be distributed to member CEOs via email in May. This year, MTAP members will receive a stand-alone invoice for MTAP membership dues. Stay tuned for additional information about membership dues on the May Steering Committee Conference Call.

With AASHTO's Fiscal Year 2019 beginning July 1, MTAP members MUST USE their remaining Networking Funds by June 30, 2018. That means any expense for which a member is seeking reimbursement must be incurred on or before June 30th. The Networking Fund assists members with the cost of participating in training, meetings and conferences, providing technical assistance or networking with their peers at other departments of transportation. And all Networking Fund reimbursement forms also MUST be submitted to MTAP no later than June 29th.

Upcoming Events
The State DOT Roundtable at the CTTA Expo (June 10 to 14) is scheduled for June 14 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Expo is in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania at the Westin Convention Center. The roundtable provides an excellent forum for one-on-one discussions with leaders from the Federal Transit Administration, CTAA, National RTAP and APTA. Members will get sufficient opportunity for a dialogue on key issues that are critically important to State DOT transit offices.

The 2018 State Public Transit Partnership Conference will be in Minneapolis, Minnesota from August 15 to 17. Hotel registration is now open at Radisson Blue Minneapolis Downtown (35 S. 7th Street, Minneapolis, MN). AASHTO, APTA and CTAA are hosting this 2 ½ day conference and are working on an agenda that will include sessions on technology, innovation, mobility management, safety, public education, etc. At this year’s conference, AASHTO’s Council on Public Transportation and Multi-State Transit Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) will have its business meeting on Thursday, August 16th from 1:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.