Consider this scenario: Dan lives in a small, rural town and suffers from several health issues. Dan is a very-low-income senior, making him eligible for Medicaid healthcare. Three times a month, he must travel an hour away to the nearest city for medical care. Since he does not own a vehicle or drive, Dan arranges to get a ride through the Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) program. He also would like to shop for groceries and visit relatives in the city. For these multiple trip purposes, Dan will need to make multiple phone calls to arrange transportation with different providers for the various trips (to his doctors, the grocery store, and his family), a process that is challenging and time consuming and resulting in a significant level of stress and nervousness.

Medicaid is a joint Federal and state program that provides health coverage for millions of individuals and families with limited incomes. The assurance of transportation to necessary medical care is an important feature that sets Medicaid apart from traditional health insurance. Medicaid NEMT is an important benefit for Medicaid beneficiaries who need to get to and from medical services and have no personal transportation. Similarly, rural public transportation providers are a lifeline for people who live in rural areas and are geographically isolated. While similar in purpose, NEMT, human services transportation, and public transportation often lack coordination.

In recent years, numerous state Medicaid agencies have separated NEMT transportation services from local or regionally coordinated transportation systems in order to create a statewide or regional brokerage service for NEMT trips. As a result, qualified Medicaid recipients must call a broker to request transportation, and the broker then follows multiple steps to verify recipient eligibility, obtain approval for the trips, and arrange for the most efficient and economical ride—often from a privately owned, rather than a public transportation provider. Public transportation coordination and mobility management professionals are concerned about this trend, citing less coordination, more service duplication, and loss of local revenue for public transportation providers that can be used to match Federal transit grants.

The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) decided to examine these concerns through TCRP Research Report 202. Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) in association with SkyCastle Enterprises, Community Mobility Solutions, and the University of Kansas Transportation Research Institute, conducted the research. The research team created a helpful handbook to provide background information about NEMT and identify strategies to encourage coordination between NEMT brokers and rural public transportation agencies. The handbook includes seven in-depth case studies of states based on interviews with stakeholders, including state Medicaid agencies, state departments of transportation, brokers, public transit agencies and other human services transportation providers, as well as advocates for Medicaid beneficiaries.
Researchers discovered that stakeholders for NEMT, human services transportation, and public transportation have common desired outcomes for providing NEMT services:

- Improve health outcomes.
- Provide better quality of service.
- Lower the cost of transportation services.

The research team found that state Medicaid agencies use the NEMT broker approach for a variety of reasons, such as controlling costs, ensuring compliance with Medicaid guidelines, and reducing the administrative burden to the states. A top priority for the brokers is to arrange the lowest cost transportation available, creating an opportunity for rural public transportation providers to partner with the brokers to provide this much-needed transportation service. These rural public transportation agencies could better coordinate with NEMT brokers, allowing them to fulfill their goals of cost reductions while also benefiting the rural population, who could schedule transportation with one call/one click.

Based on the team’s research, coordinating NEMT with public transportation offers numerous advantages. The TCRP Research Report 202: Handbook for Examining the Effects of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Brokerages on Transportation Coordination identifies opportunities and suggests 14 overall strategies for improving coordination. The following six strategies are the most applicable to rural areas:

1. Align goals and objectives to achieve common desired outcomes.
2. Include NEMT stakeholders when preparing or updating a locally developed, coordinated human services transportation–public transportation plan.
3. Adopt common geographic boundaries for service areas.
4. Use technology to enhance NEMT program administration and verify medical trips.
5. Measure the contribution of transportation to better health outcomes and reduced health care costs.
6. Coordinate NEMT with shared-ride, demand-response public transportation to meet the unique requirements of Medicaid beneficiaries in rural areas and reduce NEMT costs per trip.

All strategies included in the handbook do not necessarily apply to every state or every NEMT model. However, stakeholders can use the handbook and the strategies included to start collaborating on opportunities that apply best to a state’s specific circumstances and make NEMT coordination with public transportation in rural areas possible. And better NEMT coordination with public transportation increases the likelihood that customers eligible for Medicaid can access transportation for various purposes and ensures efficient use of limited transportation resources.

FTA Announces $4 Million Initiative to Support Human Trafficking Awareness and Public Safety

Every year millions of men, women, and children are sold into prostitution, domestic servitude, or forced labor around the world. Human traffickers often use public transit to move victims, due to the low cost and limited interaction with officials. Everyone—transit agencies and employees, state officials, the transportation industry, and the public—plays a critical role in identifying, reporting, and preventing potential trafficking situations.

At the Federal level, the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) launched the Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking initiative to collectively combat human trafficking. In support of U.S. DOT’s efforts, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recently announced a $4 million human trafficking awareness and public safety initiative to enhance public awareness and develop innovative strategies to address human trafficking and other public safety issues within transit systems.

State DOTs, state and local governments, transit providers, and nonprofit organizations are eligible to submit project proposals under two competitive funding opportunities—the Crime Prevention and Public Safety Awareness, and Innovations in Transit Public Safety. The deadline to submit applications for both is May 28, 2019.

State departments of transportation (DOTs) are uniquely positioned to contribute to the human trafficking prevention effort. State DOTs oversee, fund, and operate various transportation modes—such as trucking, intercity bus, and public transportation—and have a broader reach to connect with the public and transportation operators.

Several states also have established transit and transportation human trafficking training and public awareness programs. States with established programs can collaborate across industries, assist other states looking to start their own programs, and seek available funding opportunities to enhance their current efforts.

Continued on page 12
For all of us at state DOT Transit Offices, we are typically focused on two things: safety and funding.

As always, safety first. The Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (or TrACS) is organized by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to provide information, advice, and recommendations on transit safety and other issues to the FTA Administrator and the Secretary of Transportation. I have been a member since 2015. Needless to say, safety is our number one priority.

Since becoming chair, I have made safety a top priority for the Multistate Transit Technical Assistance Program (MTAP). And the reason is not only due to my role on TrACS; it also is my concern with over-regulating the transit industry. Over the years, the FTA has implemented a number of safety-related regulations targeted at state DOTs and transit agencies. Most recently, FTA implemented the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan, asking transit providers with 100 or fewer vehicles in peak revenue service to develop safety plans by July 2020. Thankfully, FTA has exempted providers funded with Section 5310 and 5311 from this requirement…at least for now.

While safety is a serious issue, public transportation is the safest form of transportation, especially in rural communities. To demonstrate the already extensive safety record of public transportation in rural areas, I have compiled and analyzed safety data (crashes, fatalities, incidents, etc.) in the National Transit Database from 2013 to 2017. Over this period, I have found the following:

- 39 fatalities total (average 7.8 per year)
- 26 non-transit vehicle error (average 5.2 per year)
- 8 transit driver/agency error or probable error (average 1.6 per year)
- 4 transit driver medical incident/heart attack (average 0.8 per year)
- 1 intersection incident; fault to be determined

By comparison, 37,133 people were killed on our nation’s roads in 2017, a 1.8 percent decrease from 2016. In the first half of 2018, traffic fatalities are estimated at 17,120, a 3.1 percent decrease from 2017. Despite this positive decline, the data clearly demonstrates that public transportation remains the safest form of transportation. And this confirms my belief that the safety trainings and protocols established by members of MTAP for sub-recipients truly make the difference. Through my work on TrACS, I will continue to work with FTA to ensure that state DOTs are strong partners in maintaining the most effective safety systems for rural transit providers.

Next, let’s talk about funding. As we all know, the Highway Trust Fund and Mass Transit Account are dwindling and need to be replenished. At APTA’s Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Ed Mortimer gave an interesting discussion on the chamber’s support of a 25-cent increase in the Federal gas tax over five years (5-cents per year) while addressing concerns that any user charge is regressive.

The Chamber’s position is that a 5-cent per year increase to the Federal gas tax will cost the average motorist $9 a month, while the cost of extra vehicle repairs and operating costs due to current disrepair of the transportation system cost over $46 per month per motorist. These costs do not account for increasing congestion, which translates to even higher costs. Simply put, the cost of doing something is less costly—or less regressive—than doing nothing, and the increased costs of doing nothing impacts low-income drivers more than higher income drivers. For the Chamber’s full position, click here.

Additionally, MTAP will once again host the State DOT Roundtable at the CTAA Expo on May 22 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. PT (Expo is May 19–23) in Palm Springs. And over the summer, FTA will be hosting the 2019 State Public Transportation Partnerships Conference August 14–16 in Washington, DC.

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.

– David Harris

New Mexico DOT
Director, Transit and Rail Division
MTAP Chair
davidc.harris@state.nm.us
In Chicago, as the snow fell in early November, the Illinois DOT hosted another successful Winter Meeting of AASHTO’s Council on Public Transportation and its Multistate Transit Technical Assistance Program. The 2018 Winter Meeting was held at the Willis Tower (formerly known as the Sears Tower). Twenty attendees from 14 state departments of transportation, as well as APTA, CTAA, FTA, and our private-sector friends, participated in this year’s Winter Meeting.

On November 7th, the two-and-a-half day event kicked off with an important and productive discussion on public transit priorities for the reauthorization of the next six-year surface transportation law, called the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation or FAST Act. Participants in the FAST Act Reauthorization discussion highlighted various public policy priorities/options for public transportation on a variety of topics, such as public transportation funding, program streamlining, safety, and others. This meeting was a great first step at developing AASHTO’s policy position as it relates to public transportation. Then, later that evening, members participated in a tour of Chicago’s beautifully renovated Union Station, which has served as a transportation hub for Chicago and the Midwest since its construction was completed in 1925.

AASHTO’s Executive Director Jim Tymon and New Mexico DOT’s David Harris, MTAP Chair, kicked off the Winter Meeting on November 8th with a warm welcome and opening remarks. The day’s sessions began with an in-depth look into State Management Reviews (SMR) with common findings, tips on how to avoid findings and what to consider when preparing for FTA SMRs and other specialty reviews. FTA’s Scott Giering, director of the office of safety oversight, and Diane King, Milligan and Company, led that session.

The morning continued with Gail Bauhs, TripSpark Technologies, and Linda Cherrington, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, discussing the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) brokerages. Bauhs and Cherrington provided helpful strategies to achieve desired NEMT outcomes including improved health, better quality of service while reducing costs. Check out their article in this issue of the MTAP Network News for more details.

During lunch, David Harris presented the 2018 MTAP Outstanding Service Award to Don Chartock of Washington DOT, who has diligently served the group since 2017. The award presentation was followed by a keynote address by Kelley Brookins, recently named Regional Administrator of FTA’s Region 5 in Chicago.

As usual, the FTA staff provided attendees with a lively exchange of information and ideas, always with the goal of improving the FTA programs, and the service and technical support the state DOTs provide to transit providers. The FTA presented on several topics during the meeting including:

- **FTA State Programs Update and Discussion:** Marianne Stock and Kimberly Sledge, both from the FTA's Office of Transit Programs, facilitated a discussion on ideas to better meet the transit needs of small urban and rural communities, as well as for seniors and people with disabilities.

- **The Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) and Safety Management Systems (SMS):** Candace Key, Acting Director for FTA's Office of System Safety, FTA and Adrienne Malasky, FTA's Office of System Safety, presented on the PTASP Final Rule, published in July 2018 and addressed questions regarding requirements and funding options for the state DOT-prepared PTASPs.

- **Roundtable Discussion: Transit Asset Management (TAM):** Mshadoni Smith, TAM Program Manager, FTA, along with Anna Biton and Emily Lawless, U.S. DOT

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Winter Meeting in Chi Town Another Success

Carrie Cooper  
Illinois DOT  
Carrie.Cooper@illinois.gov

Photo courtesy of Illinois DOT.
Volpe Center, facilitated a discussion on the TAM process for preparing the TAM plans that were implemented in October, lessons learned and suggestions for improving the TAM rule for future TAM plan development and utilizing the future needs assessments.

On Friday, November 8th, the Winter Meeting agenda continued with a session on the Rural Transit/Shared-Use Mobility in America. Judy Shanley, Ph.D., Easterseals, offered innovative examples of shared-use mobility in rural settings. Sharon Feigon and Albert Benedict, Shared-Use Mobility Center, presented on the potential and best-uses of multi-modal shared-use transportation. And to round out the discussion, Scott Hennings, McHenry County Division of Transportation, offered the local government perspective from the McHenry County, Illinois pilot project with transportation network companies, and discussed their future shared-use mobility plans.

Former Illinois Secretary of Transportation, Randy Blankenhorn welcomed MTAP to Chicago and highlighted some of the local Chicago sites, along with an inspiring perspective on how transportation and transit serve local communities and economic development.

Robbie Sarles, RLS and Associates, provided an update on Drug and Alcohol regulations and shared tips for achieving compliance with 49 CFR Part 655 and Part 40 and how to prepare for FTA Drug and Alcohol Audits. Afterward, Mississippi DOT’s Charles Carr and the Transportation Research Board’s (TRB) Velvet Basemera-Fitzpatrick provided a status of TRB’s ongoing research efforts with regard to the National Cooperative Highway Research Program projects underway, including research on transit marketing practices and allowable in-kind and local match funds. They concluded with a discussion on problem statement topics for future research projects.

After the group snacked on Chicago’s famous Garrett’s popcorn, the Winter Meeting wrapped up with a look into the future with a panel discussion on Connected and Automated Vehicles (CAV), along with ideas on how state DOTs can facilitate the evolution of CAVs. The expert panel, moderated by Jerry Quandt, Executive Director, Illinois Autonomous Vehicles Association and including Pete Costa (Sam Schwartz Consulting), Julia Suprock (AECOM), and Michael Daly (Innova EV), used real-world examples demonstrating the technology and discussed ways state DOTs can leverage and integrate Automated Vehicle data and technology.

For more on the 2018 Winter Meeting including the agenda, presentations, and other information, please visit the MTAP’s meeting website. Planning for the 2019 Winter Meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico is underway!
At the 2018 Winter Meeting in Chicago, the group discussed whether transit will survive, support, or wither away in an era of autonomy, as well as the strategies to consider for policymakers and community leaders. No single approach, or package deal can provide all the answers, but opportunities exist. This article continues the conversation about the author’s positive future of transit in a connected, autonomous vehicle (AV) world.

Transit Is Here to Stay.
Longer trend lines indicate that transit usage is up almost 40 percent since Y2K. (APTA 2017 Factbook) These strong vital signs are a primary result of our transit systems covering more ground, reaching more people (of ALL abilities), and focusing more on customer service than ever before. Recent findings, however, indicate that a relatively small proportion of riders have quit transit entirely or decreased their weekly transit usage, opting to use their own car or perhaps Lyft or Uber. Nevertheless, a vast number of loyal customers have not given up on transit. They just yearn for better access, reliability, and places that provide more mobility choices. (Transit Center’s “Who’s on Board 2019: How to Win Back America’s Transit Riders” (February 2019)).

Transit Flexibility Is Key.
Transit systems are evolving to maintain market share. With secured funding and community support, this will be the trend moving forward. The process is fundamental: 1) prioritize high-demand routes; 2) strike a parity balance in areas of immense growth or dire access needs, or 3) change up the game plan entirely. Adding more frequent fixed-route service to key corridors does not mean to cut service in other low-demand areas. Instead, providing on-demand service to meet the needs of those in lesser concentrated areas can maintain customer base and balance costs. Transit service, however, needs to be malleable and adaptive to provide customers with reliable service—autonomous or not. Companies piloting AV shuttles as first-/last-mile solutions need to study the blueprints for on-demand service and learn from public transit agencies who best understand their network and customer needs.

Make Transit a Competitive Force.
It’s all about competing travel times. Buses in mixed-traffic lanes are influenced by car speeds and typically carry less than 2,000 people per hour. Buses in “transit-only” or flexible transit-only lanes can carry more than 8,000 people per hour. (NACTO Transit Street Design Guide) A dedicated AV transit lane lined with frequent, high-capacity vehicles can carry between 10,000 and 25,000 people per hour. Making smarter
decisions about how our streets function and installing transit lanes now will allow for a seamless transition for AV systems.

Use Technology to Support Goals. Communities often place a premium on establishing mobility goals. But rarely do community plans include technology goals. First, understand what data is available. Second, develop performance indicators and benchmarking to ensure that the physical realm (e.g., accessible street design) and the informational ether (e.g., wireless infrastructure) are aligned to help us move about in a safer, reliable, and more equitable manner. In short, we need to build community values using our physical environment as a foundation and technology as a tool. Seattle’s New Mobility Playbook is a great start.

Greed Is Not Good. Creating a complete on-demand AV-based fleet in lieu of our well-established transit systems would cost an incredible amount of money, would be extremely difficult to own/operate, and could exacerbate congestion. Conversely, operating small/mid-sized AV shuttles to complement existing transit and fill service gaps would be a more viable, responsible, and a win-win all around. Uber, Lyft, Waymo, Apple, Ford, and others appear to be eyeing this approach, which coincides with the fundamental goal of providing darn good transit.

Accept an AV Future. AVs are being tested in busy downtowns, university campuses, and on test tracks. Over the next year, most major automakers will likely have built and tested AV cars and in 20 to 30 years. AVs will be a commonplace. Pending legislative action in Congress, the House and Senate generally agree to prohibit state and local governments from regulating the design, construction or performance of AVs, allowing states to regulate sales and repairs (H.R. 3388 SELF Drive Act (September 2017) and S.1885 AV START Act (November 2017)). No Federal action is being taken on the infrastructure and street design with AVs, sparking much attention from municipal officials and planners.

AV use is only as good as how they operate on our streets. Imagine streets with a fully integrated, connected network comprised of dedicated high-capacity lanes, AV passenger lanes, and carefully-controlled curbside movements orchestrated like synchronized swimmers, leaving the remaining right-of-way for human activities and social interactions. It sounds good and frankly, it is completely possible. But this reality puts the onus on the consumers and local regulators. The exact market for AVs is not known but prognosticators are predicting the full spectrum from traditional ownership to shared ownership akin to carshare/ride-hail service, or somewhere in between. A “collaborative business model” involving AV makers, civic leaders, and community members is preferred. But it is paramount that we balance the market desires for AVs and our community needs.

Build an Intelligence Team. An AV future with a strong transit presence requires knowledgeable representation. Comprehending AV mobility is complicated, involving many moving parts, including infrastructure safety needs, telecommunications and wireless capabilities, artificially intelligent traffic control systems, roadway detection and sensory networks, etc. State DOTs and transit agencies need to build the technical capacity to ensure AV implementation adheres to established goals and policies. And it is vital to build an intelligence team to ensure AV goals and policies are uniform and cooperating. This team would comprise a Chief Intelligence Officer (CIO), Chief Technology Officer (CTO), or related position and their teams must be collaborative.

Overall, this approach to AV mobility will make sure that when it comes to technology, smart city planning and our community needs, everyone is at the table speaking the same language.
On February 22, AASHTO’s Multistate Transit Assistance Program (MTAP) kicked off its first Technical Initiatives Forum for 2019 on the topic of Cooperative Procurements. The Technical Initiatives Forums provide opportunities for state departments of transportation to highlight success stories and best practices. MTAP hosted a webinar to highlight the work of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Washington State Department of Enterprise Services (DES) and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT).

Presentations from WSDOT, DES, and DRPT answered the following questions:

- What are the funding tools for purchasing buses and other types of vehicles?
- What are cooperative procurements?
- What benefits and challenges cooperative procurement presents?
- How is a cooperative schedule contract developed and executed?
- What contracts are currently in development for other states to utilize?

WSDOT presented on the different Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding programs available to purchase buses and other types of vehicles, including cooperative procurements. WSDOT highlighted changes introduced under the FAST Act in Section 3019. This section, titled Innovative Procurement, drives the cooperative procurement process at the Federal level, providing states with the ability and flexibility to utilize cooperative schedule contracts. WSDOT identified key benefits of cooperative procurement, including:

- Satisfies state and Federal competitive procurement requirements;
- Provides pricing and delivery schedules to assist with planning and budgeting;
- Allows for best value purchasing;
- Allows customers to consider fleet uniformity, availability of parts, reliability, maintenance training, etc.; and
- Encourages vendors to provide quality post-delivery service and maintain good standing with contracting agency.

DES, the state agency responsible for overseeing procurement, shared its experiences with the cooperative procurement process and how it developed the contract for light-, mid-, and heavy-duty buses. DES is currently working with customers in Washington state, FTA Region X states (Alaska, Idaho, and Oregon), and other states nationwide such as Nevada, Colorado, and California to develop this contract. The customer group is diverse and provides the input needed to cover all options and type of buses. DES also coordinates directly with WSDOT, the agency responsible for providing monthly updates to FTA on the progress and status of the new contract.

After WSDOT and DES explained its use of cooperative procurement, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation shared its experience with these types of procurements, including (1) the reasons they chose cooperative procurement, (2) the type of services they used it for, and (3) what contracts are currently active and available. Virginia highlighted the challenges of cooperative procurement, including:

- Eligibility rulings that seem to differ among the FTA region offices;
- Individual states laws/legislation preventing the agency from using a contract administered outside of Virginia;
- Manufacturers committing to orders beyond their ability to deliver; and
- Manufacturers delivering vehicles that do not meet certain geographical location technical specifications.

The webinar concluded with an agreement among the states to work together towards improving the procurement process and making the process more flexible and innovative.

Through Council on Public Transportation and MTAP, AASHTO is committed to sharing ideas developed by states on cooperative agreements. And with FAST Act Reauthorization process getting started, AASHTO’s Council on Public Transportation will work with Congress to remove some of the barriers to the implementation of the FAST Act’s Section 3019, Innovative Procurement and subsection (b) related to cooperative procurements.
The Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA’s) Transit Asset Management (TAM) program remains a top priority for state departments of transportation. TAM is closely linked to managing state good repair (SGR) of vehicle fleets, facilities, and equipment and a vital component of maintaining safe transit systems. With state DOTs completing the first round of TAM plans in and beginning the first mandatory NTD reports in October 2018, MTAP and FTA are maintaining an ongoing dialogue about the future of TAM in preparation for the next round, which will include narrative reports.

To continue this dialogue MTAP and FTA co-hosted an educational webinar for members, titled Reviewing TAM Plans and Assessing Future Needs, to better understand what worked (and what did not) and begin preparing for the future. This webinar, moderated by FTA’s Mshadoni Smith, is part of the MTAP Technical Initiatives Forum. With pending state management reviews, Connecticut and Montana DOTs presented on the webinar.

State DOT Lessons Learned, Process/Procedure Improvements, Etc.
Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) prepared its group plan using the available FTA and TCRP resources, combined with a TAM planning experienced contractor, and the results were remarkable—a successful process, a tailored plan and very useful asset management results. But MDT learned that TAM planning is more than the data. The planning helped increase MDT’s interaction with its stakeholders, gain their attention and appreciation, prompt the revaluation of existing processes, and lead to improvements in the statewide asset inventory repository and significant cost savings.

Further, MDT now has a custom decision support tool that provides supplemental, data-driven direction and guidance for asset prioritizing. Finally, the new SGR targets offer means to measure progress relative to a defined benchmark. Overall, the TAM planning was a well-structured experience, yielding a useful product for managing and maintaining assets.

Connecticut Department of Transportation’s (CTDOT) Bureau of Public Transportation prepared a Tier 1 Transit Asset Management Plan (TAMP) and was the Tier 2 Group Plan sponsor. The TAM planning process first required immediate changes in current practices, such as developing and documenting new approaches for assessing asset conditions, and utilizing a new Transit Asset Prioritization support tool to generate a comprehensive list of prioritized capital needs for Tier 1 and 2 providers. To address the significant challenge of collecting and analyzing data from multiple resources and systems, CTDOT is developing a single SGR database.

Overall, TAM planning helped CTDOT improve its coordination internally, with transit providers, and with the metropolitan planning organizations. The agency learned from this planning process that a realistic self-assessment of existing practices is the critical first step in building a successful Transit Asset Management system.

FTA’s Evaluation & What’s Next for TAM
FTA outlined its evaluation of the TAM program’s implementation, including what the agency did well and where it could improve. FTA had success with involving the regional offices early and often and providing an open and consistent communication (and messaging) with stakeholders. FTA could have improved its resource delivery timing and developed a more robust TAM curriculum.

What’s next for TAM planning? In October 2019, FTA will have a new TAM template. This template will allow state DOTs to pull data from the National Transit Database asset inventory into the template. For the next round of TAM reporting, state DOTs will include a narrative report that helps explain/provide context about meeting/not meeting TAM targets. Lastly, regarding the future of the transit asset management program, FTA will focus on TAM as a strategic approach, business model, data quality standards and continue providing technical assistance to state DOTs and transit providers.

For more information about the MTAP-FTA, visit the MTAP webpage for Transit Asset Management. On the webpage, members will find the webinar recording, PowerPoint presentation slides and the poll questions/responses from members. On this webpage are previous webinars and workshops on transit asset management sponsored by MTAP. And information related to TAM, including updates to the template, can be found on the FTA’s Transit Asset Management Website.
Over the past six months, members of AASHTO’s Council on Public Transportation and MTAP participated in numerous teleconferences to discuss writing and submitting transit research problem statements to the NCHRP for Fiscal Year 2020 funding. Thankfully, our members are not strangers to good research and five transit research problem statements were conceived and submitted to NCHRP by members. However, to realistically obtain funding for transit research, we asked members to prioritize the problem statements and as a result, members of the Council on Public Transportation and MTAP chose the following:

1. A-05: Cost Savings Analysis of Statewide Insurance Pooling for Public Transit
2. B-19: Best Practices in Coordination of Public Transit and Ride Sharing
3. B-20: Access to Jobs, Economic Opportunities and Education in Rural Areas

Keeping transit research projects top-of-mind among our members is a priority as research subcommittee chair of AASHTO’s Council on Public Transportation and NCHRP 20-65 Project Panel Liaison for MTAP. Now that we are completely transitioned from the NCHRP 20-65 Project Panel and its related deadline, we must remain vigilant of this new, highly competitive NCHRP project solicitation process. Here is what is coming up:

- NCHRP FY2019 Panel Member Solicitation Released—April 2019
- NCHRP FY2019 Panel Nominations Due—June 15, 2019
- NCHRP FY2020 Problem Statements Solicitation Released—June 2019
- NCHRP FY2020 Problem Statements Due—November 1, 2019
- TCRP FY2020 Problem Statements Due—June 17, 2019
- TCRP FY2020 Panel Member Solicitation Release—November 2019

In the meantime, here is a status of NCHRP 20-65 projects:

**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. **Completed December 2018.**

**Task 75: Baseline Research on Allowable In-Kind and Local Match Sources** will result in a resource guide that describes how in-kind and local match sources have been successfully used. **To be completed July 2019.**

**Task 76: Opportunities for State DOTs (and Others) to Encourage Shared Use Mobility Practices in Rural Areas** will generate information that can advance selected shared use mobility practices. **To be completed April 2019.**

**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 state DOT’s implementation of the new TAM rule—and applicable Safety Plan guidance focusing on asset condition, safety performance and the investment of Federal transit funds. **To be completed April 2019.**
In addition to the Tasks 75-77, the NCHRP 20-65 Project Panel has five active research tasks that received funding from the Fiscal Year 2018 program. Here is the status of each:

**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. **Anticipated Completion date—May 2020.**

**Task 79: 5310 Sub-Grantee Consolidation** 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. **Anticipated Completion date—May 2020.**

**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. **Anticipated Completion date—May 2020.**

**Task 81: Effective Local and Statewide Approaches to Rural Service Assessment** will investigate effective local and statewide approaches to rural service assessment and (1) document, assess, and determine lessons from the current local and state levels practices; and (2) develop recommendations for state DOTs and individual rural transit agencies. **Anticipated Completion date—May 2020.**

**Task 82: Issues Associated with 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. **Still in development, Anticipated Completion date—May 2020.**

In addition to the FY 2020 NCHRP funding priorities and the NCHRP 20-65 research projects (currently underway), the **NCHRP 20-122 Rural Transportation Issues: Research Roadmap** is a comprehensive research initiative to identify critical rural issues. The research team conducted a workshop at the 2019 TRB Annual Meeting and a webinar on March 7th to gather stakeholder input and feedback and further prioritizing of the research needs. Research needs have been categorized into 14 theme areas, of which eight might have a direct interest to our members, including
- Theme 3: Transportation Access and Mobility
- Theme 4: Intersection of Health and Transportation
- Theme 8: Rural Public and School Transportation
- Theme 9: Law Enforcement, Crime, and Drugs
- Theme 11: Connected and Automated Vehicles
- Theme 13: Infrastructure
- Theme 14: Safety
- Theme 15: Funding, Policy, and Economy

The draft roadmap, draft final report, and draft problem statements will be completed by May 31, 2019, allowing members an opportunity to prioritize selected problem statements for possible submission through the upcoming TCRP process.
In addition, an increase in information sharing could help fuse together data from multiple sources and jurisdictions to provide a more complete picture of the human trafficking process. For example, many state DOTs have readily available data sources, such as existing transportation system camera, video, and sensor data. Combining and streamlining this data can aid transportation and law enforcement officials to better detect movement trends of potentially trafficked persons.

The FTA will host informational webinars on April 8 and April 16 to discuss both funding opportunities and answer questions. You can register for the webinars or view the webinar recordings and presentations on FTA's Human Trafficking webpage. You can submit additional questions on the funding opportunities to FTAPublicSafety@dot.gov.

The U.S. DOT is committed to preventing human trafficking on all modes of transportation, including on our nation's public transit systems. We encourage you to sign the transportation leaders pledge to demonstrate your commitment and help Put the Brakes on Human Trafficking. For additional transit-focused human trafficking and crime prevention information and resources, visit FTA's Human Trafficking and U.S. DOT's multimodal human trafficking webpages.