

Administrator Speeches 2004

Date	Subject		
10/11/2004	APTA Annual Meeting - Atlanta, GA		
9/22/2004	Rail-Volution Conference - Los Angeles, CA		
7/20/2004	COMTO Conference - Plenary Session, Cleveland, OH		
6/11/2004	Community Transportation Association of America Conference - Seattle, Washington		
2/24/2004	United We Ride Leadership Forum		

United We Ride Leadership Forum

02-24-04

JENNIFER L. DORN
ADMINISTRATOR
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
UNITED WE RIDE LEADERSHIP FORUM
OPENING PLENARY
FEBRUARY 24, 2004

[SLIDE 1: United We Ride Logo]

Thank you Bill [Millar]. Much appreciation to you and the American Public Transportation Association for your sponsorship of today's event. And many thanks to all of the sponsoring organizations for their generous contributions of staff time, resources, and, most importantly, their commitment to making transportation services work better in our communities: The Community Transportation Association of America; Easter Seals Project ACTION; and the American Public Works Association. And special thanks to FTA's Federal partners in the HHS Administration on Aging, the Labor Department Office of Disability Employment Policy, and the Federal Highway Administration's ITS Joint Program Office. I particularly want to acknowledge Josephina Carbonelle and Roy Grizzard for their incredible personal involvement, leadership, support, and their commitment to the customer and to results. I can honestly say that we are working as a team in a way that I have never before experienced in government.

For those of you who have ploughed the fields of coordination with your sister agencies, you know the soil can be rocky. For those who have done it, season after season, I commend you. We heard last night from our United We Ride State Leadership Award winners just how tough, but rewarding this work is. Can we give them another round of applause?

[SLIDE 2: UWR with Department Logos]

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta, Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson, Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao, and Secretary of Education Rodney Page - thank you for coming and welcome to the official kickoff of United We Ride!

[SLIDE 3: Real People Representing Target Customers]

For most of us, how we will get to the doctor's office, a job, classes, or the grocery store is not something we worry about in our personal lives. Most of us hop in our cars to get to and from work, visit the doctor, go to the

movies, or run errands. But for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income families who can't afford or can't drive a car, these everyday activities are often out of reach.

I know that many people in this room work professionally every day with, or represent people who have transportation challenges. But I'd like you to think for just a minute about your own life ... how many of you know someone who must depend on someone else for transportation? Can I see a show of hands? It could be an elderly parent, a disabled child, a neighbor, an acquaintance at church.

Quite a few of us...and that's not surprising.

- Because one in every 10 households does not own a car...most because they simply can't afford one.
- And one in every four Americans is an older adult or person with a disability - many of whom either cannot drive or cannot afford a car.

But statistics don't tell the whole story; real people do.

[VIDEO CLIP: Man on the Street]

It's a confusing and scary problem for people we call care about. But the really good news - and I mean that sincerely - is that there are 62 Federal programs that recognize the importance of transportation. That didn't happen 10 years ago - or even 5 years ago. And at this forum we have State leaders who receive funds from many of those 62 Federal programs; stakeholder leaders who represent the customers who receive the services; and Federal leaders who award the grants. And we are all trying to help people like Joe Rider.

[SLIDE 4: Joe Rider Slide]

Meet Joe Rider. Joe is desperately seeking a ride to his doctor appointment, to the grocery store, or maybe even a part-time job.

The bad news for Joe is that there are 62 Federal programs **[SLIDE 5: Federal Programs]....** that in turn fund hundreds of State programs **[SLIDE 6: State and Local Programs]** and thousands of local agencies that could give Joe a ride. But without common sense solutions at every level, he may not get one.

[SLIDE 7: Joe in the Middle of Federal, State and Local Programs]

I'm sure everyone understands this chart. And, by the way, right in the middle of all this is Joe. Isn't he a lucky guy? Is it any wonder that Joe has a hard time figuring out how to get where he needs to go?

We have used this chart to try to tell the coordination story to Federal colleagues and to community leaders. It's pretty clear that we don't need

one more new transportation program to solve this problem. That won't do it. But we do need to sort through and sort out flexibilities and complexities to provide common sense coordination options.

As everyone here knows only too well, our programs many times have:

- Different eligibility rules **[SLIDE 8: Four Buses]** and
- Restricted destinations **[SLIDE 9: Destination Photos]** which can lead to
- Confusing reservation systems **[SLIDE 10: Telephone Operators]** for Joe and his fellow customers.
- And perplexing, overlapping routes **[SLIDE 11: Map]**

Not to mention...

- Different reporting requirements
- Different billing systems
- And different funding cycles!

So, is it any wonder that people like Joe are confused, frustrated, and vulnerable?

[SLIDE 12: Headache]

Many people in this room have done their level best to reduce Joe's frustration, working across agencies to solve these problems. They have met with some success. They've avoided headlines like this one:

[SLIDE 13: Bad Headline] "Bureaucrats Limit Transportation Options for Seniors, Disabled."

As a public servant, I don't like the way that sounds, and I know you don't either.

Of course, its not just about bad press. Each of you has come here this week because your Governor wants to find common sense solutions to the very real problems of the people of your State - and so do you. We, as Federal bureaucrats, need to find more of those common sense solutions, too, and we are working on them.

Let's listen to what "common sense solutions" means to two typical older adults - Rose and Fleeta:

[VIDEO CLIP: Rose and Fleeta]

I think that puts it in perspective. Common sense, right? Easier said than done, right?

It takes time and effort to communicate effectively with colleagues who speak a different language - IEP, IFSP, IWRP, CMS, SCI, TBI, ITS, AT; patients, clients, consumers, riders - and we're all talking about the same

thing! And we know it takes some resources – initially, at least – to coordinate. But coordinating transportation services helps States do more with the money you have – and that’s good news!

How about this headline?

[SLIDE 14: GOOD HEADLINE] “States Save Money; Increase Transportation for Medicaid Clients.”

That sounds much better. The kind of headline we’d like to see, and the kind of service we’d like to provide – to customers and to taxpayers!

Last night, we honored five States that have already made great progress in tackling the issue of coordinating transportation services. Those states...and many others who were nominated for the awards...have already begun to see the impact of these efforts on their bottom line.

[SLIDE 15: Money Trees with State Names]

- In Kentucky, where the State instituted a regional mobility system, they have reduced the cost of providing transportation by 35 percent, and were able to double the number of customers served.
- In Miami-Dade County, Florida, they created a Medicaid Transit Pass Program that is used by only 1 percent of Medicaid clients, but saves the Medicaid program over \$7 million annually – money that is ploughed back into services.
- And in Philadelphia, the coordinated services provided by the Wheels Program has reduced costs from an average of \$21 per ride to an astonishing \$8 per ride.

In fact, you heard the statistic from Secretary Mineta last night – the National Academy of Sciences has estimated that States could generate over \$700 million dollars a year in savings by coordinating human service transportation.

There are many coordination success stories, and you’ll be hearing more about them over the next few days and, I hope, sharing a few yourself. They vary in scope and detail, but I’ve learned from literally dozens of visits and discussions in communities across this country, behind every coordinated transportation system are two things: leadership and a plan.

One of the most important things that your State team will take with you from this conference is a “Framework for Action”

[SLIDE 16: FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION].

The Framework for Action looks so simple, just another brochure. But it is a self-assessment tool that will help you determine where you are and create a customized roadmap to success -- and it is a key element of United We Ride. The Framework was developed by a team of experts representing the transit industry, human service providers, employment specialists, State agencies and customer groups. It is a tool for every community – not a prescriptive rule, but a tool you can use.

Later today, you'll have the opportunity to begin working with the Framework for Action and identify the issues that will be critical to progress in your own State.

One of the things we've learned is that every State is different... **[SLIDE 17: Continuum]** and every State is in a different place on the continuum toward a fully coordinated human service transportation system. That's okay! Start where you are... all progress is good!

It all comes back to people and policies. One of the most important “ah-hah” moments for me occurred last December, when I paid a visit to Fairfax, Virginia. The county government had recently taken an important coordination step. Before, separate vans operated by different community organizations served senior centers, vocational training programs, and adult day care centers. In fact, there were multiple vans running down the same roads, passing by people who needed transportation help but didn't qualify for a ride on that particular van. We heard directly from the leaders in that community about what they did to help solve that problem.

[SLIDE 18: Cut Red Tape]

Today, they run FASTRAN – a phenomenally successful single transportation service that provides a shared ride to Medicaid clients, adult day-care clients, seniors, and vocational training clients. FASTRAN did coordinate eight different funding streams. They have been able to save money and invest in driver training, provide attendants to ride on the vans, purchase more vans, and expand routes. The effort to do all this involved using some of the most delicate, creative, and diplomatic skills of persuasion with the providers and stakeholders who had become accustomed to their own vans and what they thought was better services, as well as with Federal, State and local program agency leaders and program officers, who were concerned that by combining eight different funding streams into a single transportation program, all accountability would be lost.

But Fairfax now has a comprehensive system that better meets the needs of people like Joe ...and people like Patty. Let's hear her story.

[Video Clip: Patty's Story]

People like Patty really made it come alive for me, and many of you, I'm certain, have your own Joe or Patty story to tell. Because that's what it's all about - there are inspirational stories just waiting to happen in every community, in every State in America.

[SLIDE 19: BARNRAISING]

Those of us who have formed the United We Ride partnership among Federal agencies thank you for what you do and for being here today. We are far from complete in our work at the Federal level, and we look to your guidance about how we can do our jobs better, so that together we can help Patty and Joe and millions like them, by developing common sense transportation solutions for the people who are counting on all of us.

[SLIDE 20: UWR LOGO WITH WOMAN & CHILD]

Thank you.

Community Transportation Association of America Conference - Seattle, Washington

06-11-04

Jennifer L. Dorn, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

Community Transportation Association of America

Thank you, Dale. It is always a pleasure to attend the annual CTAA conference... to have the opportunity to meet and talk with so many who ensure that people in our communities have transportation options. And, as always, it is an honor to share this podium with you, Dale. You and CTAA president, David White, have done so much personally and through CTAA to promote and improve public transportation in America

President Bush has asked all of us in government to make our programs more customer-focused, citizen-centered, and results-oriented - and in no area is this more important than transportation.

In response to the President's call to action, and CTAA's strong encouragement, we have worked hard on an area that is a great source of frustration to you as transportation providers, and to the customers we both seek to serve. It's labeled "human service transportation coordination." That's quite a mouthful to say, and it's also an extremely complicated issue. Those of you who are on the "front lines" everyday know that and have known it for years... and one problem is making it "real" to the policy-makers at the Federal, State and local level. After all, it's not the construction of fancy new bus garages or the purchase of a fleet of paratransit vans...it's more of a bureaucratic and people problem, really. Policy-makers find it hard to understand how well-meaning rules - meant to keep other bureaucrats in line! - could possibly create problems for customers.

I guess it's because, for most people, how they will get to the doctor's office, a job, school, or the grocery store is not something they worry about in their personal lives. Most Americans hop in their cars to get to and from work, visit the doctor, go to the movies, or run errands. But - as you know so well - for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income families who can't afford or can't drive a car, these everyday activities are often out of reach.

Almost all of the people here today work professionally every day with, or represent people who have transportation challenges. But I'd like each of you to think for just a minute about your own personal life ... how many of you know someone who must depend on someone else for transportation?

Can I see a show of hands? It could be an elderly parent, a disabled child, a neighbor, an acquaintance at church...

Quite a few of us...and that's not surprising.

Because one in every 10 households does not own a car...most because they simply can't afford one. And one in every four Americans is an older adult or person with a disability - many of whom either cannot drive or cannot afford a car.

But statistics don't tell the whole story. Finding transportation is a confusing and scary problem for people we all care about. But the really good news - and I mean that sincerely - is that there are 62 Federal programs that recognize the importance of transportation. That didn't happen 10 years ago - or even 5 years ago. Many of you here today have been in this business for a long time; you are stakeholder leaders who represent the customers who receive transportation services, you are public or private transit operators who deliver transportation services, you are State or Federal leaders who administer grants for these services. And we are all trying to help people like Joe Rider.

Meet Joe Rider. Joe doesn't own a car... and couldn't drive it, if he did. So, Joe is desperately seeking a ride to his doctor's appointment, to Safeway, and to his part-time job at the Bagel Bakery.

The good news for Joe is that there are 62 Federal program...that, in turn, fund hundreds of State programs and thousands of local agencies that could give Joe a ride. Each of these programs provides eligibility for Joe to get a ride. The bad news is that, without common sense solutions at every level, Joe may not get one.

Now, I'm sure this chart is perfectly clear to everyone here, right? And, by the way, right in the middle of all this is Joe. Isn't he a lucky guy to have so many options? Is it any wonder that Joe has a hard time figuring out how to get where he needs to go?

We created this chart a year or so ago to help our Federal colleagues understand why we need to improve the coordination of transportation services. It's pretty clear that creating another new transportation program is not going to solve this problem. What we need to do is figure out how we can reduce the complexity and increase the flexibility of the transportation resources we already have. We need some common sense coordination.

I think everyone here knows only too well that, many times, Joe -- and many customers like him -- has to sort through transportation options that have:

- Different eligibility rules
- Restricted destinations

- Confusing reservation systems
- And perplexing, overlapping routes.

And the public servants trying to administer these programs on behalf of people like Joe must deal with:

- Different reporting requirements
- Different billing systems
- And different funding cycles!

So, is it any wonder that people like Joe are confused, frustrated, and vulnerable?

Improving the coordination of human service transportation – making it easier for people like Joe to get places in their community – is one of the top priorities for the President, DOT Secretary Mineta and for the FTA. Working with our counterparts in the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Education, we have made considerable progress over the last two years to identify and tackle key hurdles at the Federal level. And all of this was done with the help, advice, encouragement and support of the CTAA and its Board. Last December, we jointly launched United We Ride – an initiative to improve the coordination of human service transportation in America.

United We Ride consists of five components. The first is a Framework for Action. The Framework looks simple, just another brochure. But it is an important self-assessment tool that will help States and communities determine where you are and create a customized roadmap to success -- and it is a key element of United We Ride.

The Framework was developed by a team of experts representing the transit industry, human service providers, employment specialists, State agencies and customer groups. It is a tool for every community – not a prescriptive rule, but a tool you can use. You can download a copy of the Framework from FTA's public website.

Many States are already using the Framework to conduct a State-level assessment. But it is meant to be used by communities, too. It doesn't matter if you are the Area Agency on Aging, the Community Health Center or even a private paratransit provider -- or whether you from Boone County, Missouri, or St. Johns, Florida – you can take the initiative in your community to open a dialogue with other transportation providers. You can take the first step to assess community transportation services in your own community....and the Framework will give you a step-by-step guide. It will help you engage in productive conversations and build a coordinated transportation network in your own community.

The second component of United We Ride took place in February. The National Leadership Forum on Human Service Transportation Coordination brought together top leaders from 47 States in

transportation, in human services, in education, and labor. We wrote to the Governor of each State, asking for their personal involvement in these appointments. The forum provided an opportunity for leaders from these diverse programs to discuss how we could improve transportation for people who are transit-dependent by changing funding practices, changing State policies and regulations, and changing reporting requirements

Ironically, a number of the people attending the forum told me they were embarrassed by the fact that it was the first time they had met their counterparts from their own State! In fact, holding this forum was an idea that emerged from the expert team that developed the Framework for Action. They told us that it wasn't just Federal rules that were problematic – States can play an important role in making transportation coordination easier and more likely to happen.

By the end of the conference, there was remarkable consensus on next steps. Almost universally, the State teams indicated that they planned to use the Framework for Action to undertake a State-level assessment – and they recognized that they would need to expand their collaborative relationships, and engage in both education and outreach efforts in order to succeed. So, as you move forward in your community, you can expect your State leaders to be aware and supportive of your efforts to improve coordination.

As the third component of United We Ride, Secretary Mineta honored five States at the National Leadership Forum that have already made great progress in tackling the issue of coordinating transportation services. Among the five States that received a State Leadership Award was our host State today – Washington. Washington created its own Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation in 1998 to improve services for older residents, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and children. And, in turn, 23 counties created their own councils, with proven results in coordination.

Florida was also honored at the ceremony. Their work has included the creation of a Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund, and the creation of local transportation coordination boards. The State of Maryland was recognized for the development and implementation of a statewide, five-year human services transportation plan and the adoption of new technologies to support the coordinated delivery of transportation services. North Carolina – another award winner – was recognized for its long-standing commitment to human service transportation coordination. It was the first state in the nation to require a Transportation Memorandum of Understanding at the local level that assures coordination among transportation agencies and human service agencies. And Ohio, our final award winner, was recognized for the near-universal voluntary implementation of transportation coordination projects by counties

throughout the State. These were undertaken with the encouragement of the Ohio Department of Transportation.

All of these states -- and many others who were nominated for the awards -- have already begun to see the impact of these efforts in improvements to services and improvements to their bottom line.

The fourth component of United We Ride is intended to help every State make progress on coordination. Last week, we announced in the Federal Register, the availability of State grants for human service coordination efforts. I am announcing today that FTA will make available \$1 million in this fiscal year to put toward these grants -- and we are hopeful that our sister Federal agencies will contribute, too. Each State that sent representatives to the National Leadership Forum in February is eligible to apply for these grants... and the award criteria are very flexible and simple. Basically, we want to encourage States -- and help communities in those States -- to use the Framework for Action and begin to implement the steps identified in their self-assessments. We know that effective coordination across agencies is hard work, and having even a little added flexibility to hire someone to coordinate or lead this effort can be critical. I hope you'll encourage your State to apply and participate. We expect the availability of the grants to be officially announced within a few days, but I believe we have draft copies of the application guidance for you to take, if you'd like to get a head start!

Finally, I am extremely pleased to say that the fifth -- and final -- component of United We Ride builds on the work of the CTAA, Project ACTION, and other stakeholder groups...to provide hands-on technical assistance to States and communities in coordinating their human service transportation programs. Using coordination "ambassadors" that have already been assigned to 30 States, we have brought together the resources of the various technical assistance agencies to provide you with a "coordinated" helping hand. For the first time, you don't have to figure out whom to call among the many technical assistance centers and providers. Instead, the technical assistance providers are working together to bring cross-agency technical assistance teams to you. And your coordination ambassador will help you make that happen.

At the National Forum, we also asked the State leaders what we could do at the Federal level to help them. They said the most important thing we could do would be to get rid of the conflicting and duplicative federal laws and regulations that apply to different human service transportation programs.

So I was particularly pleased that President Bush chose the occasion of the conference to sign Executive Order 13330. This Executive Order recognizes the need to get the full panoply of Federal agencies with transportation programs to coordinate their efforts. The President has

charged 10 Federal agencies with the tasks of eliminating duplication and overlapping federal programs, identifying useful practices and improving the coordination of federally supported transportation services at all levels. Every Federal agency named in the Executive Order is required to demonstrate progress. Workgroups have already been formed, and we are now meeting with our Federal partners on these issues 3 to 5 times a week. FTA has taken the lead on all of this, thanks to your encouragement and your support.

The new Council formed by the Executive Order will be chaired by Secretary Mineta. And staff from the affected agencies has already begun the detailed work necessary to support prompt, effective work by the Council. Under the action plan they have already drafted, we expect to pursue solutions in six primary areas:

- Reducing statutory and regulatory hurdles to coordination;
- Identifying and sharing useful practices to improve coordination at every level of government and within communities;
- Integrating the wide range of Federally-funded and sometimes-mandated human service program entities into local transportation planning, including area agencies on aging, development disability councils, one-stop employment centers, rehab service agencies, hospitals, and housing shelters;
- Working to make it easier in each community to provide a single point of customer access to the entire continuum of transportation options...so Joe Rider just has one number to call, instead of 6 or 12;
- Creating a single point of access at the Federal level – so transit agencies and human service agencies have one place to turn for help; and
- Figuring out a way to make it easier to share rides across programs by cracking the difficult “cost allocation” nut. We know this area is particularly challenging for those of you who are trying to help Medicaid clients...and we want to work with you to find an equitable solution that not only benefits the bottom line for our programs, but benefits our customers, as well.

So many people in this room have done their level best to reduce Joe’s frustration, working with each other and across agencies to solve these problems. And you have met with some important success. But I know that this work has often been frustrating, as you’ve had to work within Federal and State constraints and faced reluctant “partners” in other agencies.

For the first time, I believe we have solid momentum toward progress at every level – Federal, State and local -- behind a solid action plan and a unified approach:

- President Bush has gotten Federal agencies engaged – and made it clear that he is serious about achieving results.
- Both the House and Senate have expressed their support for improved coordination of transportation services by including key FTA provisions in their reauthorization bills.
- And we now have new tools with which to tackle the tough work that lies ahead.

We have work to do at the Federal level – and work to do in States and communities. But there has never been a better time to form partnerships, develop strategies and take action.

With a renewed commitment to our common goals, I know that we can make genuine progress. And I am confident that we can find common sense transportation solutions for all the people who, like Joe Rider, are counting on us to get there.

Before I close today, I'd like to touch on one more subject that I know is on everyone's mind – transit security.

Transit, as a whole, has many high risk, high consequence assets. Each weekday, transit carries 14 million passengers. In two week's time, transit carries more people than AMTRAK carries in a year...and in one month, transit carries more people than US airlines carry in a year.

Most of these transit passengers are riding in dense urban environments. So, we in the Federal Transit Administration – as well as the press, the Congress and Homeland Security – have paid a lot of attention in terms of security to larger transit systems – where the risks of a terrorist attack are greater. I believe that attention has been appropriate.

At the same time, I want you to know that FTA has not forgotten those of you who operate smaller systems or in more rural areas -- far from it. And I know that you have not forgotten the importance of ensuring that your systems are as safe and secure as possible for your passengers and your employees. I also know that it can be very difficult to figure out exactly what to pay attention to and what to do to improve security preparedness and response. Should I worry about controlling access to the bus yards first? How much do I know about my employees? Did they all have background checks? Is there someplace I can turn to for intelligence information that is specific to my community? What about cameras on buses? Do our bus drivers know what to look for and how to respond if they see suspicious activity?

It's not easy. But FTA can help. First, based on our own threat and vulnerability assessments of transit agencies throughout the country, as well as consultations with transit security experts in Israel and around the globe, we believe it is imperative that you focus on three key areas:

Employee Training; Public Awareness; and Emergency Preparedness. Let's talk a little about what is involved in each.

First, employee training. Every transit agency, regardless of size, should ensure that its employees are trained to deter, detect, mitigate, and respond to security emergencies. And it's important to remember that, in many communities, even if transit is not the target of an attack, transit may have to play an evacuation role...whether that's transporting workers out of a downtown office district, nursing home residents to a safe location, or apartment building residents to temporary shelters. FTA has developed a wealth of materials, brochures and courses for your use - even some simple cards your bus drivers can read and keep in their wallets.

And I especially want to call your attention to the numerous courses available to your employees through the National Transit Institute, some of which are listed on the screen. Please note that many of the courses, like the 2-hour Security Awareness Course, are mode-specific - so if you run a bus-only system, your employees don't have to sit through a long discussion of commuter rail security. You may also want to simply send one or two employees to a "train the trainer" course, so that the rest of your employees can be trained at your own facilities.

Second, let's talk about public awareness. Last fall, FTA rolled out a public awareness campaign kit called "Transit Watch." We partnered with CTAA, APTA, TSA, and the ATU to develop and make available these materials available to you free of charge. The Transit Watch Tool Kit provides everything you need - including sample materials and a "CD" with templates on it - to roll-out a customized campaign in your community. You'll find it all - a logo, signage, poster slicks, a press release, fact sheet, and two versions of a trade publication newsletter... all you'll have to provide is a printer.

I can't stress enough how important it is that you reinforce safety and security messages with your customers. And your employees and local media should be key partners in that effort. But it's up to you to enlist their help.

Finally, no matter what size your system is, everyone needs practice. The last thing you want to do is to use the real thing to "practice." I urge you to conduct or participate in annual community-wide drills - and be a part of table-top drills even more often. Practice how you will communicate with your law enforcement agency, with your fire and emergency medical teams. Figure out ahead of time: who will be in charge; what role transit will play in a community emergency; and how you and others will respond if the incident involves transit itself. Your customers and your community are counting on you.

If you've got these basics underway, I'd suggest you also take a look at FTA's list of Top Twenty Security Action Items to see what else makes sense for your agency.

I've just skimmed the surface of all that's available to you from FTA regarding security. I urge you to take a look at FTA's website, where you'll find more details. The website, for those who may not yet have logged-on, is <http://www.fta.dot.gov/> -- then click on the "Safety and Security" tab.

I'm sure that being prepared for emergencies seems like such a small part of what you do each day... but, if you think about it, it is an important part of your mission. Because, fundamentally, it is the job of the people here today to help ensure that every American can enjoy the freedom of movement that we so cherish in this great country. God bless you... and God bless America.

COMTO Conference - Plenary Session, Cleveland, OH

07-20-04

Remarks: Jennifer L. Dorn, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

Thank you for that kind introduction. I'm always so impressed by the Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and the Cleveland, itself -- a city with multiple halls of fame...for rock and roll and for football. It's not often that I have to compete with Elvis Presley, the Rolling Stones, and Joe Namath all at the same time, but I'll do my best... and wait for the Public Transit Hall of Fame to open!

The Transit Industry and Minority Leadership...Progress and a New Challenge

This is the third time I've addressed COMTO, but this year it is a particular honor for it is the fortieth anniversary year of the Civil Rights Act. After decades of struggle, the Civil Rights Act sent a clear, unequivocal wake up call to employers that this is, indeed, a land of equal opportunity in which every person can pursue the American dream. That message is as urgent, as relevant, and as deeply compelling today as it was in 1964.

It is hard for me to believe that, when I was a teenager about to enter the summer workforce in 1964, it was still legal to make hiring decisions openly based on race, or to have "males only" and "females only" want ads. Today women lead the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Motor Carrier Administration; an Asian American is our Secretary of Transportation; and minorities and women serve in State and local transportation leadership positions throughout the country.

In 2001, the American Public Transportation Association conducted a diversity study of our industry. It found that non-white employees held a significant portion of the higher positions, at 39 percent of management, 44 percent of professionals, and 40 percent of technical groups... although women still had a way to go in all three of these categories.

APTA concluded that the transit industry is ahead of the national averages in its number of minority workers across the occupational spectrum, and including leadership roles. The progress we have made as an industry - and as a nation -- can be traced to many of the pioneers in this room.

But there is more work to be done. At your conference this week, you will be asking tough questions of our industry, and one of the most important is, how can we replenish the ranks of transit leaders? As much as we might like to think otherwise, we will not be here forever. We need to

keep the momentum toward a diverse workforce rolling. We need to cultivate and tap the next generation of talent -- a talent pool that reflects the formidable diversity and strength of minority communities in this country—who will be the majority of our population within a matter of years.

Creating Opportunity

This audience certainly knows well of Secretary Mineta's tireless and enduring commitment to civil rights and equal opportunity. Earlier this year he noted that barriers of race, or sex, or ethnicity "must be overcome" if the full potential of this Nation to create jobs and economic growth is going to be realized. The "dream of building something that did not exist before" he said, fuels the American dream. And it most certainly fuels our industry, which is dedicated to growth and opportunity.

President Bush is committed to the principles of civil rights and the promise of small businesses and the entrepreneurial spirit. This Administration laid the foundation for the creation of 1.4 million new jobs since last August, with new tax incentives, an increase in the number and amount of loans to small businesses owned by minorities, and the transformation of the Small Business Administration into a more customer-focused service-oriented agency.

And today I want to talk about three other important ways that we in FTA are working to create, in the transit industry, real opportunities, and real networks for advancement. The first FTA initiative focuses on the talented young people in universities and colleges who might otherwise never consider a career in public transit.

The Inside Track

We recognize that finding the next generation of minority leaders in the transit industry begins before the job market. We want to foster an interest in the transit industry while students are still in college. And we want to provide tangible, hands-on experience with the rich and varied professional pathways that transit provides.

I remember vividly the influence that internships in the Connecticut State Legislature, in the university's IPS, and one for the Mayor of New Haven had on me as a college student. I had the energy and the desire to make a contribution, but those internships helped to funnel that energy into channels that set me on the course of a lifelong career in public service. We can do the same thing for prospective transit leaders in the minority communities.

Although many of us - myself included - have become "transit geeks," I suspect that the idea of becoming a transit professional still does not carry

quite the same attraction for most young people as becoming a lawyer, an athlete or an actor! But we are working hard to change that image!!

Working with COMTO, FTA has created the "Inside Track" program to make transit a magnet for the best and the brightest minority talent of the next generation. Inside Track matches talented young minority students looking for a career, with an industry that is looking for talented young minority students.

This is not just another internship program. It brings together all of the elements critical to success... a partnership among FTA, transit agencies, dedicated transit professionals based in our communities, and universities and colleges.

Inside Track participants will gain real life work experience on exciting New Starts projects - with either a private firm or the local transit agency. They will be assisted by universities and colleges that have a stake in their success. They will benefit from mentoring relationships with transit professionals who are members of COMTO, and who are eager for these students to succeed. And -- an often-overlooked, but a very important component for struggling college students - they will get paid for the work they do. We believe that, through these partnerships, we can interest some of our Nation's very best minority talent in careers in the transit industry.

I have to tell you, this project was not easy to design. COMTO and FTA both wanted to get it right. Julie Cunningham and I both spent many long hours to ensure that the project would meet our goals. We knew that we would maximize the benefits to the participants and the industry if we could find a nexus of an exciting New Starts project, a successful transit agency, a thriving local COMTO chapter, and a historically black college or university equipped to support the program. And we did.

I'm delighted that we have found our pilot site in Baltimore, Maryland, where COMTO is collaborating with the highly esteemed, historically Black Morgan State University. Now that the program is underway, I know that COMTO will keep the ball rolling.

I believe that Inside Track can put our industry ahead of the curve. The entire industry -- both the public and private sectors -- needs to cultivate minority talent. We need professionals who are fluent in the private sector and the local and Federal programs, and who can move between those worlds with ease and confidence. Young professionals today are looking for dynamic and challenging careers. This industry can provide those opportunities - and we are committed to proving it.

DBE Program: Real Opportunities Never Emerge from Fraud

The second program I want to talk about today is the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program – or DBE program, for short. Our work in building a dynamic transportation industry doesn't end once we attract new talent to the field.

Since 1983, the DBE Program has sought to expand opportunities for minority firms to participate in Federal contracting. Small businesses are the engine of our economy – and the DBE program is a critical component of the President's effort to create new jobs and economic growth in America.

Unfortunately, this year the DOT Inspector General identified fraud and abuse in the DBE program as one of the top ten management challenges facing the Department of Transportation. The IG is currently investigating no fewer than 40 DBE fraud schemes, in 19 states. Over the last five years, DBE investigations by the Inspector General have resulted in 29 convictions. One common scheme is for prime contractors to conspire with DBE firms to fraudulently meet DBE participation criteria in order to win contracts.

In these cases, the DBEs either do not perform the work or yield total control of the project to the prime contractors – acting as a “front” for firms that would not otherwise qualify to receive the contract.

DBE fraud and abuse undermines the integrity of the program. Almost by definition, real opportunities never come out of fraud. These schemes turn potential business partnerships into partnerships in crime. And the minority firms who participate in them trade long-term business opportunities and growth, for illegal short-term gains. Another firm gets the work, the experience and connections -- and the minority firm gets the short-end of the stick.

The President's vision for creating real opportunities for minorities in transportation is about creating new leaders and long-term gains – strengthening the industry and building our communities. Achieving this requires careful stewardship of the DBE program to prevent fraud that undermines the legitimate efforts of minority firms to build a reputation and presence in the industry. The bottom line is that “fronts” are not “opportunities,” and they jeopardize our broader mission of opportunity.

In response to the IG report, FTA is taking several important steps. We will offer additional DBE courses through the National Transit Institute, including a new Fraud Detection and Prevention module that was developed in concert with the IG.

We are also incorporating new areas of inquiry into our regular oversight programs, and we will conduct in-depth spot reviews of DBE compliance. At the same time, we are offering enhanced technical assistance to transit

agencies who want to take full advantage of the opportunities that the DBE program provides.

Finally, I have asked every transit agency to submit a letter within 90 days verifying that they have appropriate DBE certification files for every firm that is serving as a DBE prime or subcontractor. I've asked agencies to conduct those certifications within 60 days if they have not been documented.

Trust me when I say that the last thing we want to do at FTA is create more administrative work, but it is vital that we ensure the integrity of the DBE program. We live in a time of increased scrutiny and heightened attention to the careful stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Americans demand accountability not only from government, but from industry, as well. So this is truly an industry-wide responsibility, and I was pleased to note that there will be several sessions at this conference on compliance with DBE requirements and dealing with DBE certification. I hope that each of you will make time in your conference schedule to attend.

Mentor Protégé: Navigating the Federal Marketplace

The third and final program I want to mention to you today is FTA's new Mentor-Protégé program in the New Starts oversight program. In 2002, FTA convened a forum for small and women-owned businesses, and at that time I promised to create more opportunities for these firms. This goal became both personal and professional for me.

The following year, we launched the Mentor-Protégé program which, like Inside Track, formalizes the hands-on, mentoring experience - but at a business/company level. The Mentor-Protégé program pairs a first-rate mentor with a promising, ambitious, small, disadvantaged firm that is eager to compete in the Federal contracting marketplace and learn the ropes from a more experienced firm. The Mentor-Protégé program taps into the power of networks and connections — but it brings new faces into the network, and builds new kinds of connections for small, minority-owned businesses.

Please join me in congratulating our first Mentor-Protégé pair: Our mentor firm, the minority-owned, Delon Hampton, with over 30 years of experience; and our protégé firm, the woman-owned Interactive Elements Incorporated. Under the experienced, steady hand of Delon Hampton, IEI has just gotten its first task order to oversee the Triangle Transit Authority's commuter rail project in Raleigh, North Carolina, an \$840 million dollar New Starts project. I know that Raleigh will be in great hands.

United We Ride: Creating Opportunities for Professionals and Customers

I've talked about partnerships today. And I hope you will indulge me for just a few minutes more, so that I can tell you about one more partnership that I feel passionate about.

Last February, President Bush signed an Executive Order that formalizes a critical partnership among Federal agencies. It is a partnership that brings together every Federal agency with a stake in improving transportation for the millions of Americans with disabilities, our growing older adult population, and people with low incomes. With Secretary Mineta in the lead, the President told us to work together to reduce statutory and regulatory barriers, enhance coordination, and improve the delivery of cost-effective transportation services to these underserved populations.

And that's what our new initiative, United We Ride, is all about. United We Ride is a five-part initiative, launched this year, that encourages human service transportation providers to work together, coordinate their services, and pool their resources to increase mobility in our communities. There are 62 Federal programs with eligibility to fund transportation services, and from a business perspective, that's quite a market niche!

Without coordination and collaboration, communities typically experience redundancies, gaps, and overlaps in transit service. They might have several vans running the same route each day—one providing service for seniors to a senior center, and another providing service for people with disabilities to a job training site in the same building. United We Ride helps human service and transportation providers think about pooling resources and consolidating these services. That will benefit customers – and benefit of the transit industry, as well.

With coordination, communities can provide more transportation services, with less overlap and lower per-trip costs.

But it is not easy to build a coordinated transportation system. That's why United We Ride offers some important tools to help. It includes a framework for action and self-assessment tool, technical assistance resources, and recognition for States that exemplify effective coordination.

The benefits for our customers — low-income riders, people with disabilities, and the elderly — are clear: They get more service. But United We Ride makes good business sense, as well, by opening up opportunities for new partnerships and services. United We Ride will help the transit industry reach its potential, just as it helps our customers reach theirs.

There is power in partnership, especially when budgets are tight and funds scarce. We already have coordination success stories, local examples of

how new networks and collaborations have yielded “win-win” gains for the transit industry and professionals alike.

In Kentucky, the governor combined funds from several state-administered human service transportation programs into a single fund, and established regional transportation brokers. The cost per ride was reduced by almost 20 percent, while the number of rides was increased substantially.

In Miami, coordinating Medicaid transportation with public transportation resulted in a win-win situation for the local Medicaid agency, the transit providers and Medicaid customers. By issuing transit passes to allow Medicaid customers to use less-expensive fixed route transit instead of more expensive paratransit or taxi trips, the Medicaid agency saves \$700,000 per month — almost \$8 million a year - even though only 1 percent of the Medicaid clients use the new service. This strategy not only saves money, it helps Medicaid clients who can use their transit passes not only for medical trips, but for other trips in the community, as well.

And in Riverside County, just east of Los Angeles, the Transportation Reimbursement and Information Project (TRIP) complements public transportation by reimbursing volunteers to transport individuals where no public transportation service exists. All told, these services would cost at least \$1.5 million more than those provided by TRIP.

Concluding Thoughts: Build New Networks and New Opportunities

If there is one overriding message in all of these initiatives, it is that this Administration has confidence that customers, transit providers, and communities all benefit when we can foster new energy, new networks, and new connections in the transit industry. These networks are really about stoking the entrepreneurial spirit in the transit industry, and learning to see—and seize—new opportunities ... by talking and collaborating with colleagues that you haven’t worked with before, by partnering with young talented firms through the federal contract marketplace, and by fostering the best and brightest talent in the next generation of transit professionals.

So I’d like to thank all of you here not only for your professional contributions over the past year, but also for your dedication to building opportunity for the next generation of transit professionals and entrepreneurs. You are helping to put the American dream within reach of the talented individuals who will become the leaders of tomorrow. And you are making an important investment in the future of our industry and our Nation.

Thank you so much.

Rail-Volution Conference - Los Angeles, CA

09-22-04

Remarks: Jennifer L. Dorn, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

Introduction and Acknowledgments

Thank you, Representative Blumenaur, for that generous introduction. As a fellow Oregonian and transit supporter, it is always a pleasure to share the podium with you. Thank you for your continued advocacy on behalf of good, cost-effective transit for America.

And it's a pleasure to be here once more at Rail-Volution, a conference that has incubated some of the freshest and most innovative ideas in transit. You are great ambassadors for an important idea: that transit is not just about rails and cars — it is about creating thriving communities. And, your vision and leadership have never been more relevant, or vital, than they are today.

I bring greetings to you from Transportation Secretary Mineta. As you know, he is a staunch advocate for wise investments in transit, including rail. We are so fortunate to have a leader with his experience, perspective, and credibility. He uses his passion and experience -- as a former mayor, a former chairman of the House Transportation Committee, former Secretary of Commerce and, now, the Secretary of Transportation -- to help all of us make the case for cost-effective investments in transit that make such a difference in our communities, and to our economy.

The American Dream: Then and Now...

A century ago, a critic for the Literary Digest wrote skeptically about a strange new American invention. "The ordinary 'horseless carriage,'" he wrote, "is at present a luxury for the wealthy, and although its price will probably fall into the future, it will never, of course, come into as common use as the bicycle." ... Well, not quite.

But the author can perhaps be forgiven his short sightedness. Who could have imagined -- in a world of streetcars and the intercontinental railroad, in an America of walking trails and unpaved roads -- that the automobile would fundamentally rewrite the American landscape, in just a matter of decades?

When we think about the American Dream, we tend to think about the post-World War II vision. The American Dream was something that Americans would DRIVE to. In the popular lexicon, the American Dream

meant a two-parent family with two children (one crew-cut boy and one pig-tailed girl, of course), and a dog -- all ensconced in a suburban tract house with a big yard surrounded by a white picket fence... and a roomy automobile parked in the garage to carry Dad to his job in the city each day.

The post-World War II baby boom went hand in hand with the suburban boom. By 1950, the national suburban growth rate was ten times that of central cities. The compact row house of the city was becoming a thing of the past. In-fill development in our cities just wasn't suitable to mass-produced housing, so it didn't happen.

That version of the American Dream responded to the desires of a nation of young families seeking housing, space, privacy, and a homogenous community in which to live. But, in fact, this was only one interpretation of an American Dream that is as OLD AS America itself. The real core -- the values inherent in the American Dream -- do not simply describe a location, they run much deeper than that. The American Dream really speaks to: ownership, opportunity, security, and community.

The American Dream existed well before the automobile and the suburbs and the postwar baby boom. And it will endure long after the baby boomers, the suburbs, or even the automobiles, fade away. And, as shocking and as radical as the idea of a "horseless carriage" was in the early 1900s, I believe we are on the cusp of an equally dramatic reinterpretation of the American Dream today... as a new generation of Americans puts its own stamp on the American Dream.

The American Dream: Coming Soon to a Location Near You

In communities across the nation -- from Charlotte to Portland to Los Angeles -- we have already seen that American homebuyers, investors and developers are crafting a new version of the American Dream. Their version of the American Dream includes the timeless elements of ownership, opportunity, security and community that have been embraced by every generation of Americans. But their interpretation of the American Dream doesn't involve a car in the suburbs. ... They are building and buying homes near transit.

President Bush understands that homeownership is a cornerstone of America's vibrant communities, and that it helps families build stability and long-term financial security. Indeed, his economic policies have kept both taxes and interest rates low -- and, as a result, the overall US homeownership rate hit an all-time high of 69.2 percent in the second quarter of 2004. In June 2002, the President issued America's Homeownership Challenge to the real estate and mortgage finance communities to encourage them to join the effort to close the gap between the homeownership rates of minorities and non-minorities. To help low-

income families overcome the hurdle of a down payment, the President proposed the American Dream Downpayment Initiative. And in December 2003, he signed the American Dream Downpayment Act into law. This year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced \$160 million in funding for this initiative, so that state and local governments across the country can assist low-income families with down payments. Two years later, minority homeownership has set a new record of 51 percent.

Transit skeptics tend to be fatalistic about Americans' housing preferences. Developments get built in the suburbs, they say, because that's where people want to live. They believe that the American Dream has only one script. But to many Americans today, the good life means not having to get into your car to get to work, BlockBuster Video, or Starbucks. They live in communities where transit – and transit-oriented development – has hung a figurative sign on suburban sprawl. And the sign says: "The American Dream – Visit us at our New Location."

The New American Dream: Same Idea, Different Place

Behind these dramatic changes in the American Dream are dramatic changes in the American population. Seismic changes -- a concept Los Angeles can appreciate! – seismic changes in the demographics of our country are changing our collective preferences for housing and transportation. The population groups that currently have the greatest preference for housing located near transit are precisely the population groups that will grow exponentially in the next twenty years.

The AARP reports that fully 71 percent of older households want to live within walking distance of transit. Imagine that: 71 percent! And, older Americans are one of the fastest-growing population groups in the country. The traditional "pyramid" age distribution, with more young people at the bottom than older people at the top, will be turned on its head within twenty years. Within a single generation, in fact, almost 35 percent of Americans will be over age 65.

Older Americans -- the fathers and mothers of my own generation, whose childhood memories include the Great Depression – older Americans place a high value on independence and self-sufficiency. They dream of autonomy, and a place to live where they do not have to call one of their children, just to get a prescription filled or to run a simple errand to the grocery store. The last thing that older Americans want is the nightmare of dependency on their children as "chauffeurs" to drive them where they need to go. How many times have you heard from an aging parent, "I just don't want to be a burden"? No wonder the vast majority of people surveyed by the AARP want to live in a transit-rich environment. Their dream includes living in a place where they can maintain an active life without relying on a car, or a child, for transportation.

Our population is becoming increasingly diverse, as well, especially as a consequence of immigration. Barring any dramatic changes in policy or world events, almost one-third of growth in our population by 2025 will come from the immigration to our country of people of Hispanic and Asian origin. Historically, immigrants have settled primarily in cities. While we see some changes in that pattern today, for the most part, it still holds true. Immigrant households tend to rely on transit heavily—and they want to live in denser urban neighborhoods.

Many of these “new” Americans arrive with aspirations to secure their foothold in the American Dream by saving to buy a home. These groups yearn for the security and stability that having new roots, in their own home, can bring. Their version of the American Dream is often a safe, urban community where they can put down roots, and still maintain ties to their country of origin.

Not needing a car is central to achieving the American Dream of many lower income Americans, including many “new” Americans.... Because the Surface Transportation Policy Project finds that the cost of car ownership can put the American dream of home ownership out of reach for families with lower incomes. According to a July 2003 STPP report, American households spent 19 cents of every household dollar on transportation expenses in 2001 – and lower income households are forced to spend an even higher percentage on transportation. In fact, transportation is the second largest household expense, after housing, and is three times the cost of health care. It amounts to, on average, over \$7,600 dollars each year, just to get around....and saving for a home becomes that much more difficult.

The composition of American households is also changing. The traditional nuclear families that made up 40 percent of households in 1970, now comprise less than 25 percent of households. And that percentage is expected to decline even more. In just one generation, the “typical” American household won’t have children living in it. In fact, nearly 70 percent of households will not include children. These households will consist of singles, empty nesters, and couples without children. And these are groups with a proven preference for our cities and the transit options they provide. Young professionals and empty-nesters are seeking connections, not isolation. They are seeking vitality, not necessarily peace and quiet. Their interpretation of the American Dream includes a community where they can enjoy a sense of belonging and safety, but where they can also reap the benefits of a lively, more diverse neighborhood -- and live a “mixed use” life that combines interesting housing options with the amenities of the city.

Reinterpreting the American Dream for New American Realities...

It is not just demographics that are driving these changing desires, however. In a world of instant communication and growing global competition, Americans are working harder and longer hours than ever. And time is becoming an increasingly scarce commodity for all of us. We certainly don't want to spend any more time than we have to just "getting there."

Unfortunately, the Texas Transportation Institute's Annual Urban Mobility Study recently delivered some sobering news. The number of hours that the average peak-time commuter in this country has lost to congestion has tripled over the last 20 years -- from 16 hours in 1982 to 46 hours lost annually in 2002. That's more than a whole work week -- or a whole vacation week! Outside of this room right now, Los Angelenos are waging a losing battle against the commuter time-drain. The TTI study ranks Los Angeles as the worst urban area in the country in terms of time lost to congestion -- at a whopping 93 hours per commuter in 2002.

In May, the DOT's Transportation Statistics Bureau coined a grim new term: the "Stretch Commuter." These workers—and there are 3.3 million of them—travel 50 miles or more one way, to get to work. And they commute these distances 329 million times a year. While one out of five of the stretch commutes is at least 100 miles, more than one in 20 are "super stretch commutes," trips to work of 200 miles or more, one-way. That's a high price to pay -- in energy, money, and time -- to pay for the American Dream.

There are clear signs that people are getting tired of the isolation that the car culture tends to create, and they are growing weary of having to get in the car for even the simplest of errands... The fact is, a gallon of gas for a gallon of milk is a terrible exchange rate.

Fortunately, there are alternatives. Americans are fine-tuning the Dream to suit a new moment, and a new generation. And in this version of the American Dream, time is on public transit's side. Instead of driving, many people think it's time to start riding to the American Dream. The demographic and cultural changes taking place in America point directly to a transit-rich, urban vision of the American Dream for the 21st century.

With funding from FTA and the Fannie Mae Foundation, the Center for Transit Oriented Development just released a national market assessment of demand for housing near transit in the next two decades. Even using a very conservative methodology, they reach what the authors call a "staggering" conclusion. They project that, over the next 20 years, at least a quarter of all American households are likely to seek housing near transit. There is, in fact, the potential to more than double the amount of

housing in transit zones in the next twenty years.

Los Angeles, in fact, is one of five regions that our report singles out as holding the greatest potential for transit-oriented housing development. The new GIS database created by the Center for Transit Oriented Development shows that in 2000, a little over a quarter of a million households in the Los Angeles area lived in a transit zone. Within 20 years, the demand for housing near transit could increase a stunning sevenfold to 1.7 million households.

If — and it is a big if — the demand for such housing can be met in Los Angeles and in other communities throughout the country, transit oriented development has the potential to become an unprecedented catalyst for economic growth... and for the realization of this generation's American Dream.

We can all point to wonderful examples of transit-oriented development — in communities where transit has spurred increases in housing and thriving businesses. In Portland, Oregon; Charlotte, North Carolina; Arlington, Virginia; and Dallas, Texas ... transit agencies, local elected officials, developers, and investors have recognized the potential and seized the opportunities that transit creates. But, in most communities, transit-oriented development has not caught fire... it is the exception, not the rule.

Something has gotten lost between the paper world, where transit-oriented development makes sense... and the real world, where elected leaders, transit agency officials, developers, investors, and community activists must work together to bring transit-oriented development to life.

I know that, as transit agency officials, we ask you to do a lot of things — the most important of which is running a good transit system! And I'm sure many of you are asking yourselves, "Why should housing development and economic development be MY responsibility? I'm not a development expert!"

I believe that transit's stake in housing and economic development is pretty high — because the more development takes place around transit, the more people will ride transit. But you don't have to be the development expert. You just need to be the community leader — just as you are in so many other arenas.

In the study we are releasing today, Reconnecting America and the Center for Transit-Oriented Development have given all of us some amazing tools. First, they have produced both national and local estimates of demand — estimates that all of us can use to create interest in the potential of transit-oriented development....interest from beyond its traditional supporters, including real estate developers and institutions. But, perhaps even more importantly, they have created a database that can be accessed and used

by the 42 metropolitan regions they studied. The database utilized Geographic Information System (GIS) technology and data from the 2000 U.S. Census to create a snapshot of the population living within ½ mile of the 3,341 existing and 630 proposed rail stations. With this database, city planners, local real estate developers, and others can identify the potential and make plans for transit-oriented development. It is a truly remarkable tool – and I want to acknowledge both Hank Dittmar, of Reconnecting America, and Shelley Poticha, of the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, for their tremendous contribution. Please join me in giving them a hand.

The database is an important tool – one that we have been missing! – but there are, of course, a number of hurdles we must overcome in order to make transit-oriented development the rule, instead of the exception to the rule. We have a terrific panel today – experts in real estate development and finance, representatives of local governments and transit agencies, and, of course, the study's author, Shelley Poticha. They are here today to help us figure out how we can work together, and what we can do to convince communities throughout the nation to embrace and build transit-oriented development.

Our moderator for the panel is someone that many of you know. Brigid Hynes-Cherin is FTA's Deputy Associate Administrator for Budget and Policy. Brigid was personally involved in the study and the report. But she also brings 30 years of transportation experience to the table. Before rejoining FTA last February, she was vice president for transportation planning at the Parson's Group – prior to that served at both the national and regional level of the Department of Transportation, in local transit agencies, and in the private sector. She has been a community planner, regional counsel, and regional administrator, and western area director for the Federal Transit Administration.

APTA Annual Meeting - Atlanta, GA

10-11-04

Remarks: Jennifer L. Dorn, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

Introduction and Acknowledgments

Thank you for that kind introduction, Dick [White]! I'm so pleased to be back here in Atlanta. Many, many thanks to APTA and to our local hosts, Nat Ford and Michael Wells [MARTA Chair], for their gracious hospitality. We are all so proud of the progress that transit has made in Atlanta.

For many of us, being here in Atlanta brings to mind the determined Scarlet O'Hara of *Gone with the Wind* ... The Scarlet who makes her clothing out of curtains, does her own potato farming, and perseveres with vision, courage, and just plain hard work. That is what leadership looks like — rolling up our sleeves, asking the toughest questions of ourselves and our industry, and not sugar-coating the answers.

APTA's new chairman, Dick White, is certainly not known for "sugar-coating." I know that Dick's forthright manner and emphasis on "getting down to business" will serve APTA and the transportation industry well. We are looking forward to working closely with you, Dick.

And what more can I add to the accolades offered on behalf of George Dixon? His enthusiasm for our industry has been contagious... and he has kept his eye – and ours -- on the reauthorization ball. Thank you, George, for all that you have done over the past year – and throughout the years – to further the cause of public transportation in America.

And many thanks, of course, to Bill Millar, APTA's iconic president, who has served as mentor to me and to many of you... And who has helped ensure that the American Public Transportation Association continues to be an important resource to the entire transit industry.

I also bring greetings to you from Transportation Secretary Mineta. As you know, he continues to be a staunch advocate for transit, and we are so fortunate to have a leader with his experience, perspective, and credibility.

I first addressed the annual APTA conference in October 2001. By then, I had visited just a smattering of innovative transit systems across the country. I told you that getting first-hand insights like those would continue to be vital to me as I did my job at the FTA. Well, I was right about that. Over the last three years, I have learned so much from you, as we have done challenging, innovative, and transformative work together.

Actually, I think it's fair to say that, since that conference in 2001, we have changed the national conversation about transit, and we have changed the paradigms that shape our industry. We no longer measure our success by the number of buses we run or the amount of track we maintain... We measure our success by the number of people who choose to ride our transit systems. Two years ago at this forum, I asked you to help me change America's mind about transit - and increase ridership on public transportation.

You have impressed me with your enthusiasm for making this goal your own, and taking the lead in meeting it. In fact, increasing ridership is the number one goal of the new APTA Strategic Plan. And I am pleased to announce a new FTA national webpage -- "Innovative Practices for Increased Ridership" - that showcases your efforts, and demonstrates the creativity, imagination, and energy of our industry. Thus far, over 250 transit agencies have shared their own proven local strategies to increase ridership on FTA's new Ridership webpage. These programs are a wonderful demonstration of the creativity, innovation, imagination, and energy of our industry.

The national conversation about transit has changed in other ways, as well. We are less reluctant to talk about the risks associated with major transit projects. We all recognize that any major construction project entails risk - and transit projects are no different in this regard. Building tunnels, acquiring property, and navigating the unpredictable process of public involvement are all risky ventures. But instead of shying away from conversations about the risks involved, we are now embracing risk management. We know that this is the surest way to produce projects that are delivered on time, within budget, and with the ridership projected.

And we have changed the conversation about public transit as a transportation option. Ten years ago, our industry tended to think of it as a contest between roads and transit. The roads versus transit approach assumed that demand for transportation is finite -- a zero-sum game. But that has changed, and especially so in the last several years. There has been a real shift in the transportation paradigm.

We know that there is plenty of transportation demand to go around. And we are moving beyond the mode wars, toward a truly "intermodal" future. It is a future where integrated, sensibly-designed transportation networks dominate.... Networks where roads, rail, buses, bike paths, and pedestrian walkways work together to create transportation options and minimize congestion in our communities.

We are also opening the door to new partnerships to maximize the transportation services available to people with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with low incomes. At the Federal level, 11 departments and agencies have rolled up their sleeves to do something about obstacles

that discourage or even prevent coordination among human service transportation programs at the State and local levels. And new conversations are taking place at the planning table in States and communities around the country – conversations that tackle tough issues like equitable cost sharing among transit and human service agencies.

And, of course, who among us could have imagined the new reality of post-September 11th transit security. Unlike many other industries that have struggled against adaptation and change, the transportation industry -- and transit especially -- has embraced the critical changes necessary to preserve our freedoms. Every workday, our transit systems safely move more than 14 million passengers in an inherently open travel environment -- an environment that is the very definition of a classic high risk, high consequence target for terrorists. But you rose to the occasion, with the courage to set aside old assumptions and adapt to new realities. And, today, our transit systems are, indisputably, safer and more secure than ever before.

A New American Dream

There have indeed been dramatic changes in this industry. But, if the past is prologue, perhaps the biggest changes for the transit industry still lie ahead.

A century ago, a critic for the Literary Digest wrote skeptically about a strange new American invention. “The ordinary ‘horseless carriage,’” he wrote, “is at present a luxury for the wealthy. Although its price will probably fall into the future, it will never, of course, come into as common use as the bicycle.” ... Well, not quite.

But the author can perhaps be forgiven his short sightedness. Who could have imagined -- in a world of streetcars and the intercontinental railroad, in an America of walking trails and unpaved roads -- that the automobile would fundamentally rewrite the American landscape, in just a matter of decades?

When we think about the American Dream, we tend to think about the post-World War II vision. The American Dream was something that Americans would DRIVE to. In the popular lexicon, the American Dream meant a two-parent family with two children (one crew-cut boy and one pig-tailed girl, of course), and a dog -- all ensconced in a suburban tract house with a big yard surrounded by a white picket fence... and a roomy automobile parked in the garage to carry Dad to his job in the city each day.

The post-World War II baby boom went hand in hand with the suburban boom. By 1950, the national suburban growth rate was ten times that of central cities. The compact row house of the city was becoming a thing of

the past. In-fill development in our cities just wasn't suitable to mass-produced housing, so it didn't happen.

That version of the American Dream responded to the desires of a nation of young families seeking housing, space, privacy, and a homogenous community in which to live. But, in fact, that was only one interpretation of an American Dream that is as old as America itself.

The real core – the values inherent in the American Dream – do not describe a location; they run much deeper than that. The American Dream really speaks to: ownership, opportunity, security, and community.

The American Dream existed well before the automobile and the suburbs and the postwar baby boom. And it will endure long after the baby boomers, the suburbs, or even the automobiles, fade away. And, as shocking and as radical as the idea of a “horseless carriage” was in the early 1900s, I believe we are on the cusp of an equally dramatic reinterpretation of the American Dream today... as a new generation of Americans puts its own stamp on the American Dream.

The American Dream: Coming Soon to a Location Near You

In communities across the nation – from Atlanta to Portland to Los Angeles – we have already seen that American homebuyers, investors and developers are crafting a new version of the American Dream. Their version of the American Dream includes the timeless elements of ownership, opportunity, security and community that have been embraced by every generation of Americans. But their interpretation of the American Dream doesn't involve a car in the suburbs. ... They are building and buying homes near transit.

President Bush understands that homeownership is a cornerstone of America's vibrant communities, and that it helps families build stability and long-term financial security. Indeed, his economic policies have kept both taxes and interest rates low – and, as a result, the overall US homeownership rate hit an all-time high of 69.2 percent in the second quarter of 2004.

Transit skeptics tend to be fatalistic about Americans' housing preferences. They believe that the American Dream has only one script. But to many Americans today, the good life means not having to get into your car to get to work, BlockBuster Video, Starbucks, McDonalds or the doctor's office. They live in communities where transit – and transit-oriented development – has hung a figurative sign on suburban sprawl. And the sign says: “The American Dream – Visit us at our New Location.”

The New American Dream: Same Idea, Different Place

Behind these dramatic changes in the American Dream are dramatic changes in the American population. The population groups that currently

have the greatest preference for housing located near transit are precisely the population groups that will grow exponentially in the next twenty years.

The AARP reports that fully 71 percent of older households want to live within walking distance of transit. Imagine that: 71 percent! And, older Americans are one of the fastest-growing population groups in the country. Within a single generation, almost 35 percent of Americans will be over age 65.

Older Americans -- the fathers and mothers of my own generation, whose childhood memories include the Great Depression -- place a high value on independence and self-sufficiency. They dream of autonomy. The last thing they want is the nightmare of dependency on their children to drive them to get a prescription filled or pick up a gallon of milk.

No wonder the vast majority of people surveyed by the AARP want to live in a transit-rich environment! Their dream includes living in a place where they can maintain an active life without relying on a car, or a child, for transportation. As one real estate developer told Newsweek last week, "Who ever imagined that suburban flight would be round trip?"

Our population is becoming increasingly diverse, as well, especially as a consequence of immigration. Barring any dramatic changes in policy or world events, almost one-third of growth in our population by 2025 will come from the immigration to our country of people of Hispanic and Asian origin. Many of these "new" Americans arrive with aspirations to secure their foothold in the American Dream by saving to buy a home. Their version of the American Dream is often a safe, urban community where they can put down roots, and still maintain ties to their country of origin.

The composition of American households is also changing. The traditional nuclear families that made up 40 percent of households in 1970, now comprise less than 25 percent of households. And that percentage is expected to decline even more. In just one generation, the "typical" American household won't have children living in it. In fact, nearly 70 percent of households will consist of singles, empty nesters, and couples without children. And these are groups with a proven preference for our cities and the transit options they provide.

Young professionals and empty-nesters are seeking connections, not isolation. Their interpretation of the American Dream includes a community where they can enjoy a sense of belonging and safety, but where they can also reap the benefits of a lively, more diverse neighborhood. -- and live a "mixed use" life that combines interesting housing options with the amenities of the city.

Reinterpreting the American Dream for New American Realities...

It is not just demographics that are driving these changing desires, however. In a world of instant communication and growing global competition, Americans are working harder and longer hours than ever. And time is becoming an increasingly scarce commodity for all of us.

We certainly don't want to spend any more time than we have to just "getting there."

Unfortunately, the Texas Transportation Institute's Annual Urban Mobility Study recently delivered some sobering news. The number of hours that the average peak-time commuter in this country has lost to congestion has tripled over the last 20 years -- from 16 hours in 1982 to 46 hours lost annually in 2002. That's more than a whole work week - or a whole vacation week!

There are clear signs that people are getting tired of the isolation that the car culture tends to create, and they are growing weary of having to get in the car for even the simplest of errands... The fact is, a gallon of gas for a gallon of milk is a terrible exchange rate.

Fortunately, there are alternatives. Americans are fine-tuning the Dream to suit a new moment, and a new generation. And in this version of the American Dream, time is on public transit's side. Instead of driving, many people think it's time to start riding to the American Dream. The demographic and cultural changes taking place in America point directly to a transit-rich, urban vision of the American Dream for the 21st century.

For transit leaders, there is an exciting new tool that can help us achieve this vision. With funding from FTA, the Center for Transit Oriented Development has created an exciting new database that combines Geographic Information System (GIS) technology and data from the 2000 U.S. Census. With this database covering 42 metropolitan areas, city planners, local real estate developers, and others can identify the potential and make plans for transit-oriented development.

The Center recently released a study in which they used the database to conduct a national market assessment of the likely demand for housing near transit in the next two decades. Even using a very conservative methodology, they reach what the authors call a "staggering" conclusion. They project that, over the next 20 years, at least a quarter of all American households are likely to seek housing near transit. There is, in fact, the potential to more than double the amount of housing in transit zones in the next twenty years.

If — and it is a big if — the demand for such housing can be met in Atlanta and other communities throughout the country, transit oriented development has the potential to become an unprecedented catalyst for economic growth... and for the realization of this generation's American Dream.

We can all point to wonderful examples of transit-oriented development – in communities where transit has spurred increases in housing and thriving businesses. Here in Atlanta...and in Portland, Oregon; Charlotte, North Carolina; Arlington, Virginia; and Dallas, Texas ... transit agencies, local elected officials, developers, and investors have recognized the potential and seized the opportunities that transit creates.

But, in most communities, transit-oriented development has not yet caught fire... it is the exception, not the rule. Something has gotten lost between the paper world, where transit-oriented development makes sense... and the real world, where elected leaders, transit agency officials, developers, investors, and community activists must work together to bring transit-oriented development to life. As transit advocates, solving that disconnect is our next challenge.

I know that we ask you, as transit agency officials, to do a lot of things – the most important of which is running a good transit system! And I'm sure many of you are asking yourselves, "Why should housing development and economic development be MY responsibility? I'm not a development expert!"

I believe that transit's stake in housing and economic development is pretty high – because the more development takes place around transit, the more people will ride transit. But you don't have to be the development expert. You just need to be the community leader -- just as you have been in so many other arenas.

We've already seen dramatic changes in the transit paradigm. We've moved from counting buses to counting passengers, from risk-avoidance to risk-management, from competition to collaboration, and from the idyllic world of pre-9/11 to the security-conscious world of today. We have had challenging moments — but we have never stopped talking, or working toward shared goals.

And, embodied in these changes, is the quality that I admire most about this industry and the people who lead it: You have the quiet courage to change your assumptions and look at the world anew. And I know that you have the leadership skills to broaden the conversation about transit even more... To initiate a conversation that will embolden others in your community to see the potential of transit as a lynchpin for economic growth and community success.

In the vernacular of *Gone with the Wind*, I know that the transit industry will succeed because, "Frankly, my dear, we DO give a damn!"