

## Deputy Administrator Speeches 2008

Date	Subject		
<a href="#"><u>9/28/2008</u></a>	Center For Urban Transportation Research - Tampa, FL		
<a href="#"><u>7/29/2008</u></a>	18th Anniversary ADA Celebration - Washington, DC		
<a href="#"><u>7/22/2008</u></a>	FHWA-FTA Planners Seminar - Washington, DC		
<a href="#"><u>7/10/2008</u></a>	Taxicab, Paratransit & Limousine Association Midyear Leadership Conference - Paris, France		
<a href="#"><u>7/7/2008</u></a>	French-American Workshop on Public Transportation - Lyon, France		
<a href="#"><u>6/14/2008</u></a>	TCRP Oversight Project Selection Committee Meeting - Woods Hole, MA		
<a href="#"><u>6/11/2008</u></a>	CTAA - New Orleans, LA		
<a href="#"><u>5/4/2008</u></a>	APTA Bus & Paratransit Rodeo - Dallas, Texas		
<a href="#"><u>6/23/2015</u></a>	New Starts Roundtable - Pittsburgh, PA		
<a href="#"><u>4/15/2008</u></a>	African Growth and Opportunity Act Conference - April 15, 2008		
<a href="#"><u>3/13/2008</u></a>	Women In Infrastructure - New York, New York		

## **Women In Infrastructure - New York, New York**

**03-13-08**

REMARKS

SHERRY LITTLE

DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

WOMEN IN INFRASTRUCTURE

March 13, 2008

New York, New York

On behalf of President Bush and Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, I'm delighted to be here tonight to address such an important topic.

In his popular book, *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell identifies the point at which "the momentum for change becomes unstoppable." And he identifies some of the change agents involved in this process as mavens – that is, people we rely upon to connect us with new information, accumulate knowledge about the marketplace, and share it with others.

I strongly suspect that many of the women here tonight are these mavens. . . and the transportation industry has indeed reached the kind of tipping point that Gladwell describes.

Demand on our public transportation infrastructure has never been greater: Many highways are congested to the point of gridlock. . . And transit ridership in many regions has reached record highs. . . .

Yet securing the resources to keep this infrastructure in a state of good repair, and grow it further, is enormously challenging. . . .

The DOT calculates that we need roughly 22 billion dollars a year to improve the condition and performance of existing transit systems through 2024. That level is 70 percent higher than all transit capital spending in 2004.

Meanwhile, the price of commodities used to build roads, bridges, highways, transit systems, and so on has risen much faster than inflation over the last 4 years:

Between December 2003 and August 2007, the price of steel mill products rose about 160%. . .copper and brass, 270%. . .and aluminum and concrete, 125%. . . .

By the end of 2008, construction input costs are projected to rise 6-to-8 percent annually.

As you well know, the dramatic change in material prices in recent years, and the possibility of labor or material shortages, make it very difficult for bidders to develop reliable price estimates for their work. . . This makes big, complex projects especially prone to price and performance risks.

On top of all this, our traditional sources for funding transportation projects are under stress:

The Highway Trust Fund – the federal cash cow for transportation funding – is projected to run a deficit of 3 billion dollars by 2009. . . and the mass transit portion of the account will have a negative balance by 2012 if no action is taken.

The impact of all this could well play out in New York over time. . .The FTA and local authorities are investing billions in game-changing public rail projects here, including the new Second Avenue Subway; the East Side Access connection to Long Island; and the Access to the Region's Core project, between New Jersey and Manhattan. . .

Maintaining all this new transit capacity in a state of good repair is likely to be enormously challenging, and will require sustainable, long-term funding mechanisms.

As you well know, one of these potential mechanisms – tolling – is currently a hot topic in New York.

The funding question is near and dear to me. . . As some of you may know, before joining FTA I served on the Senate Banking

Committee staff, where I authored the transit provisions of SAFETEA, including a Public-Private Partnership Pilot Program.

Public-private partnerships are an important emerging tool for the transit industry, as a means of leveraging alternative funds for complex transit projects.

To aid in this, SAFETEA provides an additional \$15 billion in authority to issue private activity bonds – issued by private sector, proceeds used for public purposes.

We're pleased with the promise shown by these partnerships. Since 2000, 11 FTA capital transit investment projects have entailed public-private partnerships, worth more than \$10 billion.

And acceptance of PPPs growing rapidly. According to Ernst & Young, public-private partnerships are here to stay and may well be the only viable way for governments to reach their infrastructure development goals.

Moreover, testimony at Senate Banking Committee hearing this week on nation's infrastructure cited Goldman Sachs, stating that:

"Closing the infrastructure deficit will require tapping all available sources of capital: tax-exempt debt, federal government funding tools, and private sector funds."

One promising example of a public-private partnership in the transit industry involves the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) in San Francisco. This project seeks to extend rail service from the city to Oakland Airport. BART is negotiating with Merrill Lynch on creative ways to close a financing gap for this project. This is precisely what PPPs should help to accomplish.

Let me say in closing, that if all the "mavens" here tonight put their heads together, surely y'all can come up with some answers to our transportation and infrastructure challenges. . . .

I leave you with this provocative idea from Clare Booth Luce, who once served as a Congresswoman from Connecticut:

"They say women talk too much. If you have worked in Congress you know that the filibuster was invented by men."

Thank you.

## **African Growth and Opportunity Act Conference - April 15, 2008**

**04-15-08**

### **Remarks for Sherry Little, Deputy Administrator Capetown, South Africa**

Federal Transit Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation

“Financing Africa’s Transport Infrastructure”

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to our plenary session on financing Africa’s transportation infrastructure.

On behalf of President Bush and U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, I am delighted to be here with you in Cape Town.

The Department of Transportation is enormously proud to host the first-ever transportation and trade forum, in conjunction with the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

As we all know, sub-Saharan Africa faces many significant challenges in its quest to develop a viable transportation infrastructure that can support sustained economic growth, commerce, and mobility – within and across each country’s borders.

Indeed, it is fair to say that in terms of infrastructure, the region lags behind other developing nations. For example, less than a fifth of the sub-Saharan road network is paved, compared to more than two-fifths in South Asia, and over a quarter in Latin America. And while the region is home to nearly a fifth of the population among developing countries, it accounts for less than 3 percent of the total rail infrastructure.

Throughout the sub-Saharan, geographic and demographic realities contribute to the difficulties associated with developing a transportation infrastructure. More than a dozen of the continent’s countries are landlocked, population densities in the interior are very low, and the financial and social capital needed to jump-start various development projects is not always readily available.

In addition, wars and national disasters have at times disrupted well-intentioned efforts to move private-sector rail concession agreements forward.

These are formidable obstacles, to be sure. . . They call to mind an African proverb:

“When a mountain is in your path, do not sit down at its foot and cry. Get up and climb it.”

Fortunately, our African friends do not have to climb that mountain alone.

The U.S. and other nations are joining them on the journey.

For example, through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the United States is providing nearly 4 billion dollars in partnership grants to 9 African nations. We'll hear more about this later this morning from one of our panelists.

In addition, China's Eximbank has extended 2 billion dollars in loans to Angola and is involved in building roads in Mozambique.

And my agency, the Federal Transit Administration, has undertaken several initiatives through its International Mass Transportation Program.

Working with officials in South Africa. . . Lagos, Nigeria. . . the Republic of Liberia. . . Kenya, and elsewhere. . . we are providing technical assistance and information on a range of projects to improve the safety, planning, design, and operation of bus, rail, and other public transportation projects.

Obviously, this is only a beginning. A great deal more work lies ahead for the region.

One of the first and most important strategic goals is to obtain access to capital and financial partners in order to secure the resources needed to build roads, rails, ports, and other transportation assets.

Unfortunately, there is a chicken-and-egg situation at work here: Access to financing has been difficult, in part because of the real and perceived risks associated with investing in complex, long-term transportation projects. . . Many potential investors have questioned whether they would see timely returns on their investments, and whether loans could be repaid. . .

Yet without secure financing mechanisms, it is difficult -- if not impossible -- for national and municipal leaders to plan, build, and deliver much-needed infrastructure.

This morning, we will examine what's possible in the financing arena. . .

We will learn about some of the project financing models that may be available to the region, including public-private partnerships. . . uses of private capital. . . and a potentially cost-effective and efficient project management approach known as 'build, own, operate, and transfer'.

This is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to focus on pragmatic, workable solutions that may help these nations and their people to develop a robust transportation infrastructure that will lead to greater economic freedom and mobility for everyone.

Thank you.



## **New Starts Roundtable - Pittsburgh, PA**

**06-23-15**

### **Remarks for Sherry Little, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration**

On behalf of President Bush and Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, I'm pleased to welcome y'all to the New Starts Roundtable.

I have just returned from an extraordinary trip to Africa. . . where DOT hosted the first-ever transportation and trade forum, in conjunction with the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Our government is working closely with several African nations and private partners to help these developing countries finance and build the transportation infrastructure they need to move their people and their economies forward.

The need for transportation solutions in Africa is so great -- they lack the institutional frameworks that we taken for granted here in the U.S.

It's always a pleasure to bring our grantees together to share information and ideas. We know you've worked long and hard to compete successfully for our discretionary New Starts funds.

There is an old African proverb:

"When a mountain is in your path, do not sit down at its foot and cry. Get up and climb it."

Beginning the New Starts process is very much like arriving at the foot of a good-sized mountain...

Fortunately, none of you has sat down and cried because you have all scaled the mountain...

I congratulate you for your dedication to bringing new and enhanced transit options to your communities... And thanks, also, for your patience... We know this is a long, slow, steady climb.

The New Starts program is such a vital part of FTA's mission. At headquarters, and in our regional offices, we're always looking for ways to strengthen, streamline, and improve the program... and to deliver projects on time, on budget, and with the promised benefits.

These are important goals -- both on behalf of our grantees who must live through the many stages of the planning and development process ...and on behalf of American taxpayers, who rely on us to select and fund the most promising capital transit projects around the nation.



I believe we can be proud of our record for the New Starts program, and the confidence the Administration has placed in us.

For FY09, the Administration has proposed more than \$1.6 billion for capital investment grants for New Starts – a record-setting amount. Our FY09 budget also proposes \$200 million for 9 new Small Starts programs, including bus rapid transit projects... That's more than double the number funded last year.

You'll hear more on Small Starts later this morning.

In the coming year, we will continue to fund 12 existing New Starts capitol projects... we hope to sign two additional FFGAs if all the required conditions are met... and we'll invest in moving selected New Starts projects forward into Final Design.

Now, this is all good news... but we must also be realistic.

As you know, SAFETEA expires at the end of fiscal 2009. The legislation gave us about \$11 billion in commitment authority, including a three-year look-ahead.

Here's the reality check:

Taking into account our outstanding commitments -- including existing FFGAs and those projects promised in our FY09 budget -- we have about \$1 billion in available commitment authority...

A number of projects are competing for those remaining funds. It's going to be tough to invest in all of the worthy projects on the drawing boards, before SAFETEA expires.

Let me assure you, we will do everything in our power to move as many projects forward that meet our stringent New Starts criteria, as we possibly can. . .

And as we do that, we're working to improve the way we administer the program as a whole. We've taken successful steps to improve coordination and oversight between our regional offices, headquarters, and grantees... and to deliver the technical assistance our grantees want and expect from us.

I think you'll see good results from these efforts.

Now I want to talk about the future.

As some of you may know, before joining FTA I served on the Senate Banking Committee staff, where I authored the transit provisions of SAFETEA.

In fact, I'm honored to have with us today two staffers on Capitol Hill whom you will hear from later on—Joyce Rose and Amy Scarton.

I know personally how tough it can be to get away from a demanding job during the week, when Congress is in session.

I've spent more than a year now helping to implement a law that I had a hand in crafting... It's been fascinating... illuminating... and very challenging.

Looking ahead... in the time we have left at FTA, Jim and I want to concentrate on three areas that we think are key to leaving the agency -- and the New Starts program -- in the best shape possible, before new legislation kicks in.

It's like borrowing a car -- you want to return it in better shape than when you got it.

First, we want to ensure that we use our limited resources to make smart investments in the nation's transit and transportation infrastructure. To do that, we're comparing predictions made throughout the project development process to actual performance, once a project is opened...

Second, we're actively promoting private sector involvement in financing, building, and operating capital transit projects -- and encouraging private entities to assume a share of the risk...

And third, we're focusing on keeping our legacy transit systems in a state of good repair. Encouraging grantees to build new capacity, without providing for aging transit infrastructure, is not a winning long-term strategy.

You'll hear more on all this later...

But I want to emphasize a few things first, beginning with the state-of-good-repair issue.

We issued proposed guidance for comment last week, letting you know that we intend to pay extra attention to how you demonstrate that sufficient local resources are available to preserve the quantity and quality of existing transit service.

This is written into SAFETEA, y'all.

We're looking for assurances that your existing transit system is in a state of good repair -- and likely to remain so, whether or not new investments are made.

What's more, if your capital plan seeks to use formula or mod funds for a New Starts project, then rest assured we're going to scrutinize the estimated costs of recapitalization to ensure that the plan provides sufficient funds to meet those costs from sources other than FTA formula funds.

Two key thoughts about this:

First, it's a big deal -- we've reached a critical stage where decisions of the past are catching up with us... We can't keep doing business as usual.

Second, we don't want you to rob Peter to pay Paul -- to pour money into new capital projects without also maintaining legacy systems.

The plain truth is that our transportation and transit infrastructure have reached a tipping point... If we don't identify sustainable funding sources to preserve our rapidly aging legacy systems and provide for future maintenance of new construction, then we're doing a real disservice to future generations...

But identifying reliable sources of funding for transit projects is enormously challenging -- especially as commodities and construction costs continue to escalate . . and as traditional sources of revenue, like the Highway Trust Fund, decrease.

That's why we're conducting a demonstration project with selected New Starts grantees to encourage public-private partnerships on capital transit projects where additional funding sources are necessary.

This approach has worked well for highway capital construction -- so we're trying it on the transit side.

The goal is for project sponsors to contract with private partners to design, construct, finance, operate, and maintain transit facilities -- from rail and bus stations to parking garages.

These arrangements offer many potential advantages, by supplementing public funding with private equity and debt... transferring long-term financial risks to the private sector... and speeding up project construction and delivery, which in turn may reduce costs on some transit projects.

We have selected three locations for public-private partnership demonstrations -- Houston, Denver, and Oakland, California.

We're monitoring these projects closely, and will keep you posted on how they turn out.

Now a heads-up:

For a detailed look at whether public-private partnerships are right for your area, consider attending one of four workshops we're sponsoring with the National Council for Public-Private Partnerships over the summer.

These sessions will cover everything you want to know, including which states have passed legislation to facilitate these partnerships . . . how to determine which types of projects are a good fit . . . and financing options.

According to Ernst & Young, public-private partnerships are here to stay and may well be the only viable way for governments to reach their infrastructure development goals.

So sign up! And be among the first to participate in the benefits of successful public-private partnerships!

The last area I want to touch on is how we're getting a better handle on cost and ridership information for New Starts.

We simply have to admit that historically, y'all tend to over-estimate ridership forecasts, and under-estimate project costs.

This happens systematically -- not just once in awhile.

Until recently, we simply hadn't done enough of a detailed analysis to determine the reasons for this gap.

This is an issue I'm very familiar with -- going back to my days on the Banking Committee.

As we drafted SAFETEA, we knew that this was an area that had to be addressed. After all, you can't manage what you can't measure...

And if FTA is not sure whether grantees are making accurate forecasts, then it's difficult to know whether the right investment decisions are being made.

So we wrote several provisions into SAFETEA to improve New Starts cost and ridership estimates, collect more cost data, study contractor performance, and develop before-and-after studies of New Starts projects.

Now we've finally got some good predicted-vs-actual data from 2003 and 2007...

The bottom line is, we still have a ways to go, to make these forecasts more accurate... but we're getting better, and using more real-time information.

The industry's ability to accurately predict ridership is almost twice as good now as it was in 1990...

However, forecast accuracy didn't improve much between the 2003 and 2007 studies.

Clearly, we must keep working at this... We can't afford to fly blind -- and neither can you...

Investing -- and most importantly, re-investing -- in our nation's transportation infrastructure is one of the most difficult challenges facing the United States today...

It's costly... it's time-consuming... and it takes enormous political will and commitment at the federal, state, and local levels...

There are a lot of "unknowns" involved...

For instance, it's not clear where all the money will come from to rebuild and enhance our national transit assets -- as well as our highways, roads, bridges, tunnels, and other infrastructure.

But one thing is very clear:

The time and energy y'all are putting into the New Starts process is enormously valuable...

You're making a lasting contribution to your communities, and to the mobility and economic health of your regions.

On behalf of all of us at FTA, I cannot thank you enough for all your hard work...

I promise you that Jim and I will continue to work hard with you as well, as you make your way through the New Starts process.

I'll be here at the New Starts Roundtable through the rest of today....so please seek me out... I'd like an opportunity to visit with you.

Thank you.

## **APTA Bus & Paratransit Rodeo - Dallas, Texas**

**05-04-08**

### **Remarks for Sherry Little, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration**

Good afternoon!

On behalf of President Bush and Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, it's a pleasure to welcome you to this great conference, and I'm so pleased to be here with y'all.

APTA's support of FTA over the years is immeasurable, and I can't even begin to thank you all for the work you do. Thanks for putting on another terrific APTA conference - and APTA members, thank you, for all the great work you do to meet the nation's transit needs.

I'm here today to celebrate the role that buses play in our nation's public transit system. . .

I'm here to applaud and encourage everyone who rides a public bus. . . all the transit agencies who successfully manage and operate bus systems, both large and small . . . and all those in the public and private sectors who are working to make buses themselves cleaner, greener, faster, and more comfortable.

know it may seem like commuter rail is the star of public transit because it's usually the focus in the news. Unfortunately, buses are sometimes perceived as the supporting actor.

But, in hundreds of the nation's smallest and most rural communities, where rail is nonexistent, bus service is the star. It's the lifeline people need to get from home to work, school, the doctor, or the supermarket.

Buses truly are the workhorses of the transit industry.

According to APTA's own figures, in 2007, about 3.9 million trips were taken on passenger rail lines -- but many more - 6 million - were taken on buses around the country.

Put another way, roughly 60 percent of all trips taken on public transit system last year, were taken in a bus.

And it's no wonder - buses are flexible, responsive to local conditions, and relatively cost effective to operate.

At FTA, we truly value the service that transit bus operators provide -- even if we have not always funded bus programs to the levels y'all would like to see.

Nevertheless, buses are playing an increasingly important role in the transit industry. . . I'm truly excited about the incredible momentum that is building for bus rapid transit in this country. . .

I remember the first hearing on BRT... back when I was on the Senate Banking Committee. . . It drew a standing-room-only crowd. . .

It's very clear that as the nation's traffic congestion problems grow worse, BRT is going to be a vital part of the solution.

You may have heard that late last month, the DOT awarded more than \$200 million to Los Angeles and more than \$100 million to Chicago to develop innovative ways to reduce congestion. . .

Those funds will be used, in part, to finance new bus service running in high-occupancy toll lanes - a move that will really speed people along. . . And in Chicago, the funds will help launch four new pilot BRT routes, to relieve traffic throughout the Windy City.

I know that DOT's decision last year to put funds towards urban congestion relief rather than towards discretionary bus programs was not a popular decision.

But, I truly believe it was the right decision. With congestion increasing so rapidly, it was time to implement creative solutions.

Of course, our federal dollars will always be committed to bringing mobility to populations that need it most. And, I'm happy to tell you that some of that money will go toward expanding and enhancing bus service in some of the most densely populated and congested parts of the country. . .

I also recognize that adding new bus toll lanes may be controversial, but don't forget that a portion of the millions raised this way goes to building more public transit -- including BRT and other transit bus systems. . . .

As long as we work together, we can make these new ways of funding transit work for everyone!

I'm proud of the significant and historic investments that FTA is making in BRT. Our fiscal 2009 budget sets aside \$200 million for 9 new Small Starts projects -- and 6 of these are proposed new or expanding BRT lines. . . In Flagstaff, for example, the Mountain Links BRT line will use electric-hybrid vehicles to connect local shopping and residential centers with a university campus -- bringing fast, efficient, and environmentally friendly transit to one of the country's fastest-growing areas.

Believe me, this represents real progress. . . I drafted the original Small Starts language for SAFETEA . . . At the time, there was nothing like it on the radar screen -- no mechanism for providing discretionary funds for small-scale bus projects. . . It's so rewarding to see this become a reality - and to see buses play a starring role here. . .

In addition, FTA is proud to collaborate with APTA on developing new technical standards designed to bring transit technology into the 21st century -- so that state and local transit operators can deploy the latest electronic fare and toll collection systems, and better automate operations and communications. . .

These advances are really going to help make state-of-the-art buses a reality. . . I want to encourage y'all who are transit operators to work with us and other stakeholders, to bring these intelligent transportation system standards into the fold.

At FTA, we're also committed to investing in another type of technology -- one that enables buses to run on alternative fuels. We're doing our part to contribute to reducing vehicle emissions and providing cleaner air.

I'm pleased to announce that this year -- for the first time -- FTA has unallocated dollars from our Clean Fuels Program. . . Within the next few days, we'll announce the availability of applications to compete for nearly \$29 million in discretionary funds for this program, so we can help our industry reduce energy consumption and improve air quality.

I want to thank APTA for keeping up the good work in an area that's perhaps less glamorous than going green or creating high-tech toll sensors -- and that's procurement.

As you know, we awarded \$1.9 million late last year for new vehicle procurement standards to help the industry build and buy better buses and rail cars. . . I understand that last month, the folks working on this moved closer to developing a single guideline for procuring different sized buses, using multiple fuel types. . . Thanks for all your efforts on this!

Now, so far, we've talked about funding and technology . But we cannot ignore the human side of bus transit. . . After all, this is all about bringing mobility to people who cannot, or prefer not, to drive everywhere. . .the frail, the elderly, people with very limited incomes, and of course, the millions who are disabled.

Now more than ever, with gas prices spiraling, it's so important to devote time and energy to the human services side of the transit equation. . .

FTA's Office of Civil Rights is very diligent about investigating and overseeing full compliance with ADA requirements -- and helping to ensure that individuals with disabilities are well served.

In 2006 -- the latest year we have figures for -- more than 58 million ADA paratransit trips were taken in this country. That's a significant market -- and one we must do our very best to serve.

I'm pleased to report that we are in the process of awarding \$400,000 in cooperative agreements to two organizations that will spend a year creating



technical assistance information on the ADA. This information will be available by Fall 2009.

We've also been conducting civil rights training -- covering six cities so far, with more sessions on the books . .

And we're partnering with several organizations to conduct research and outreach on ADA and related issues. For example, this past spring, FTA and Easter Seals held a very successful distance learning event on fixed-route driver responsibilities under ADA.

We know y'all are very interested in these issues. . . Within the last year, more than 2,000 people have subscribed to FTA's civil rights web pages. . . We are truly committed to an open exchange of information on the full range of ADA compliance issues and other civil rights issues that transit operators and the public need to know about. . .

Our door is always open on this -- and so is our website! . . So I encourage you to let us know what you need to know about ADA compliance and similar issues.

At FTA, we are serious about making human services policies and programs work for the traveling public. Our staff realizes that to do this, we've also got to get serious about mobility management strategies.

Specifically, we need to figure out how best to integrate the full range of mobility needs -- paratransit, elder care, medical transport, workforce needs, and so forth -- with transit operations and plans.

Mobility management isn't about one mode versus another -- rather, it's about focusing on the customer. . . and coordinating the best solutions, with public and private operators in the mix.

APTA and FTA are engaged in a five-year strategic planning process to figure this out. . .

This is an opportunity for thinking outside the box, and we are so excited to have ya'll take on a leadership role here.

And bear in mind this is going to be one of the areas we're hoping to address under reauthorization.

Now, while we're on the subject of transit strategies. . . By now, most of you are familiar with the new charter bus rule we have issued.

This was an important ruling -- the first revision to the charter rule in 20 years. . .

Strategically, the goal is to clarify the rules governing public and private charter operations -- especially the circumstances under which each is allowed to operate.

This rule may not be perfect -- but we think it's a step in the right direction. . . and we are doing our best to answer all the questions y'all have on this. . . We're working through the implementation.

Now, I mentioned reauthorization a moment ago. . . I want to return to that. . .

As you know, Congress will enact new authorizing legislation for federal transportation programs some time after 2009. . .

I think the legislation has done well by the transit industry -- but as with everything, there's always room for improvement.

While it's too soon to go into specifics, I do want to highlight a couple of areas, where we are hoping the new legislation can make a difference. . .

First, we are serious about the need to maintain transit systems in a state of good repair. . . before we add a beautiful new sunroom onto the old house, we have to make sure to fix the leaky, old roof!!

For transit bus operators, this applies to stations, parking facilities, bus shelters, and vehicles. . .

Even Very Small Starts projects must, under current law, demonstrate that operating and maintenance costs are less than 5 percent of the agency's budget. . . This could become an issue for older bus systems where legacy assets are aging and requiring more attention.

Second, we're looking at transit-oriented development and land use policies.

Transit bus operators have a golden opportunity to coordinate with developers on locating transit hubs near employment and housing centers. . . This will topic will be at the forefront of our reauthorization.

FTA staff are continuing to brainstorm on reauthorization -- and we will welcome your input in the coming months.

Finally, FTA is in the midst of conducting an email survey to determine our customer's level of satisfaction with FTA's existing products and services. We believe y'all's input will yield valuable information enabling us to respond in a timely fashion to industry trends, performance issues and communication concerns. Expect to receive a reminder email and link to the survey this week from the Administrator asking for your feedback.

Let me close by once again thanking all the transit and paratransit operators who are here today, for all of the dedication and compassion ya'll show -- each and every day -- to the millions of riders you serve. . .

I can't tell you how many incredible stories I've heard about drivers going the extra mile to help an elderly or sick rider get to the hospital . . .

In today's world, a little kindness goes a long way.

That said, we all face some tough challenges ahead . . .

With gas prices soaring and the cost of living rising. . .Now, more than ever, Americans are looking for alternatives to fueling and maintaining expensive automobiles.

And that spells opportunity. . . This is an historic moment for transit operators, and for the bus industry, to step up and show America that you've got the right stuff -- the know-how, the dedication, and compassion bring mobility to millions of people, and keep our economy moving.

I've seen firsthand your compassion and dedication. And I know APTA and the bus industry will be key to solving the nation's transportation issues.

We at FTA will do everything we can to support you in this venture.

Keep up the great work!

Thank you.

## **CTAA - New Orleans, LA**

**06-11-08**

### **Remarks for Sherry Little, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration**

On behalf of President Bush and Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, I want to congratulate CTAA and its members for the amazing work y'all do to bring affordable, accessible transit choices to millions of Americans and their communities.

Before coming to FTA, I spent 8 years on the Senate Banking Committee, getting to know the transit industry...and identifying areas where communities were successfully addressing mobility needs...

I spent a lot of time reaching out to the industry, and that's when I developed a partnership with both Dale and Chris Zeilinger.

You'll find many of CTAA's good ideas reflected in SAFETEA, thanks to Dale, Chris, and CTAA's outstanding staff and membership...

I really appreciate CTAA's tireless advocacy of practical, real-world solutions to mobility challenges throughout rural and small urban areas, made me a believer in CTAA and its mission...

I am so excited to be back in the Big Easy!

This city, and this event, are personally very dear to me. . .not only because it's great to see so many of y'all again...

New Orleans is deeply imprinted on my brain.

My very earliest memory is from here...I actually rode the St. Charles Streetcar when I was 4 years old. . . I can remember that! As a country girl from the South, I understand the needs of rural and small-urban transit operators and their respective communities...

Transit is not just about building infrastructure -- it's about the people that infrastructure serves.

Back home, I volunteer at a nonprofit agency serving at-risk youth. . . Getting these kids to training centers that are not near any public transit is a real challenge...

Clearly, access equals opportunity. . . And the nexus between poverty and transportation is very real...

The need for accessible public transit in New Orleans and throughout the Gulf Region is also very real.

Sometimes, you don't realize how much you value something, until it is damaged or taken away...

I had an opportunity to visit New Orleans about three months after Hurricane Katrina, along with folks from HUD and the local transit authority.

That was really, really tough to see...

I vividly recall taking a helicopter ride over Bayou Le Batre and New Orleans...The devastation took my breath away.

Now...nearly 3 years later...I'm greatly encouraged by all the progress to restore transit service to the folks in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, and Florida.

I know it hasn't been easy, or quick...But things are returning to normal - maybe even better than normal - and that's great news.

I'm very proud of FTA's contribution to the Hurricane Katrina recovery effort...

Around the time I came on board at FTA, the Bush Administration provided generous resources to rebuild transit systems harmed by the hurricanes.

I made sure the money was allocated to the appropriate places, and that transit agencies received the resources that they needed to help fix up their systems and put streetcar lines and bus routes back in business.

As y'all know, last summer we awarded \$35 million to help 19 Gulf Coast transit agencies continue their recovery efforts. . . . And we waived local matching funds for many agencies...This allowed them to continue to provide essential transit services in the wake of the storms.

I'm so pleased to tell you that we've decided to extend the local waiver for another year -- through June 2009...And we'll address waivers on operating assistance on a case-by-case basis.

So now we're seeing the results...

Along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Coast Transit Authority (CTA) has made a remarkable come-back...upgrading general passenger facilities along all its routes...adding benches and covered shelters...and planning improvements to fixed route systems to accommodate changes in travel patterns since Katrina.

The numbers really tell the story:

CTA's ridership was up 53% in fiscal 2008 over fiscal 2007!

And ridership has been nearly 10% higher than pre-Katrina levels!

Meanwhile, CTA's new Casino Hopper is a big success...running buses every 15 minutes...almost 24/7...between the big attractions.

From Beaux Rivage to Boomtown, tourists are pumping money into the local economy...and the cross-town casino bus is a big part of that success...So Biloxi is back in business!

This just goes to show: Investing in transit pays economic dividends!

We owe a big 'thank you' to Kevin Coggin, CTA's Executive Director, for bringing CTA back from the brink...

I was just down in FTA's Region IV, in Atlanta, where Kevin received FTA's Guiding Star award for his remarkable dedication to restoring service following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Kevin is a native Biloxian, y'all...and he has really poured his heart and soul into making the city a better place to live, work, and play!

Now, turning to New Orleans, the future is getting brighter here all the time...

Last week, RTA took delivery on the first of 39 new biodiesel buses! These new buses will help meet rising levels of demand-response trips...

In addition, the first rebuilt streetcars for St. Charles, Riverfront and Canal Street should be completed later this summer...

And speaking of Canal Street, we're thrilled that plans for a new \$10 million streetcar terminal are moving along...

I'm confident this will be a beautiful new addition that provides a safer, more convenient transfer point for boarding buses.

Y'all, I hope to come back for the ribbon-cutting for the final leg of the re-opened St. Charles line...

At last, the oldest continually operating street railway in America will be fully restored!

I'm proud of FTA's \$8 million contribution to this historic railway!

I also want to mention that the Rosa Parks Transportation Center in Lafayette, Louisiana, is moving forward. This is a great multi-modal project...

I'm proud that both FTA and the Federal Highway Administration have provided funding.

I know there's more work to be done to fully restore NOLA to its former glory, but as Beatle John Lennon said:

"I've got to admit it's getting better, a little better all the time."

(Now, in case y'all didn't know. . . John Lennon isn't from the Big Easy, of course. . . but his piano was brought here last year to help raise awareness and money for the city. . . So he was here in spirit.)

Looking beyond hurricane recovery, I believe our ongoing work to ramp up rural transit programs will have a long-lasting impact on communities and public transportation.

From TEA-21 to SAFETEA, we have seen unprecedented growth in rural programs...

In 2006, 74% of all counties in the U.S. had rural transit service...

I'm proud of the contribution FTA has made to this growth...

Between 2003 and 2008, FTA's funding for rural transit programs doubled - from about \$240 million to \$480 million.

As I said to y'all at the outset...a lot of this is due to the very effective advocacy work by CTAA during SAFETEA authorization.

I'm convinced that funding for rural transit is going to make a qualitative difference in the lives of those who depend on transit for work, school, shopping, and more.

And we've come such a long way, y'all!

I'm not all that ancient. . . but even when I was growing up, the only way to get around if you didn't have a car was by horse...

Today, in places like Escambia County, Florida, and Hattiesburg, Mississippi people have a real alternative, thanks to public transit...

I know we have some human service providers here today from both those places -- and they serve the very folks we're really hoping to support here...

Now, those of you in the transit industry have to do more than just make service available...You also need to track its growth and ensure that funds are used effectively.

We're going to help you with that...

FTA has implemented a rural data collection program, to show the extent of rural needs and how rural areas are spending their funds on transportation services...

I know this is a bit of a challenge initially...

But let me tell you from experience what this will mean...

You need good, reliable data that shows the outcomes from investments...including the number of trips and extent of service provided.

This kind of information is essential to making your case to decision makers on Capitol Hill...

Once you've made the case for the resources you need. . . it's much harder for anybody to take them away from you...

Now, something else we're doing to help things go smoothly -- we've increased the technical capacity of the operators and grantees providing additional assistance to the state DOTs, so they fully understand all the FTA requirements.

The growth in rural transit is really great -- but that's not all...I've got other good news to share with y'all:

I'm proud to announce that a total of \$96 million in discretionary funds has been awarded under FTA's Bus and Bus Facilities Program for FY08...

The funds were awarded to 27 transit agencies serving all types of communities -- including small urban and rural communities in Kentucky, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Texas, and other states...

These grantees were selected from the same pool that competed for the bus NOFA last year...We're glad their patience has been rewarded!

These funds will provide a real boost to agencies that may have been holding off on buying new equipment, expanding bus services and facilities, and investing in rural transportation.

We know the money is greatly needed -- and it couldn't come at a better time for the transit industry and riders everywhere.

And let's never forget: Buses are the real workhorses of our transit systems -- especially when they are clean, green, flexible, and efficient!

We've got FTA folks here to talk more later about the bus charter rule and other bus and rail issues -- including Susan Schruth, our Associate Administrator for Program Management...and Linda Lasley, one of our ace attorneys who wrote the new charter rule.

Now, we're pleased to be able to make these investments transit, but in doing so, we must never lose sight of the human element -- the customer -- especially in rural and small urban communities where people are really feeling the economic pressure from rising gas prices.

That's why it's so important for all of us to recognize the need for effective mobility systems that enable our communities to coordinate critical social services -- such as paratransit, elder care, medical transport, and workforce needs -- with transit services.

Mobility management is an emerging priority for us, and we need to figure out how best to integrate the full range of every community's mobility needs.



We are funding mobility managers who coordinate with transportation providers...And APTA is working with us on a five-year strategic planning process to figure this out...

This effort isn't about one service sector versus another – rather, it's about focusing on the customer. . . and coordinating the best solutions, with public and private operators in the mix. Private operators have so much to offer!

Done right, an effective plan to coordinate human services with transit will not only improve the quality of individual lives, but will save dollars.

After all, preventive outpatient health care is a much cheaper option than acute care in a hospital...And our returning veterans, some of whom carry injuries, will need a way to get to health care facilities, jobs, and other support services.

Every community wins when a successful, coordinated, mobility management strategy is in place!

Addressing these mobility challenges is also the goal of our United We Ride program. This initiative harnesses the transportation spending of individual agencies into a coordinated set of services that expands mobility options for individuals, while reducing per-passenger trip costs.

In other words, we want to get more rides for the same or less resources...And we want our customers to have an easier time getting their rides...

Our goal is to create a single source of transportation information rather than make individuals negotiate a maze of different federal programs.

You'll hear more, y'all, about all this later from FTA's Doug Birnie -- our maestro of mobility management.

I'm proud of my role on the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility on behalf of Secretary Peters...

And I'm encouraged to see how agencies across the country are coming together to promote interagency cooperation so that transportation-disadvantaged persons have access to more transportation services.

Now, I know many of you are very concerned about an access issue right now, involving Medicaid coverage.

A proposal by CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid) to essentially allow insurance companies to "de-list" non-emergency transportation services for Medicaid recipients raises big concerns for you – and for us.

Fortunately, we believe that most protected groups – those who are transportation-disadvantaged -- will likely still receive coverage.

The larger point is that there was not a well-coordinated discussion of this issue among members of the Federal Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility -- including FTA -- before the proposed rule was issued.

We recognize we need to do a better job of getting out front of issues like this in the future.

The Council hopes to begin evaluating the impact of federal policies like this one, before they go into effect.

This is an important issue, and we promise not to lose sight of it.

Let me address one other concern we've heard from y'all on...

I know y'all have some questions about funding for JARC and New Freedom...

We know that many of you have found it difficult to navigate the requirements for these programs

I was just in Atlanta, where our grantees brought this up over and over again...

One person there summed up how a lot of y'all feel about this: "There's not a lot of juice for the squeeze."

We are going to look at this going forward, as part of reauthorization...

In the meantime, I've got a bit a good news:

While it's true that unspent FY06 funds for these programs will lapse come September...these funds will be reappropriated to states and urbanized areas in FY09.

We do recognize that the mobility and accessibility needs of low-income persons, and persons with disabilities, in areas where local leaders have been slow to implement the programs, is just as important as the needs in areas where local leaders have acted promptly.

But we want to keep these important programs on track...And don't forget: FTA's regional offices are able to offer any technical assistance you may need, to work through the grant application process.

Plus, we're considering making mobility management a grantee performance measure in the future...

It's an important aspect of how efficiently y'all use your resources...

Later on, y'all will learn more about what's going on with JARC and New Freedom from FTA's experts, including David Schneider.

Now I want to switch gears and highlight another important priority for Jim and me, while we're at FTA...and that is, ensuring that our transit systems are maintained in a state of good repair.

We must ensure that both our aging legacy rail and bus systems...and all the new light rail, rapid bus, and other assets going into operation...can be well cared for...and that we can afford to retool, repair, and upgrade them.

We must strike the right balance here...We never want to see anyone building rail at the expense of bus systems.

And remember...the new transit systems of today, will become the aging, legacy systems of tomorrow...Nothing stays new, or in perfect working order, without a lot of hard work and reliable re-investments.

It appears that relatively few transit agencies conduct detailed studies on state-of-good repair, on a regular basis – like every one or two years...

We must work together to help the transit industry find the resources to strike the right balance -- to ensure the safety and soundness of legacy systems...while also enabling these systems to grow as demand requires.

I encourage you to meet regularly with your Safety and Maintenance Directors to get an honest assessment of where things stand at your agencies.

We're taking a number of steps at FTA to address the state-of-good-repair issue. . . including meeting with transit operators and industry experts later this year, to discuss recapitalization and asset management strategies.

The last issue I want to discuss with you is our upcoming reauthorization...

Everywhere I go, people come up to me with questions about how FTA's funding levels and programs will be affected by the legislation that replaces SAFETEA...

The answer is, I don't know...But we are thinking hard about this...

The upcoming reauthorization effort could not be more important in terms of the future of transit in America...

Clearly. . . we are at a crossroads in transportation. Our federal funding system cannot keep with our needs, climate change is a growing concern, and highway congestion is disrupting the daily lives of Americans across the nation.

We've simply got to identify new, sustainable funding sources as our traditional federal funding levels decline.

As you may know our Highway Trust Fund – the principle mechanism for federally funding transportation and transit projects – is expected run a deficit of more than \$3 billion next year...and the mass transit portion of that account will run a deficit by 2010.

Congress is working on a fix – but they're not there yet.

One of the big questions -- a subject of much debate here in the U.S. and also in Europe -- is the role that excise taxes play in helping to solve this problem...

Specifically, What should we do about fuel taxes? . . . Raise them to generate more funding for transportation? . . . Or lower them, to reduce the burden of expensive fuel?

Well, if the gas tax issue plays out like the cigarette tax issue -- and it appears that it will -- we've got problems: As people drive less, and drive more fuel efficient vehicles, we'll see gas tax revenues decline further. . . There are contradictory incentives at work here. . . By the same token, we see cigarette tax revenues decline as more people quit smoking. . . It's difficult to predicate a tax on people's behavior -- because behavior changes.

So raising the fuel tax is not going to be a panacea, by any means...

So it's time to get back to the drawing board and think long and hard about what role transit can play in helping to solve these problems -- and provide all Americans, regardless of income, with the mobility and access to services they require.

Dale Marsico made a good point when we were chatting recently...He noted that diesel fuel has risen by 75% over the last couple of years...and that leaves many of you with little choice but to raise fares...

I know we're all concerned about the impact that has on lower-income transit riders...

Reauthorization offers a fresh opportunity to identify more flexible funding options, which would allow more discretion at the state and local level -- for building and pricing transit services...

And reauthorization offers a chance to create a new paradigm, where there is more reliance on the private sector to build transportation infrastructure and operate our transit systems.

We don't know how all this will turn out...

But we do know that Washington, D.C. does not have all the answers!

So we invite all of you to be part of the solution here...

I'm confident that CTAA and its members can step up and show America that you've got the right stuff -- the know-how, the dedication, and the compassion to bring mobility to millions of people who rely on your services every day, and keep our economy moving.

And I know that ya'll have a very central role to play in solving the transportation challenges facing our rural communities and small cities and towns.

We at FTA will do everything we can to support your road to success!

So keep up the great work!

As the legendary New Orleans jazz musician Louis Armstrong once said,

“We all do ‘do, re mi,’ but you have to find the other notes yourself.”

I believe that working together, we can find all the notes we need to compose a first-class transit system for all our citizens.

Thank You!

## **TCRP Oversight Project Selection Committee Meeting - Woods Hole, MA**

**06-14-08**

### **Remarks for Sherry Little, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration**

On behalf of President Bush and Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, I want to welcome y'all to the annual TCRP Project Oversight Selection Committee meeting.

I want the new TOPS Committee members. . . We're so glad to have you on board, and I'm sure the committee will benefit from your expertise.

Thank you to the National Academy of Sciences for hosting this meeting once again in gorgeous Woods Hole . . .

Cape Cod's beauty may be everlasting, but at FTA, things do change now and again. . .

So let me acknowledge some folks who are taking on new responsibilities. . .

First, though he's not here with us today, we're so grateful to Ron Hynes for all the years of service he's give to FTA in our research office, most recently as Acting Associate Administrator. . . .

Ron worked tirelessly to improve oversight, implement important programs like our national fuel cell bus demonstration, and complete our research program plans. . . Ron is moving to the Federal Railroad Administration, and we wish him great success there.

Ron's successor. . . who is here. . . is the dapper and highly capable Vince Valdes. . . In his 25 years as a senior manager in the public and private sector—the last six with FTA—Vincent has demonstrated a clear ability to lead change and innovation in transportation research, urban and regional planning, engineering research, neighborhood economic development, environmental protection, and international development. . . .

We know Vince is going to accomplish great things on the research front, and we're glad to have him in this position. . . .

I want to acknowledge Kathryn Waters of APTA and Bob Skinner, for all of the fantastic work they do, as advocates for transit research.

And to all the transit agency general managers who are with us today – thank you for that you've done to help to boost transit ridership to its highest level since the late 1950s. . . .

Finally, I want to give a shout-out to the business and consulting folks here today. . . We need y'all to help us tap into the right technologies. . . and creative financing. . . so that we can continue to build and invest in the nation's transit infrastructure.

Let's talk about funding for a moment. . .

FTA is once again awarding \$9.3 million to Transit Cooperative Research Program for FY08. . . . The good news is these funds will be available by or before the end of this month.

Vince will fill y'all in later about our FY09 budget request.

Y'all have done a terrific job using available resources wisely -- choosing and funding projects that are going to make a real difference to transit operators and riders in the long-run. . .

We're very excited about these initiatives. . .

This year, for example, y'all have chosen 5 projects. . .

One looks at methods for evaluating the economic impacts of transit projects. . . This is so important! We must have really good data to make the case to Congressional appropriators, for transit funding.

Another new project examines ways to operate street-level light rail transit at higher speeds. . . This is also important. . . . Now more than ever, we've got to find ways to make transit attractive to current and future riders.

We're still reaping benefits from projects that TOPS selected last year. . .

For example. . . a project on managing capital costs of major federally funded public transportation projects is very useful to our risk assessment process. . . It provides the data we need to establish contingency targets in risk assessments. . .

And TCRP's work on the economic benefits of coordinating human service transportation and transit services has been used to make the case for our very forward-looking Human Service Coordination Initiative . . .

This effort brings a variety of public social service and transportation providers together, to figure out the best ways to meet the mobility needs of rural and low-income folks, and people with disabilities.

I could mention so many more great research projects that are having a real impact. . . but I know you'll have a chance to discuss them, later today.

None of this would be possible if y'all didn't step up to the plate and volunteer your time to the various research committees. . . Thank you for doing that.

Now, let me put in a plug for FTA's latest research agenda. . .

We've got 7 research proposals we're submitting to TOPS for consideration.  
..

One of the most important, in our view, involves risk assessment. . .

This may be a bit controversial, but it's key to effective cost management. . .

Quite frankly, the persistent underestimation of capital costs for major public transportation projects around the country has raised public scrutiny of the industry's ability to estimate, manage, and contain costs.

Helping the industry get a better handle on this is a strategic priority for FTA -- to ensure that we're investing our limited resources in the projects likeliest to succeed. . . and avoid cost-overruns as much as possible. . . .

There's no question that research is a very important tool for unlocking the potential of transit systems -- leading to greater safety, efficiency, and cost savings. . .

But even the most creative research can only take us so far. . .

Our national transit and transportation infrastructure is facing some serious challenges -- and we've got to address them, urgently, if we hope to apply what we learn from our research.

The truth is, we've reached a tipping point in transit . . . and we cannot afford to continue with business as usual. . .

It's getting tougher and tougher to identify reliable funding for complex transit projects. . .

As you probably know, we face a projected \$3 billion shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund account -- our principle source of funding for transportation and transit projects. . .

Many people want to see a big gas-tax hike to plug the gap. . . but this is not a panacea. . .

As gas prices go up, people drive less -- and they drive more fuel-efficient cars. . .

So there are incentives working against generating more revenue through fuel taxes. . .

Meanwhile, prices for commodities such as aluminum and concrete continue to escalate. . . which in turn is raising the price tag on complex, capital intensive transit projects.

Given the funding challenges we face, we're supporting public-private partnerships as a means of identifying alternative, sustainable funding sources for capital transit projects.

I'm sure many of you are familiar with the basic concept. . .



The goal of these partnerships is for public agencies that sponsor transit projects to contract with private partners who design, construct, finance, operate, and maintain transit facilities -- from rail and bus stations to parking garages.

These arrangements offer many potential advantages, by supplementing public funding with private equity and debt . . . transferring long-term financial risks to the private sector . . . and speeding up project construction and delivery, which in turn may reduce costs on some transit projects. FTA is sponsoring pilot public-private partnership projects in Houston, Denver, and Oakland. . .

This is especially important to me. . . . I wrote the provision for this pilot program into our authorizing legislation, SAFETEA, a few years ago, to ensure that we begin to think outside the box on how to get more transit projects up and running.

According to Ernst & Young, public-private partnerships are here to stay, and may well be the only viable way for governments to reach their infrastructure development goals.

If you're interested in getting up to speed quickly on public-private partnerships, then consider attending one of three workshops on this, that we're co sponsoring with the National Council for Public-Private Partnerships over the next few months. . .

Believe me, this is a great event for y'all to consider attending. . . I came here directly from the first of these workshops, in Denver. . .

My friend Cal Marsella, GM of Denver Regional Transit was there. . . and he's with us today. . . I'm sure Cal will back me up in saying it was a big success. . .

Our website, [fta.gov](http://fta.gov), has all the information on these events. . . or you can just call our office.

Figuring out how to fund transit is very important to us -- not simply because we need additional money to build the systems our country needs to keep people mobile. . . but because we need money to maintain them over time.

A top priority for us at FTA is keeping our transit systems in a state of good repair...

Encouraging transit operators to build new capacity, without providing for aging transit infrastructure, is not a winning long-term strategy.

For our New Starts grantees, we're paying extra attention to how they demonstrate that sufficient local resources are available to preserve the quantity and quality of existing transit service.

Think of it this way: You wouldn't expect a bank to approve a loan for a big new addition on your house, if your house is falling down around you – if the roof is leaking, the windows are rotting, and so forth. . .

We've got to be good stewards of our public and private transit funds -- and make sure that all stakeholders -- federal, state, and local -- are held accountable for their investment decisions.

That's why we're making it a priority to help the transit industry get a better handle on cost and ridership information for our New Starts projects.

Our New Starts projects, as many of you know, often involve large, complex, multi-year investments in major rail and bus programs that have an enormous impact on the communities they serve – and on local and regional economies where they operate.

It's an historical fact that, typically, the local sponsors of New Starts projects tend to over-estimate ridership forecasts, and under-estimate project costs.

This happens systematically -- not just once in awhile.

Until recently, we simply hadn't done enough of a detailed analysis to determine the reasons for this gap.

This is an issue I'm very familiar with -- going back to my days on the Banking Committee.

As we drafted SAFETEA, we knew that this was an area that had to be addressed. After all, you can't manage what you can't measure. . .

And if FTA is not sure whether grantees are making accurate forecasts, then it's difficult to know whether the right investment decisions are being made.

So we wrote several provisions into SAFETEA to improve New Starts cost and ridership estimates, collect more cost data, study contractor performance, and develop before-and-after studies of New Starts projects.

I want you to know that we've finally gotten some good predicted-vs-actual data from 2003 and 2007. . .

The industry's ability to accurately predict ridership is almost twice as good now as it was in 1990. . . but we still have a ways to go, to make these forecasts more accurate.

The final issue I want to address involves reauthorization. . .

Everywhere I go, people come up to me with questions about how FTA's funding levels and programs will be affected by the legislation that replaces SAFETEA, which is set to expire at the end of 2009 . . .

I can't tell you, at this point, what reauthorization will look like, exactly. . . . But I can tell you that I expect the areas I just mentioned -- public-private partnerships. . . keeping transit systems in a state of good repair. . . and projecting ridership levels . . . to be addressed in the new legislation. . . .

The reauthorization effort could not be more important in terms of the future of transit in America. . . . and we are thinking very hard about it at FTA and throughout DOT.

And of course, I am hopeful that a robust research agenda will be supported in reauthorization . . . as a tool to help us strengthen transit. . . and make the most of our investments.

I think it's essential that all of us in the public and private sectors work closely with federal, state, and local officials to find the answers we need to solve our transportation problems. . .

To identify sufficient resources that will enable us to invest, and re-invest, in a national transit infrastructure that is second to none. . .

And to leverage the researcher's ability to discover and test new ways of building, operating, and maintaining transit assets -- and measuring their impact on our economy and our mobility. . .

Clearly, it's time to get back to the drawing board and think long and hard about what role transit can play in helping to address the problems we face -- and provide all Americans with the mobility and access to the transportation services they require.

I'm confident that the TOPS Committee will continue to be part of the solution here. . .

Your contributions have been. . . and will continue to be. . . invaluable to all of us.

Please know that we at FTA will continue do everything we can to support your continued success!

I'll leave you with a quote by Jack London -- the author of White Fang and other classics:

"Don't loaf and invite inspiration. Light out after it with a club!"

I'm sure that all of you here today have come prepared to inspire those around you -- and to be inspired in turn.

Thank you.

## **French-American Workshop on Public Transportation - Lyon, France**

**07-07-08**

### **Remarks for Sherry Little, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation**

On behalf of President Bush and the U.S. Department of Transportation, I am delighted to join you this morning to discuss one of the most pressing issues of our time: developing, financing, and maintaining a world-class, multi-modal public transportation infrastructure that allows us to move people and goods safely, efficiently, and affordably.

The Federal Transit Administration is proud to co-sponsor this timely and important event with the French Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Urban Planning.

I am pleased to welcome two members of the United States Congress who care deeply about the future of transportation -- Representative John Mica of Florida and Representative Loretta Sanchez of California.

I also wish to extend a warm welcome to all workshop participants -- the distinguished government and business leaders, transit advocates, and university faculty members from France and the United States.

I expect we will all benefit greatly from your experience, wisdom, and expertise.

I understand that Lyon is referred to as France's second city, but from everything I've seen, I think it's No. 1...from the spectacular Opera House to the two gorgeous rivers...Lyon is tres belle!

I've also noticed that this region is brimming with transportation history...The Romans built roads here...The first locomotives brought to France in 1828 came here, to the Lyon-St. Etienne Railway...And now there's Metro, light rail, and cable cars.

A railway group described Lyon as having "an abnormally wide mix of public transport modes."

I hope that was intended as a compliment.

Seriously...along with energy and agriculture, transportation has clearly emerged as one of the critical macro-economic challenges of our time - one that affects developed and developing nations alike, around the world.

Indeed, the surface transportation systems that have helped to bring prosperity and mobility to Europe and North America over the last 150

years, have inspired remarkably rapid spurts of similar development around the world -- from Singapore and Beijing, to New Delhi and Buenos Aires.

Fast-growing rail and bus systems have sprung up quickly in such places -- bringing renewed vibrancy to tourism and trade, and new mobility and freedom to local residents.

But whether we're considering nations like China and India, racing to build brand new transportation infrastructure from the ground-up...or France and the United States, which are seeking to renew investments in transportation for the future...profound challenges confront us all...

As you well know, petrol has become nearly as precious as gold throughout the U.K. and Continental Europe.

Europeans already drive less, and drive more fuel-efficient vehicles, than almost anyone...

Yet patience has worn thin here in France, and elsewhere, as rising fuel prices drive up the cost of food and other necessities.

As one energy analyst recently stated, "Energy consumption is becoming part of everyday thinking."

In the United States, we are just beginning to experience this level of frustration. More and more people in our car-dependent society are turning to public transportation as an alternative...

The signs are everywhere -- it's quite striking. In March alone, driving in the U.S. declined by roughly 4 percent -- the steepest drop since World War II. . . Public transit ridership has risen to a 50-year high...And sales of hybrid automobiles surged 25 percent in the first quarter of this year.

Meanwhile, we're looking for practical ways to bring more affordable transit options to rural communities, senior citizens, and low-income families -- populations hit hard by high fuel costs...

And even though people are driving less in some areas, we continue to battle traffic congestion and its adverse effects on the environment in our densely populated urban corridors.

I believe we can draw two important conclusions from these trends:

First, public transportation is arguably more important now to the economic welfare of great nations than at any time during the last century - perhaps since the invention of the internal combustion engine.

And second, financing our growing need for a robust public transportation infrastructure will require new levels of social and political cooperation and innovation between the public and private sectors.

The financing question is of course at the heart of our meeting here this week.

As you know, there's a lively public debate under way across Europe and the U.S. over what to do about fuel taxes.

Should we raise them in order to capture additional revenue for critical transportation projects?...

Or lower them to provide relief to consumers?

In the U.S., we encourage energy conservation policies – such as driving less...driving more fuel-efficient cars...and reducing congestion, which wastes fuel...

These efforts will inevitably drive fuel consumption—and fuel tax revenues—down. So we have concluded that it doesn't make much sense to count on fuel taxes as the primary source of transportation funding for the future.

Yet our Highway Trust Fund Account relies largely on fuel taxes generated by the driving public and commercial truckers. This account is the principal federal mechanism for funding roadway and transit projects in the U.S. The account faces more than a \$3 billion deficit next year, due, in part, to the fact that drivers are scaling back on gasoline consumption.

This is an unfortunate circumstance, because our nation absolutely must continue to invest – and to re-invest – in its vast transportation infrastructure...

We've got to bring our roads, bridges, tunnels, and transit systems into a state of good repair – and keep them that way...And we must have resources to build new, efficient transportation systems to keep Americans moving.

In short, we must find new ways to finance our transportation infrastructure.

The U.S. Department of Transportation calculates that we need roughly 22 billion dollars a year, on average, from all sources, to improve the condition and operation of our nation's transit systems through 2024...

That level is 70 percent higher than all transit capital spending in 2004—the last year for which we have figures.

This spending gap is likely to widen, as the cost of construction materials in high demand around the world -- such as aluminum, concrete, and copper -- continue to escalate.

The upshot is that the cost of building complex, multi-year, capitally intensive public transportation projects will continue to rise, not just in the United States, but throughout North and South America, Europe, and Asia. .

. .

This puts intense pressure on national, regional, and local governments and private contractors to manage contingencies and monitor long-term financial risks very carefully.

This workshop offers a much needed opportunity to examine solutions to these challenges.

As the French say, Quand on veut, on peut. Where there's a will, there's a way.

France has shown impressive leadership in implementing public-private partnerships on a range of public works projects -- from highways, tunnels, and viaducts to high-speed rail.

In fact, it is hard to imagine how France's plans to build three new high-speed rail lines concurrently -- linking Paris to Bordeaux, Rennes, and Charles de Gaulle Airport -- could be accomplished without leveraging private sector resources. Together, these projects will cost more than 10 billion euros.

In at least one of these projects, private contractors will design, build, maintain, and finance the system without taking a centime of public funds. And in each case, the long-term risks are largely to be borne by private operators, while the public sector will enjoy access fee revenues.

Public-private partnerships are, without question, the wave of the future -- here in France, in the U.S., and anywhere that large, complex, multi-year public works projects are contemplated.

In the U.S., we're compiling an impressive track record of our own. In fact, most people haven't yet fully grasped the unprecedented innovation taking place in transportation today.

Our states have been leading a quiet revolution in transportation financing and the way we build, maintain, and operate our infrastructure...

Instead of raising taxes or waiting for the federal ship to bring boatloads of new funding, innovative governors are finding willing partners in the private sector.

Several transit projects have been constructed without any federal dollars. In Southern New Jersey, for example, a 33-mile light rail line was successfully constructed using a public-private, fast-track, design-build approach. Annual operating and maintenance costs run 50 percent less per mile than comparable light rail projects. New Jersey owns the project -- but it was the private sector that guaranteed to deliver service at a fixed cost for 10 years.

Back home, we call that a win-win.

And we're eager to see more of the same.

These partnerships are good for America, because they unleash the power and resources of the private sector...reduce the level of risk carried by the public sector...and lead to more projects getting built faster, more efficiently, more creatively, and with the customer in mind.

With these benefits in mind, the Federal Transit Administration is actively promoting public-private partnerships where we have a direct financial stake.

A few years ago, I was personally involved in writing legislation encouraging the use of public-private partnerships for transit projects receiving federal funds through our grants program for capital transit projects.

As a result, we have pilot transit projects under way in three cities, to help us determine whether public-private partnerships actually reduce risks...and better allocate the risks associated with new construction...compared to conventional procurements.

This marks an important strategic turning point for us...

While our government remains committed to investing in public transportation, we simply cannot go it alone.

We must demonstrate to Congress, and to our taxpayers, that public-private partnerships carry their dollars much farther, and more efficiently, than public investments alone.

We're co-sponsoring a number of workshops on public-private partnerships in different American cities this year...bringing together major public and private sector participants to exchange good ideas...But I must say that France is one of the most appropriate places of all, to address this topic.

When Deputy Secretary John Negroponte of the U.S. State Department visited France last year, he noted that Benjamin Franklin's career as a diplomat here more than 200 years ago taught us that France and America are instinctively sympathetic to one another -- each full of admiration for the other's strength and vitality.

I think it's fair to say that we share more than mutual sympathy -- we also share in an historic public-private partnership. The Statue of Liberty, which has stood in New York Harbor for 122 years, is one of the greatest gifts ever offered by one nation to another.

To pay for the statue, the French levied public fees and ran a lottery. The U.S. held theatrical benefits, auctions, and prize fights.

It wasn't easy, but our citizens came through, and our governments saw to it that the statute became a reality.



That, in essence, is what public-private partnerships are all about -- bringing citizens, businesses, and governments together to work toward a common good that promises to improve the quality of life for our children, and our grandchildren.

Let me conclude with an observation by the French historian Alexis de Tocqueville, who spent a great deal of time traveling across America.

He said, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

I am confident that at the conclusion of this workshop, all of you here today will have "new eyes" to envision the future of public transportation -- and the knowledge to get us there.

Thank you.

**Taxicab, Paratransit & Limousine Association Midyear Leadership Conference - Paris, France**

**07-10-08**

REMARKS FOR  
SHERRY LITTLE  
DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR  
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

TAXICAB, PARATRANSIT & LIMOUSINE ASSOCIATION  
MID-YEAR LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
PARIS, FRANCE  
JULY 10, 2008

On behalf of President Bush and Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, I want to congratulate the TLPA leadership for their outstanding efforts over the last year to improve industry standards for safety, driver training, communications, and outreach.

These efforts -- including new paratransit driver screening and training standards -- do your industry credit, and can only lead to better, more effective service for all your customers.

I also applaud your decision to fund research on the costs of converting taxicabs so they may offer wheelchair-accessible service.

Taxicab and paratransit providers play a vital role in our national effort to promote coordinated human services transportation.

Last year, contract transportation providers delivered nearly three-quarters [73%] of the 91 million total paratransit trips taken in the U.S. that year . . . That's a 15 percent increase since 2002.

Clearly, this is a significant and growing market -- and one we must all do our very best to serve.

FTA is serious about making human services policies and programs work for the traveling public -- which means we've got to get serious about mobility management strategies.

We need to figure out how best to empower public transit and private

demand-response providers to help meet mobility needs -- including paratransit, elder care, and medical and workforce transportation.

Mobility management isn't about one mode versus another -- rather, it's about focusing on the customer. . . and coordinating the best solutions, with public and private operators in the mix -- including TLPA members.

The taxicab industry has a place at the table on this issue. . . . And it's only fair that if we ask y'all to step up, we should make sure you have all the information you need to make it happen.

That's just what we're doing.

FTA has invested \$400,000 to help create technical assistance information on meeting ADA requirements. This effort should help you come up to speed on the issues. We'll let you know when this assistance is available.

We've also recently clarified and modified the taxicab industry's eligibility for JARC and New Freedom grants. . . . This is an area where I know y'all have had concerns.

It boils down to this: If a taxicab company is chartered to provide shared rides, then you're an eligible sub-recipient for grant funds.

Hopefully, this will enable additional taxi operators to qualify for these competitively awarded funds.

I want to share with you just how well the New Freedom program is working for the taxi industry:

- Washington, D.C., now has 21 wheelchair-accessible cabs on the street, thanks to a \$1 million New Freedom grant to the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board.

Three cab companies will get seven vans—and two-thirds of that cost is subsidized by the grant.

- In Cedar Rapids, Iowa. . . a long way from Paris, right? . . . the New Freedom program is funding an accessible taxi service operating on a 24/7 basis. The funds help to offset increased fuel and insurance costs.

- And one of TLPA's own -- Hal Morgan -- is spearheading an effort to launch an accessible taxi service in Lewiston, Maine. Maine's DOT would purchase two cabs and lease them to a private operator. This service -- and others like it -- would enable persons in wheelchairs to attend evening classes, work retail and shift work, and increase their ability to interact within the community.

That's just the tip of the iceberg. . . or perhaps I should say, only one room

in the Louvre Art Museum . . . In any case, I'm so pleased to see the taxi industry begin to participate to this extent, in mobility management programs.

We're also encouraged by progress on another front -- involving private transportation companies in statewide transportation planning efforts.

This is something I was personally very invested in, during my time on the Senate Banking Committee. . .

As you know, SAFETEA requires your involvement in the state transportation planning process, and we have committed to building bridges for you to participate fully. . .

As you know, last year FTA signed a \$200,000 cooperative agreement with TLPA to help meet this goal.

I'm happy to report that those funds have been put to good use. . . for training seminars and user guides to educate TLPA members on the value of participation. . . for consulting services. . . for technical assistance materials. . . and more.

I'm pleased to tell you that we're close to finalizing a second year of funding, also for \$200,000, to be disbursed later this summer.

Clearly, we have put our money where our mouth is on this issue. . . We want and need private transportation companies to work within the state transportation planning process. . . to help secure funding for contract operations. . .

. . . And to suggest to state and local decision makers how they believe federal highway and transit dollars should be spent.

Now, I want to mention a few other issues we touched on last year.

First, I told y'all that we had launched a new section of FTA's website for Private Enterprise Participation.

This web page has really taken off. . . We've had well over 900 hits on the page. . . and more than 900 requests for e-mail updates on business opportunities in the public transportation sector. . . If you haven't visited this site yet, please do so. . . I think you'll be pleased by the amount of information at your fingertips.

I also want to mention our promise to hire a Private Sector Ombudsman to serve as your liaison with FTA. . . We haven't moved as quickly on this as I'd hoped. . . but we are actively recruiting for that position now. . .

To paraphrase the French painter Eugene Delacroix, “Those who seek perfection in everything, are those who cannot attain it in anything.”

And now I want to switch gears and share with you what we see coming down the pike in public and private transportation.

I imagine the rapid rise in fuel prices has put a squeeze on your profit margins. . .

One of the culprits isn’t just the price of fuel itself -- but all the fuel that’s wasted while your vehicles sit idling in traffic.

We recognize that congestion is especially serious for those of you operating in or near urban areas. . . . And it’s costing our nation upwards of \$80 billion a year in the form of lost hours and wasted fuel.

We at DOT are tackling this problem through a pilot program in six cities -- Miami, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago -- to support their bold and innovative strategies to reduce gridlock and raise new funds for alternative transportation.

Using such tools at high-speed electronic tolling and variable road-pricing, we expect to see fewer cars on the road at peak periods. . . a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. . . and less frustration for you and your drivers!

While you may be asked to pay a fee to use certain roadways, you will ultimately spend less on fuel -- and take back hours of lost productivity. . . . We think that’s a win-win.

But fighting congestion is only one piece of the puzzle. . .

We’re also taking a very hard look at how to finance our transportation infrastructure to keep America mobile for the future.

Right here in France, across Europe, and back home in the U.S., a heated debate is under way over fuel taxes.

Should we raise these taxes to generate more funding for transportation projects? . . . Or lower them, to give businesses and consumers a break?

Well, if the gas tax issue plays out like the cigarette tax issue -- and it appears that it will -- we’ve got problems. . .

As people drive less, and drive more fuel efficient vehicles, gas tax revenues will decline. . . By the same token, we see cigarette tax

revenues decline as more people quit smoking.

It's difficult to base a tax on people's behavior – because behavior changes. . .

So raising the fuel tax is not going to be a panacea, by any means. . .

Meanwhile, our Highway Trust Fund – the principle mechanism for federally funding transportation and transit projects – is expected run a deficit of more than \$3 billion next year. . . . That's partly due to declining gas tax revenues. . .

In addition, the cost of materials needed to build new transit infrastructure. . . such as aluminum, concrete, and copper. . . has been escalating. . . driving up the costs of complex projects around the country – and the world.

All of this is coming to a head at a time when the demands on our transportation infrastructure across the board have never been greater. . . Transit ridership is reaching its highest level in 50 years . . . and our aging bridges, tunnels, and roadways must be safely maintained and upgraded.

In his book *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell identifies the point at which “the momentum for change becomes unstoppable.”

I think it's reasonable to make the argument that we have reached that point in the United States -- and we must craft a meaningful response.

That means we've simply got to identify new, sustainable funding sources as our traditional federal funding levels decline.

That's why we're strongly encouraging public-private partnerships. . . . We need private companies to play an active role in helping to finance, operate, and maintain our transportation assets. . . to build projects more quickly and efficiently than the public sector can do on its own. . . . . And to enable our nation to leverage the resources and skills the private sector possesses.

I was in the city of Lyon earlier this week... where I saw first-hand how public government and private enterprise work very successfully together, to invest in and develop ambitious intermodal highway and rail projects that benefit so many people throughout the region. . .

The French have clearly taken a page from one of their most famous artists, Henri Matisse, who said “Creativity takes courage.”  
In the U.S., these partnerships are the wave of the future -- and we're

seeing momentum for PPPs building in cities like San Francisco, Oakland, and Denver.

Look. . . Federal and state governments have an important role to play in fostering our future transportation networks -- but they simply cannot go it alone in today's costly and increasingly risk-sensitive environment.

In fact, defining -- or perhaps, re-defining -- the federal government's role in transportation will lie at the heart of the next authorization for federally funded surface transportation programs.

Back home, we're brainstorming like crazy about this legislation -- though we do not expect Congress to act for a couple of years. . .

Though I cannot tell you specifically what might be included at this point, I can say that we are taking great care to think about what our priorities should be -- and how we can ensure that there's adequate funding for our future transportation needs.

I promise you that when the time comes, we will invite TLPA to be part of the discussion . . . and we'll invite you to share all your good ideas about this important legislation.

Now, I want to leave you with a thought about the way forward. . .

Transportation is, without question, the circulatory system of our nation's economy. . .

We need everyone to get involved in making it work -- private and public transportation service providers. . . contractors and developers. . . consumers. . . and of course government.

We cannot afford to let our transportation infrastructure fail -- and we should not settle for transportation systems that are second-best behind other nations.

Now more than ever, we need leaders willing to make tough and courageous decisions about what it will really take to build and sustain a world-class transportation infrastructure, to keep our economy moving.

We need market-based solutions as well as government leadership.

And we need a mindset that is receptive to new ways of paying for -- and using -- our transportation networks.

The advertising genius Leo Burnett - who brought us the Jolly Green Giant,

Tony the Tiger, and other popular icons – once said. . . “To swear off making mistakes is very easy. All you have to do is swear off having ideas.”

I know that TLPA members have plenty of great ideas for increasing American’s access to vital transportation services . . . and I applaud your commitment to keeping Americans mobile, and our economy moving.

Thank you.



## **FHWA-FTA Planners Seminar - Washington, DC**

**07-22-08**

### **Remarks for Sherry Little, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration**

On behalf of President Bush and Transportation Secretary Peters, welcome, everyone, to our biennial joint planning seminar.

I'm delighted to be here with all of you, and my FHWA counterpart, Mary Phillips.

Y'all are very lucky to have Mary...She brings a load of experience from the trucking industry...She has earned some battle scars from working on transportation issues for the Senate Commerce Committee...As a former Senate Banking Committee staffer, I can relate to that...And she's done a terrific job coordinating complex highway funding issues.

You know, DOT has sometimes been criticized for being too "stove-piped."

This joint event is a great antidote to that...There's always real synergy when our two agencies get together...

Planning, as you well know, can be a very tricky business.

It is not unlike trying to look through the windshield of your car while glancing in the rear-view mirror at the same time...The future has a habit of catching up with us.

As the quality guru Phillip Crosby once said, "If anything is certain, it is that change is certain. The world we are planning for today will not exist in this form tomorrow."

I think that's our challenge in a nutshell: To make our very best, most educated guesses, about what tomorrow will bring - and then prepare for it...And because we never run out of tomorrows, we must do this continuously...

I know I've learned a great deal about the value of good planning, over the last several years...

When I served on the Senate Banking Committee, writing the SAFETEA legislation was a huge exercise in planning...I tried to anticipate which tools FTA and the transit industry would need most in the months and years ahead...and then create a legislative framework that would help turn that plan into a reality...

It's been enormously fun and challenging to come to FTA and help to implement these planning policies...

Take cost-and-ridership, for example...It's a classic case of transit agencies that want federal funding, needing reliable, accurate information in order to make a plan that can help them deal with whatever lies ahead.

FTA's capital transit grantees typically over-estimate ridership forecasts, and under-estimate project costs...

So for a long time, FTA wasn't sure whether grantees were making accurate forecasts...which means it was difficult to know whether the right investment decisions were being made.

It's difficult to plan well, on that basis.

So we wrote several provisions into SAFETEA to improve New Starts cost and ridership estimates, collect more cost data, study contractor performance, and develop before-and-after studies of New Starts projects.

While there's still room for improvement, these changes to the planning process have produced real results: The industry's ability to accurately predict ridership is almost twice as good now as it was in 1990.

SAFETEA also created FTA's Small Starts program...These are low cost transit projects that qualify for a highly simplified project evaluation and rating process by FTA...

The Small Starts program provides incentives for communities to plan smaller, lower cost projects to meet their transportation needs and not have to compete with "big projects" for limited New Starts funding...

This, in turn, offers communities greater flexibility to consider a wide range of transit alternatives - such as bus rapid transit.

I've also learned the value of making planning an inclusive process...

It's not enough just to draw up plans within you own agency. . . You've got to look at the bigger picture...

Our experience with DOT's Urban Partnership initiative has taught us this...

About a year ago, Rick Kapka -- who was then the FWA Administrator -- and I, had the good fortune to sit down together and hear the same presentation about how to solve the congestion problem...

The solution wasn't about transit...it wasn't about highways...it was about planning a multi-modal approach...

We're getting better at this...but I think we can all agree that the next authorization for federal surface transportation programs presents us with an enormous set of challenges...Smart planning is critical to ensuring that our agencies - and the American public -- ultimately get a new legislative framework that strengthens and enhances our transportation infrastructure in key ways.

Good planning translates into good policy...and good policy is all about anticipating needs -- for resources, programs, people, and technology.

This week, y'all get a rare opportunity to act as if the future were going to hold still for a moment or two, while you share and explore many of the common challenges and opportunities that FTA and FHWA are facing.

I think you're asking all the right questions this week, such as:

- How do we factor global climate change goals into the planning process?
- How can we grow transit services to help offset greenhouse gas emissions?
- How can FHWA and FTA work together to facilitate compact land use and development?
- What type of planning is needed to better coordinate transit services on federal lands?
- How can FHWA and FTA improve their forecasting ability, to better guide investments in transportation?

And how can we at DOT ensure that our transit-dependent populations -- including older Americans and low-income families -- have access to the services they need, and the mobility they deserve?

These are all issues that our experts from FTA are going to discuss with y'all.

As you tackle these questions, and others, I would ask you not to lose sight of a couple of key ideas...

First, always link planning with measurable outcomes...If you plan to make the case to Congress for resources, it helps to be able to demonstrate measurable results...Remember: If you can't measure, you can't manage...and if you can't manage, you certainly can't plan.

Second, look for new ways to enhance inter-agency cooperation between FHWA and FTA.

Our modes may differ, but our goals are similar and we're heading in the same direction...to combat congestion, improve mobility, and leverage private-sector resources to enhance public transportation infrastructure. And, our customers deserve to have reasonable, consistent, and timely support from us.

Finally, I want to leave you with a thought from the futurist Alvin Toffler, who wrote: "The responsibility for change...lies with us. We must begin with ourselves, teaching ourselves not to close our minds prematurely to the novel, the surprising, the seemingly radical. This means fighting off the idea-assassins who rush forward to kill any new suggestion on grounds of its impracticality, while defending whatever now exists as practical...."

Thank you.



## **18th Anniversary ADA Celebration - Washington, DC**

**07-29-08**

### **Remarks for Sherry Little, Deputy Administrator**

18th Anniversary ADA Celebration

DOT Headquarters  
Washington, D.C.

On behalf of President Bush and Transportation Secretary Peters, I am proud to join you today to celebrate the 18th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

This legislation is one of America's greatest civil rights achievements. I am also enormously proud of FTA's unflagging commitment to the letter and spirit of the ADA.

FTA has done a wonderful job integrating the principles of ADA into its policies and programs, to help ensure that transit is accessible to all persons with disabilities who wish to use it.

We have succeeded in making sure that all but a tiny fraction of the nation's transit bus fleets are accessible.

And we continue to reach out to transit operators and disability advocates around the country, by providing training to help them understand what it takes to meet the requirements of ADA. . . We have sponsored 7 training sessions over the past two years, with 5 more sessions planned in the coming months.

I want to be sure you know about one of our newest initiatives. . . . FTA is pairing up with partners in the nonprofit community, including Easter Seals Project Action, to create new materials to provide technical assistance and summarize ADA compliance requirements for transit operators.

We're also working to make it simpler and easier for transit riders to know their accessibility rights, so they can communicate even more effectively with advocacy groups and transit providers.

And I'm pleased to announce that FTA recently approved \$200,000 for research funds to study the benefits of so-called "way-finding" tools that could ultimately improve mobility for persons with disabilities when they travel, by creating a more seamless way to access information about transit services, routes, and schedules across city and state lines.

Eventually, you'll be able to access all the information you need on transit from virtually any device - a computer, Blackberry, cell phone, etc.

But we're not there yet. . . and we know that today, public transit is still not available to all persons with disabilities – especially those living in rural communities. . . Yet these folks need and deserve the same degree of mobility as people living in more densely populated neighborhoods, where transit is common.

That's why we're moving ahead with the American Public Transit Association and other stakeholders to promote integrated transportation solutions that bring private and public bus, taxi, and van operators together to meet the needs of individuals requiring paratransit services.

Our ultimate goal is to look past the barriers of public versus private. . . look beyond one mode versus another. . . to identify the most efficient and reliable ways to help persons with disabilities get to work, to school, to the doctor's, to special events, and more.

I think we've come a very long way in the 18 years since ADA became law. . . And I know that working together, there's more we can do.

I want to share with you these words from a late 19th century writer, Orison Marden, who believed in the power of positive thinking: "Success is not measured by what you accomplish, but by the opposition you have encountered, and the courage with which you have maintained the struggle against overwhelming odds."

I think those are words we can all live by today.

Thank you so much.

## **Center For Urban Transportation Research - Tampa, FL**

**09-28-08**

### **Remarks for Sherry Little, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration**

On behalf of President Bush and Transportation Secretary Peters, I am delighted to be here with members of FTA's outstanding research team, to offer a federal perspective on our transportation successes and challenges.

I want to congratulate CUTR and its faculty for their outstanding work in developing innovative solutions to real-world transportation challenges.

This means a great deal to me...When I was serving on the Senate Banking Committee, I was a strong supporter of CUTR because I knew the research mission was so important.

But that's not the whole story. Back in 2003, Alisdair Cain invited me to go with NBRTI to England to look at BRT projects.

That trip convinced me that we needed a federal program in the U.S. to fund more BRT here at home..So when I was working on the SAFETEA legislation, I had a "hot line" to Gary Brosch, CUTR's founding director, so we could brainstorm.

The result was FTA's Small Starts program, which funds smaller, non-fixed guideway projects...It's been very successful so far...6 of the 9 Small Starts programs we're funding in fiscal 2009 are for new or expanding BRT projects around the country...

Today, FTA and NBRTI are involved in a number of worthy projects together.

The main one I want to mention is our trade delegation to India last year, where we signed a historic Memorandum of Cooperation between our countries, to encourage an exchange of information and technology on public transportation projects.

We got a first-hand look at India's ambitious plans for improving urban transportation infrastructure -- and BRT is a big part of it. In fact, 12 cities in India are planning BRT systems, and it's very encouraging to know that CUTR is closely studying these projects -- and other transit projects around the world, in Bogota, Columbia; Ecuador; Japan; and soon, China.

We need a robust exchange of information about what transit solutions work best in different transit environments. . . and we all have much to learn from each other.

I'm sure NBRTI will bring back new insights from the latest trip to India that our Administrator, Jim Simpson, took this month.

I also want to note some of our domestic collaborations. Specifically, DOT and FTA are benefiting from the work that CUTR and NBRTI are doing to support our Urban Partnership Agreements in several major urban areas -- where highway improvements, integrated transit systems, and new demand management strategies promise to reduce congestion and improve mobility for their regions.

I know that NBTRI is working here in Florida to evaluate BRT service for one of these projects along the I-95 Corridor in the Miami-Dade area. This is a great project and we're glad to have you involved.

Now, I want y'all want to know what's going on at the federal level.

First and foremost, we face significant funding challenges for transportation -- and this is going to affect the choices and investments we make in our transportation infrastructure in the coming years.

The Highway Trust Fund is our principal mechanism today for federally funding for highway and transit projects -- and it's funded largely through gas taxes.

As you many know, the Highway portion of the Trust Fund is spending more than it's taking in. . . Earlier this month, Congress agreed to an \$8 billion bail-out, but it's only a stop-gap measure, not a solution.

We're dealing with a real paradox here. As gas prices rise, people drive less, which in turn reduces tax revenues for federal transportation projects.

Meanwhile, transit ridership is at its highest level in 50 years -- but many transit agencies are having to cut costs and in some cases, service, because they do not have the resources to meet the surge in demand.

Part of the issue here is that the transit industry has not had the capital to maintain critical assets in a state of good repair -- from rail cars and stations to buses and maintenance depots.

In fact, FTA's analysis shows that the 15 largest heavy rail agencies face a \$30 billion backlog for much-needed repairs and replacement. . . And an additional \$7 billion is needed annually over the next 20 years to achieve a state of good repair for all transit systems.

This problem is only going to get worse as ridership increases -- putting more strain on many aging transit systems.

So. . . Where will the money come from to address these critical needs? That's the big question we're facing now.

There's an old saying at the Pentagon:



“A vision without resources is a hallucination.”

Congress is so concerned about this, they’ve asked FTA to issue a report on transit operators’ recapitalization plans. We’re releasing that report later this year.

Incidentally, the work that CUTR does can make a real difference here -- by coming up with technologies and other solutions that extend the life of transit assets and improve operating efficiency, for example. . . We’re counting on y’all!

Now, on top of all this, the cost to expand our public transportation infrastructure has been soaring, as the cost of steel, aluminum, concrete and other materials rise – driven by global demand.

But I don’t want y’all to think there’s nothing but bad news coming out of Washington...

In fact, the FTA has done an excellent job of funding transit projects all over the country – large and small, rural and urban -- that truly make a difference in people’s lives.

FTA’s commitment authority for New Starts projects -- our major capital investment program for transit -- is fully leveraged, and that’s good news...

We’ve got 15 Full Funding Grant Agreements for capital transit projects under way or waiting in the wings. . . which means we have about \$600 million left to invest from our \$10 billion budget -- and we will ultimately invest all those funds in worthy bus and rail projects.

But in truth, we must find a new financing paradigm for public transportation...

That’s why we’re advocating several reforms that we hope will be considered in the new authorizing legislation for federal surface transportation programs, which Congress will take up within the next year.

First...We need to involve the private sector in financing, building, operating, and maintaining capital transit projects. Public-private partnerships are the wave of the future...they’re beginning to catch on in the transit industry...and we’re going to see a lot more of them in the future...

Done right, PPPs inject capital, efficiency, and share risks that public sponsors of major transit projects cannot always handle alone...

FTA has cosponsored several PPP workshops bringing public and private organizations together -- and there’s real excitement about this on both sides.

We also need to introduce demand-management strategies that fight congestion by asking drivers to pay more to use roads when they’re the

busiest, recognizing the high price Americans are paying today for congestion in terms of lost time, wasted fuel and the drain on the U.S. economy.

That's why we're encouraging high-speed tolling and congestion pricing on the busiest corridors. These have been controversial -- but they also hold promise, by encouraging drivers to avoid roads at peak times, and generating hundreds of millions of dollars in new revenues for local, multimodal transportation projects...

It's all about giving the money back to the folks who will benefit most.

Second...We must streamline federal transportation programs -- giving more decision-making to states and local governments, to decide which kinds of transportation projects to fund -- whether highway, bus, rail, or something else...

We should make it easier for state and local officials to make investments based on what works -- and what gets people where they need to be.

Third...We must work to eliminate big congressional earmarks for transportation projects because they siphon away discretionary funds that might be put to better use by local project sponsors.

Fourth...We should subject all federally funded projects to a strong cost-benefit analysis, to make sure we're investing in the projects with the most promising outcomes.

And finally...We need to encourage and reward innovation everywhere...To provide incentives to the transit industry and other stakeholders so they're rewarded for taking on risks...for creative financing deals...and for introducing innovative technologies...

The next President and the next Congress will face many challenges related to transportation and our national infrastructure...

Whatever happens, it will be critical for our leaders to begin weaning the U.S. off of the gas tax -- and away from our dependence on 700 billion dollars' worth of imported oil each year.

Now more than ever, we need strong, innovative federal leadership to make this a reality.

We need leaders willing to make tough and courageous decisions about what it will really take to build and sustain a world-class transportation infrastructure, to keep our economy moving.

We need to restore faith in our government's ability to foster a vision for our future -- and to recognize that we are all going to sink or swim together.

Above all, our federal government ought to be an effective champion for a revitalized transportation infrastructure in this country.

Working together, I know we can reach our goals.

I want to leave you with this thought from the futurist, Alvin Toffler – which I think is especially appropriate for the research community:

“The responsibility for change...lies with us. We must begin with ourselves, teaching ourselves not to close our minds prematurely to the novel, the surprising, the seemingly radical. This means fighting off the idea-assassins who rush forward to kill any new suggestion on grounds of its impracticality, while defending whatever now exists as practical...”

I know that at CUTR, there is never a shortage of new ideas – and the courage to explore them in the interests of making public transportation better for all Americans.

Thank you.