

# TEA-21 Reauthorization: Increase metropolitan planning funds to support bicycling and walking

**A**MPO advocates increasing the metropolitan planning funds available to MPOs through both the highway and transit titles of transportation law, in part so that MPOs may plan transportation systems that better accommodate bicycling and walking.

For years we have allowed the automobile to dictate how we design our communities. There is, however, an increased realization of the negative impacts these decisions have had on metropolitan culture. Communities designed with attention to all modes of transportation, with an emphasis on bike and pedestrian facilities, have countless benefits, including:

- **Congestion mitigation** — the more people choose to bike or walk, the less crowded our streets become;
- **Cleaner air** — bicycles and pedestrians are emission-free;
- **Active living** — studies show a link between obesity and time spent in the car. Biking and walking are crucial elements of an active, healthy lifestyle that reduces public health expenditures.

So that they may fulfill their potential as leaders in improving bicycle and pedestrian conditions, MPOs have several needs:

- **A strong Transportation Enhancements program** — over 90% of MPOs use these funds for bicycle or pedestrian projects;
- **State of the art model development** — bicycle and pedestrian trips are not captured by the models that produce MPOs' primary planning data;
- **A recognition that all modes count** — lawmakers must recognize and affirm the public desire for complete streets.

Increasing their role in bicycle and pedestrian planning adds to MPOs' already significant need for increased planning funds:

- The 2000 Census resulted in 76 new urbanized areas and 46 new MPOs — consequently many established MPOs have already suffered cuts, and without a funding increase all will be faced with inadequate funding;
- MPO responsibilities increased during TEA-21 — they now do more work in areas such as homeland security, non-motorized transportation, and operations, to name a few;
- New legislation promises even more responsibilities, including conformity, goods movement, systems performance and congestion mitigation.

Thus, AMPO advocates providing more funding to the nation's 385 MPOs by:

1. Increasing the Metropolitan Planning takedown on the core highway programs (PL Funds) from 1% to 2%
2. Expanding the base upon which the highway title takedown is drawn to include the Minimum Guarantee program
3. Changing the transit title Metropolitan Planning Funds (5303 Funds) from an annual line item appropriation to a 2% takedown on the FTA program.



# TEA-21 Reauthorization: Increase and suballocate CMAQ funds

**A**MPO advocates sufficient growth of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality improvement program (CMAQ) to support new nonattainment areas and to fund PM 2.5 mitigation, as well as suballocation of CMAQ funds in TEA-3 based on the current federal allocation formula. This year the EPA imposed new pollution standards for ozone, changing from the 1-hour to the 8-hour standard, and fine particulate matter (PM 2.5), which had previously not been part of the conformity analyses MPOs are required to perform, and is therefore not funded through CMAQ.

Congestion is a major burden on our metropolitan areas - it siphons \$70 billion annually from our economy and hijacks more than a workweek of time from each person. Along with worsening congestion comes damaging air pollution, which is an unavoidable threat to each person in a metropolitan area. The CMAQ program exists to address these problems, but some changes are needed for the program to fulfill Congressional intent.

## Grow the Program

- Under the new 8-hour ozone standard there are 30 new nonattainment areas that need CMAQ funding.
- 46 areas will be designated nonattainment under the new PM 2.5 standard — current law provides no CMAQ funding for these areas.

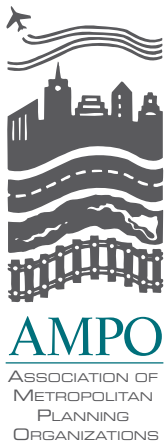
## Suballocate CMAQ Funds

The CMAQ program lingers behind other programs' obligation rates — while the average for all other programs is 90%, CMAQ funds are obligated at an 80% rate. This is because the money is not getting to MPOs. Of MPOs eligible for CMAQ funding:

- 1/3 report having problems securing state authorization for projects
- 1/2 report waiting a year or more to get funds from the state
- 2/3 are not aware of available unspent CMAQ money

To ensure that metropolitan areas are able to address congestion and air quality, CMAQ dollars should be directly suballocated to MPOs.

- In 2002, suballocating CMAQ dollars directly to nonattainment and maintenance areas would have ensured approximately \$1.7 billion went to cleaning up the air in the nation's most polluted urban areas.



# TEA-21 Reauthorization: MPOs need more planning funds to deal with the conformity process

Despite anticipated changes that will streamline the conformity process, new ozone and PM 2.5 standards increase the planning requirements, and need for planning funds, for MPOs in nonattainment areas in several ways:

- The process streamlining will in reality help only a few MPOs — many MPOs perform conformity analyses on a yearly basis or even more frequently and thus will see no benefit from the horizon changes;
- MPOs will undertake additional interagency consultation in areas with new nonattainment boundaries. Coordination among the many agencies with transportation and air quality responsibilities within a nonattainment area requires a significant amount of MPO staff time;
- New data requirements exist in areas with new nonattainment area boundaries. MPOs will need to gather vehicle registration data, Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data, population and employment figures, and additional planning information to conduct conformity;
- MPOs will need to develop new vehicle emission inventories for air quality State Implementation Plans under the new 8-hour ozone standard and the PM2.5 standard;
- Demonstrating conformity under the PM 2.5 standard will require a greater effort because of the enormous uncertainties about motor vehicle contributions to PM 2.5;
- The possible requirement of performing a Build/No Build emission test for conformity under the 8-hour standard requires the development of additional transportation networks (for the No Build scenario) and additional model runs to produce emissions levels.

These requirements add to the already significant need for additional planning funds MPOs need from TEA-21 reauthorization:

- The 2000 Census resulted in 76 new urbanized areas and 46 new MPOs — consequently many established MPOs have already suffered cuts; without a funding increase all MPOs will be faced with inadequate funding;
- MPO responsibilities increased during TEA-21 — they now do more work in areas such as homeland security, goods movement, and operations, to name a few;
- New legislation promises even more responsibilities, including conformity, safety, systems performance and congestion mitigation.



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## TEA-21 Reauthorization: Increase metropolitan planning funds for better goods-movement planning

**A**MPO advocates increasing the metropolitan planning funds available to MPOs through both the highway and transit titles of transportation law, in part so that MPOs may conduct more comprehensive planning for safe and efficient goods movement.

The movement of freight internationally, into and out of the country at major entry ports and airports, and internally through major intermodal hubs, contributes significantly to national and regional economies. Where capacity is limited, it not only hinders economic activity, but wreaks havoc on passenger travel in those corridors as well. Much of this activity takes place in metropolitan areas and, without proper planning, the movement of goods and people can grind to a halt.

With freight traffic expected to double by 2020, MPOs report several major needs to address current and future issues:

- 80% of MPOs need more data on freight traffic. Many shippers consider releasing their information too intrusive and in violation of their proprietary rights. MPOs need resources to expand their work to bring freight interests to the regional table;
- 60% of MPOs need professional development to increase staff expertise on freight issues. This minimal investment will return great dividends by increasing the efficiency of goods movement through metropolitan areas;
- 34% of MPOs simply need more staff to deal with freight. With limited budgets, MPOs are stretched thin just trying to meet basic federal planning requirements.

These requirements add to MPOs' already significant need for increased planning funds:

- The 2000 Census resulted in 76 new urbanized areas and 46 new MPOs — consequently many established MPOs have already suffered cuts, and without a funding increase all will be faced with inadequate funding;
- MPO responsibilities increased during TEA-21 — they now do more work in areas such as homeland security, non-motorized transportation, and operations, to name a few;
- New legislation promises even more responsibilities, including conformity, safety, systems performance and congestion mitigation.



# TEA-21 Reauthorization: Increase metropolitan planning funds for more effective transportation and land use planning integration

**A**MPO advocates increasing the metropolitan planning funds available to MPOs through both the highway and transit titles of transportation law, in part to enable MPOs to facilitate greater integration of transportation and land use planning.

Land use patterns and transportation systems are inextricably linked, so it stands to reason that land use and transportation planning processes should be completed in concert with one another in order to create livable, efficient communities. Especially as metropolitan areas expand, both in population and geographic area, complementary transportation and land use decisions are vital to solid planning.

When land use patterns and transportation systems are effectively integrated, metropolitan areas benefit:

- Land values increase;
- Properly designed retail development thrives and paves the way for economic growth;
- More people, including senior citizens, children and the disabled, have access to their communities;
- People park their cars and opt to walk or bike, resulting in a more active and healthier public;
- Congestion is mitigated through improved public transportation options and efficient use of existing transportation infrastructure.

MPOs are uniquely positioned to take the lead in coordinating transportation and land use activities, provided they are given adequate resources to do so.

- A 2003 AMPO study identified the willingness of an MPO to act as a leader and facilitator as a major factor in effective transportation and land use planning integration.

Increasing their role in land use planning adds to MPOs' already significant need for increased planning funds:

- The 2000 Census resulted in 76 new urbanized areas and 46 new MPOs — consequently many established MPOs have already suffered cuts, and without a funding increase all will be faced with inadequate funding;
- MPO responsibilities increased during TEA-21 — they now do more work in areas such as homeland security, non-motorized transportation, and operations, to name a few;
- New legislation promises even more responsibilities, including conformity, goods movement, systems performance and congestion mitigation.



# TEA-21 Reauthorization: Increase planning funds for better transportation systems management and operations

**A**MPO advocates increasing the metropolitan planning funds available to MPOs through both the highway and transit titles of transportation law, in part so that MPOs may plan optimally operating transportation systems.

With congested roadways putting the brakes on economic development and a tight fiscal climate limiting potential solutions, local elected officials must make the most of what they have. This means transportation systems must be well managed and operated - to get the best results, management and operations should be collaborative among the numerous relevant agencies, and should be included from the earliest stages of the planning process.

When management and operations strategies are successfully employed, metropolitan areas benefit in many ways:

- **Economy** — management and operations improvements cost less than capital projects, and produce money saving benefits like reduced fuel consumption and less time wasted in traffic;
- **Congestion Mitigation** — travel times are reduced and transit on-time performance improved through less recurring congestion and improved incident response;
- **Safety** — there are fewer accidents when transportation systems are well managed and operated, and when incidents do occur, response is more efficient;
- **Security** — security measures, such as evacuation plans, are an important part of transportation systems management and operations;
- **Environment** — with traffic moving more smoothly and transit systems offering attractive alternatives, fuel consumption and vehicle emissions are reduced.

As the regional coordinating bodies for transportation planning, MPOs should be given more resources for incorporating systems management and operations into the transportation planning process. These duties add to MPOs' already significant need for increased planning funds:

- The 2000 Census resulted in 76 new urbanized areas and 46 new MPOs — consequently many established MPOs have already suffered cuts, and without a funding increase all will be faced with inadequate funding;
- MPO responsibilities increased during TEA-21 — they now do more work in areas such as homeland security, non-motorized transportation, and safety, to name a few;
- New legislation promises even more responsibilities, including conformity, goods movement, security and congestion mitigation.



# TEA-21 Reauthorization: Increase Metropolitan Planning Funds

**A**MPO advocates providing more funding to the nation's 385 MPOs in three ways:

1. By increasing the Metropolitan Planning takedown on the core highway programs (PL Funds) from 1% to 2%;
2. By expanding the base upon which the highway title takedown is drawn to include the Minimum Guarantee program;
3. By changing the transit title Metropolitan Planning Funds (5303 Funds) from an annual line item appropriation to a 2% takedown on the FTA program.

Dedicating this additional funding to sound transportation planning is critical to our metropolitan areas for many reasons:

## **Economy**

- The cost of congestion in the United States is estimated at over \$69 billion annually. Because of their central role in metropolitan transportation planning, MPOs do not just deal with the consequences of congestion, they are an integral part of the solution. With more funding, MPOs can implement the projects necessary to reduce this burden on our economy.

## **Expertise**

- Congress created MPOs because it correctly believed them to be the best mechanism for investing Federal transportation dollars, because MPOs sit at the central locus of state, regional and local transportation and environmental planning. For MPOs to continue their mission, Congress must provide the necessary support.

## **Efficiency**

- In the current tight fiscal climate it is imperative to spend money efficiently — increasing FHWA PL funding provides for better planning which, in turn, avoids larger problems down the road. Robust planning means safe, reliable travel and efficient freight movement to sustain a growing economy.

## **Equity**

- The 2000 Census designated 76 new urbanized areas and 46 new MPOs — consequently many established MPOs have already suffered cuts, and without a funding increase all will be faced with inadequate funding.
- From ISTEA to TEA-21, State Planning and Research (SPR) funding grew more than twice as fast as Metropolitan Planning Funds. Over the life of TEA-21, SPR exceeded PL funding by nearly 3 times.
- MPO responsibilities increased during TEA-21 — MPOs now do more work in areas such as homeland security, goods movement and operations, to name a few.
- New legislation promises even more responsibilities dealing with air quality conformity, the environmental review process, safety and system performance.



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## TEA-21 Reauthorization: Increase planning funds for safer, more secure transportation

**A**MPO advocates increasing the metropolitan planning funds available to MPOs through both the highway and transit titles of transportation law, in part so that MPOs may conduct more comprehensive planning for safe and secure transportation.

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 changed the way we think of our transportation system. Not only must we maintain its physical infrastructure and increase its capacity to keep pace with population growth, we must ensure that the system is secure from attack. Security driven metropolitan evacuation plans must be integrated across all modes, a task to which MPOs are uniquely suited. Additionally, with more than 40,000 people dying each year on our roads, we must work towards improving the safety of the system for all users.

As part of reauthorization, security is likely to be separated from safety as a planning factor that MPOs are required to consider, showing the national interest in emphasizing security.

- Only 23% of MPOs report changing their metropolitan transportation planning process due to security concerns. This is largely because current planning funding allocations are not sufficient for most MPOs to take on this additional task.
- MPOs provide the proper forum for regional coordination between emergency response and transportation officials. They should be given the resources to act as a convener of metropolitan agencies to develop security plans and measures.

Likewise, safety is poised to be considered on its own.

- In metropolitan areas, safety is a problem across all modes — bicyclists and pedestrians, as well as cars, need to be included in safety planning.
- Without an increase in planning funds, MPOs will not be able to plan a transportation system that is safer than the one we have today.

These requirements add to MPOs' already significant need for increased planning funds:

- The 2000 Census resulted in 76 new urbanized areas and 46 new MPOs — consequently many established MPOs have already suffered cuts, and without a funding increase all will be faced with inadequate funding;
- MPO responsibilities increased during TEA-21 — they now do more work in areas such as homeland security, non-motorized transportation, and operations, to name a few;
- New legislation promises even more responsibilities, including conformity, goods movement, systems performance and congestion mitigation.



# TEA-21 Reauthorization: America Needs Better Metropolitan Planning

In the pending reauthorization of the federal surface transportation program, the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) advocates providing more funding to the nation's 385 MPOs by:

- Increasing the metropolitan planning takedown on the core highway program (PL funds) from 1% to 2%, including application of the takedown to the Minimum Guarantee program.
- Changing the calculation of metropolitan planning funds in the transit title (Section 5303 funds) from an appropriated number to a 2% takedown on the transit program.

AMPO appreciates the Bush Administration's incorporation of a version of our transit planning proposal in its reauthorization bill in 2003. We also thank the U.S. Senate for proposing to increase the highway planning takedown to 1.5% in S. 1072, which was approved by a large bi-partisan majority in 2004. In the 109th Congress, AMPO renews our call for increased metropolitan planning funds for the following five reasons:

1. **Economic Vitality** — Metropolitan areas are home to more than 80% of the nation's population, produce 84% of the nation's GDP, and suffer the brunt of traffic congestion that is costing the U.S. economy over \$69 billion annually. Because of their central role in metropolitan planning, MPOs are uniquely qualified to design innovative solutions to the mobility challenges confronting urban America.
2. **Faster Project Delivery** — Building new roads and rail lines often takes longer than expected and costs more than originally budgeted. Better planning at the front end can help avoid many of these unforeseen problems at the back end. A robust planning process also helps ensure that the most cost-effective transportation solution is pursued in the first place.
3. **Cleaner Air** — Under EPA's new air quality standards, 30 new urban areas have been designated non-attainment for ozone and 46 new areas fail to comply with the fine particulate standard. The MPOs in all of these regions will need additional funding to comply with the complex requirements of the air quality conformity process, which mandates that transportation plans and programs help reduce motor vehicle emissions.
4. **Livable Communities** — Land use patterns and transportation systems are inextricably linked, and an integrated land use and transportation planning process will yield more livable communities for residents and commuters alike. With boards composed primarily of local elected officials, MPOs are well positioned to forge this transportation/land use connection. They also can foster the political consensus needed to pursue a balanced investment program of roads and transit, bike trails and walking paths to support neighborhood revitalization and community growth.
5. **More MPOs, More Responsibilities** — The 2000 Census designated 75 new urbanized areas and 46 new MPOs. Without additional funding, both long-established and new MPOs will be faced with inadequate funding to carry out their mission. And during TEA-21, that mission has been expanded into new areas such as homeland security, goods movement, and traffic operations — to name a few.



# TEA-21 Reauthorization: Suballocate STP Funds

**A**MPO advocates extending the suballocation of urbanized Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds to all MPOs and restoring suballocation of the STP Minimum Guarantee funds.

Metropolitan problems require metropolitan solutions:

- Metropolitan areas are home to more than 80% of the nation's population;
- Metropolitan areas produce 84% of the nation's GDP; and
- Metropolitan areas absorb the bulk of the economic, social and environmental impacts of insufficient transportation systems.

Current law recognizes the need to direct resources to metropolitan areas by suballocating STP dollars to MPOs in areas with more than 200,000 people. Many smaller areas, however, are growing rapidly and need additional support to avoid the damaging effects of an inadequate transportation system. Thus the suballocation of urbanized STP funds should be extended to all MPOs.

- In 2002, this change would have directed an additional \$378 million to improving mobility in the nation's congested urban areas.

Under ISTEA all STP funds were distributed by formula; TEA-21 established Minimum Guarantee funds, sheltering \$2.8 billion per year from suballocation. To further support metropolitan areas as they address local transportation issues, Minimum Guarantee funds need to be suballocated.

- In 2002, suballocation of Minimum Guarantee funds would have contributed \$684 million to improving metropolitan transportation.

Combined, these changes direct 3.5% more of total highway spending to improving metropolitan transportation.



# TEA-21 Reauthorization: Suballocate STP and CMAQ Funds

**A**MPO advocates extending the suballocation of urbanized Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds to all MPOs, restoring suballocation of the STP Minimum Guarantee funds, and suballocation of CMAQ funds directly to MPOs in non-attainment and maintenance areas.

Metropolitan problems require metropolitan solutions:

- Metropolitan areas are home to more than 80% of the nation's population;
- Metropolitan areas produce 84% of the nation's GDP; and
- Metropolitan areas absorb the bulk of the economic, social and environmental impacts of insufficient transportation systems.

Currently, only 6% of the federal highway program is under the direct control of the MPOs charged with planning federal transportation investments in metropolitan areas.

Current law recognizes the need to direct resources to metropolitan areas by suballocating STP dollars to MPOs in areas with more than 200,000 people. Many smaller areas, however, are growing rapidly and need additional support to avoid the damaging effects of an inadequate transportation system. Suballocation of urbanized STP funds should be extended to all MPOs.

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Under ISTEA all STP funds were distributed by formula; TEA-21 established Minimum Guarantee funds, sheltering \$2.8 billion per year from suballocation. To further support metropolitan areas as they address local transportation issues, the Minimum Guarantee funds need to be suballocated.

- In 2002, restoring suballocation of Minimum Guarantee funds would have contributed \$684 million to improving metropolitan transportation.

CMAQ funds are a critical element of metropolitan areas' arsenal against crippling congestion and unhealthy air, but linger behind other programs' obligation rates — while the average for all other programs is 90%, CMAQ funds are obligated at an 80% rate. This is because the money isn't getting to MPOs. Of MPOs eligible for CMAQ funding:

- 1/3 report having problems securing state authorization for projects
- 1/2 report waiting a year or more to get funds from the state
- 2/3 are not aware of available unspent CMAQ money

To ensure that metropolitan areas are able to address congestion and air quality, CMAQ dollars should be directly suballocated to MPOs.

- In 2002, suballocating CMAQ dollars directly to nonattainment and maintenance areas would have ensured approximately \$1.7 billion went to cleaning up the air in the nation's most polluted urban areas.

Combined, these changes would mean an increase in the money going directly to MPOs from 6% of the overall program to approximately 15% of the overall program, a much needed step towards rejuvenating our metropolitan transportation systems.



# TEA-21 Reauthorization: Increase Metropolitan Planning Funds to Fully Integrate Public Transportation

**A**MPO advocates increasing the metropolitan planning funds available to MPOs through both the highway and transit titles of transportation law, in part to enable MPOs to continue and enhance their work in planning for public transportation.

Congress created §5303 of the Federal Transit Act in recognition of MPOs' important role in planning metropolitan transportation systems that include public transit as well as their role in selecting the investments to best support those systems. Transit provides mobility for those who do not drive and air quality improvements by offering an alternative for those that do. Many metropolitan areas have more than one transit operator, or even multiple modes including bus, rail, and ferry. It is impossible for a single operator to undertake regional planning and integration of these services.

Enhancing MPOs' public transit planning capabilities has numerous benefits:

- It ensures that transit and highway alternatives are weighed fairly when improvements are being considered for a corridor or region.
- It brings transit to the table where regional transportation systems management and operations are being discussed, which can otherwise devolve into addressing only freeway operations.
- It provides for understanding and integrating the role that public transit plays in regional security and evacuation planning.
- It creates opportunities for coordination among transit operators, as with the San Francisco Bay Area TRANSLINK program, improving the efficiency of all operators and making public transit more attractive to travelers.

Metropolitan transit planning is now funded as a line item in each year's appropriations bill. This approach creates uncertainty as to how much money will be available, making it difficult for MPOs to develop multi-year transit planning programs. The model of the Title 23 metropolitan planning program (FHWA-PL) as a percentage take-down from certain capital fund categories has proven to be the better approach.

Therefore, AMPO advocates:

- Making §5303 funding a takedown rather than an appropriated amount.
- Establishing the funding level at 2% of the Federal Transit program.



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# Issue Brief