

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION INITIATIVES AND RESOURCES IN SUPPORT OF REGIONAL STEWARDSHIP

The **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** and the **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**, provide over \$40 billion annually to states, local governments, and transit operators, for surface transportation planning and improvements.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING: All FHWA-FTA projects must flow from a multimodal planning process, which emphasizes public involvement, collaboration, and development of plans and programs that meet multiple goals, including safety, mobility, environmental stewardship, and security. Metropolitan areas of over 50,000 population must have Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to develop 20-year plans and 3-5 year programs of projects. Both MPO and State DOT planning must meet Federal requirements for planning, including public involvement, fiscal reasonableness, and consideration of the goals of improving safety, mobility, environmental stewardship, and security. FHWA and FTA oversee the MPO and state planning processes, and certify whether they meet Federal requirements.

The **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING CAPACITY BUILDING (TPCB) PROGRAM** is a collaborative effort of the FHWA and the FTA with various public and private organizations to help transportation professionals by:

- Providing information, training, and technical assistance;
- Enhancing understanding of the transportation planning process, roles within the process, and its relationship to community and societal goals;
- Strengthening skills in the areas of consensus building, understanding policy guidance, and grasping the technical elements of their job through training and peer-to-peer exchanges.

SCENARIO PLANNING is an innovative new framework for decision-making for an area's future. Scenario planning projects typically have a high level of citizen involvement, incorporate the analysis of trend data in such areas as transportation, land use demographics, health and other areas to determine how past trends may affect the future trends of a region and uses software tools that help planners and citizens actually visualize the scenarios and future land use assumptions. This allows regions to proactively shape their future while considering trends and tradeoffs. Planning activities that can be accomplished to realize the preferred scenario can then be identified.

FHWA launched its scenario planning website on March 28, 2005. It will serve as a one-stop shop for information on scenario planning and includes resources and noteworthy practices.

We are planning three upcoming workshops on scenario planning: Dubuque, Iowa on May 13, Champaign, Illinois on June 15, and Mooresville, North Carolina in August to provide participants with an opportunity to engage in dialogue on how scenario planning can be utilized most effectively in the local area.

ENVIRONMENTAL STREAMLINING AND STEWARDSHIP requires transportation and natural, cultural, and historic resource agencies to establish realistic timeframes for transportation project development and then to work cooperatively to adhere to those timeframes, while protecting and enhancing the environment. The efficient and effective coordination of multiple environmental reviews, analysis, and permitting actions is essential to meeting the Environmental Streamlining mandate for highway and transit projects under TEA-21.

The **LINKING PLANNING AND NEPA: TOWARDS STREAMLINED DECISION MAKING** course has been developed. This course is provided to transportation professionals who lead transportation planning and project development studies at State DOTs, transit operators and metropolitan planning organizations, as well as environmental resource agency staff who participate in these studies. Linking Planning and NEPA is designed to foster fundamental change in the culture that underlies transportation planning and project development – leading to better planning and decision-making, environmental stewardship and streamlined delivery of transportation projects.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
FHWA Office of Planning, Environment, & Realty (HEP)
www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/ or www.fhwa.dot.gov/about.htm