



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**

REGION X
Alaska, Idaho, Oregon,
Washington

915 Second Avenue
Federal Bldg. Suite 3142
Seattle, WA 98174-1002
206-220-7954
206-220-7959 (fax)

REGION 10 BULLETIN NO: 2010-85

Subject: Transit at the Table II: A Guide to Participation in Metropolitan Transportation Decisionmaking for Transit Agencies in Small- and Medium-Sized MPOs

Program Area: Planning Guide

Date: November 18, 2010

In October, a new Federal Transit Administration (FTA) report, **“Transit at the Table II: A Guide to Participation in Metropolitan Transportation Decision-making for Transit Agencies in Small and Medium-Sized Areas,”** was posted at <http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/TransPlanning/TransTableII.htm#ch1>. This study assesses the experiences, both challenges and success stories, of public transportation agencies working within the metropolitan transportation planning processes in small- and medium-sized regions. Transit at the Table II is the second of a 3-part series focused on transit participation in planning, with an earlier publication targeting large metropolitan areas and a forthcoming report focusing on rural transit settings and the statewide planning process. It is a follow-up to a 2004 study, entitled *Transit at the Table: A Guide to Participation in Metropolitan Decisionmaking*, located at <http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/tat.htm>, which was developed for large urbanized areas, those with populations greater than 200,000. Recognizing that transportation problems and planning issues differ in small- and medium-sized areas, this report sought to identify both the similarities and the unique aspects associated with those regions.

This report details examples of transit agencies actively participating side-by-side with the MPO in regional transportation planning activities. In many of the cases presented, transit's involvement resulted in direct benefits for the agency and, more broadly, for the profile and level of service of transit in the area as a whole. These benefits would not have been realized without proactive participation in the planning process. Additionally, further support for increased transit service may be achieved through additional sources of funding that can be directed to transit, including the Surface Transportation Planning (STP) of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) is another source from FHWA in areas that are listed as air quality nonattainment areas. Specific examples of transit agency participation presented in this report include long-range planning, membership in committees and subcommittees, and facilitated citizen transit advocacy. In addition, the report presents several examples of cooperative funding relationships between transit operators and non-traditional partners, such as the business community.

It is also important to note that the transportation planning work activities of MPOs are set forth in Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWPs) that FTA and FHWA jointly fund and they are

Bulletin – Transit at the Table II: A Guide to Participation in Metropolitan Transportation Decisionmaking for Transit Agencies in Small- and Medium-Sized MPOs

intended to be multimodal. Communities where transit may be very limited today should not plan for business as usual 20 years from now.

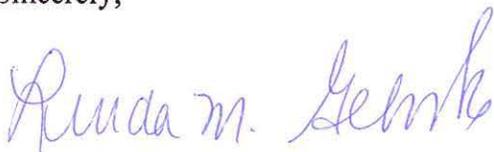
The primary audience for Transit at the Table II includes transit managers, their staff and board members, MPO staff and Policy Board members, and State Department of Transportation (SDOT) staff and officials. This report also may be of particular interest to transit managers in areas likely to be designated as urbanized areas by the U.S. Census Bureau following Census 2010, thereby necessitating formation of an MPO. Once a region receives that designation, typically when the population reaches 50,000, the Governor(s) in that State (or States) where the area is located, in cooperation with local officials, must designate an organization to serve as the MPO for the metropolitan area. It is important that both the transit agencies operating in these newly designated MPO areas as well as members of the new MPO agency understand the importance of active transit involvement in the metropolitan planning process.

This report relays some of the opportunities and substantial benefits available to transit agencies and, most importantly, to the travelling public, that come with participation in that planning process.

In addition to transit agency and MPO staff and SDOT representatives, elected officials at all levels of government and interested citizens should find this report helpful in understanding how transit can secure the level of policy support and resource investment that is critical to addressing the mobility needs of stakeholders. It is hoped they will find inspiration in the stories presented and establish similar success stories in their specific regions.

The Transit at the Table II document may be found at For further information, contact Region 10's Ned Conroy at (206) 220-4318 or email ned.conroy@dot.gov.

Sincerely,



R.F. Krochalis
Regional Administrator

