



GEORGIA ROADS

A Newsletter of Georgia's Local Technical Assistance Program

Vol. 21, No.17 Fall 2010



“BETTER ROADS THROUGH COOPERATION”

HB 277 Transportation Investment Act of 2010

...How does it impact the State ?



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After several years of debate on the future of funding for transportation in this state, the Georgia General Assembly enacted House Bill 277 (HB 277), the Transportation Investment Act of 2010. The act gives the state an unprecedented opportunity to generate dollars for transportation projects. Successful implementation of the regional funding plan for transportation depends upon participation and cooperation of local governments and elected officials.

This regional sales tax gives Georgians the opportunity to get transportation projects moving in their regions. Times have been changing for several years now, and not only because of this recession. Funding for transportation just is not there. It is not available for big new projects that really can make a difference in a community – projects that potentially bring jobs and economic development to an area. Good, strong economic development depends on a good, strong transportation system with options for all types of needs.

The Transportation Investment Act is the best opportunity to successfully move towards fulfilling the Statewide Strategic Plan that was approved by both Governor Perdue and the State Transportation Board. The revenue generated by motor fuel taxes has been declining, and all indications are that it will continue to decline in the coming years. In fact, the Department of Transportation actually promotes programs that reduce the revenue from gas collections -- encouraging teleworking, job sharing, carpooling, riding transit, biking and more that are all designed to reduce the number of vehicles on the road every day, with a direct result of less gasoline being purchased.

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Christy Lovett, Program Director
Beverly Fontenot, Staff Develop/Training
Coordinator II
Adele Samuel, Program Assistant

Address
 GDOT, LTAP
 276 Memorial Drive, S.W.
 Atlanta, GA 30303

Phone: 1-800-573-6445
LTAP Website:
www.dot.ga.gov/localgovernment/ltap
Fax: 404-463-3564
Email: LTAP@DOT.GA.GOV

The Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) is a nationwide effort financed jointly by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and individual state departments of transportation and/or universities. The program's purpose is to disseminate the latest state-of-the-art technologies for roads, highways and bridges to municipal and county highway and transportation personnel.

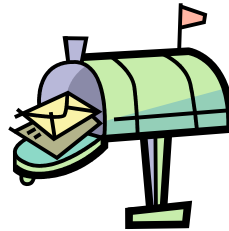
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The Georgia Roads Newsletter is distributed free of charge to counties, cities, towns and other transportation partners.



Don't forget to maximize resources and improve training by taking advantage of the LTAP lending library for hundreds of resource materials. The library is an excellent FREE source for state and local government agencies. Use our videos and other materials for your in-house training programs.

See a list of all available titles at the following website:
www.dot.ga.gov/doingbusiness/trainingresources/Documents/LTAP/Videocatrev1119.pdf



Letter from the Director

Hello everyone...Believe it or not the holiday season is already here again. Our LTAP Office has a busy December planned with a couple of good training workshops offered in various locations throughout the state. Be sure to check out the details on the Event Calendar page. I hope that everyone will have a chance to participate in at least one of the training opportunities. I will be attending the FHWA Every Day Counts Regional Summit in Atlanta. While attending, I hope to learn more valuable information to pass along to you about this initiative. As you think about the holidays remember to take precautions to be safe and stress free so you can enjoy the holiday season with your family and friends.

Best wishes,
 Christy

EVENT CALENDAR

DATE

LOCATION

APWA Equipment Show

February 8

Perry, GA

ACCG County Buyers Mart

April 29-May 1

Savannah, GA

Work Zone Traffic Control

Call to set up this workshop at your location



For up-to-date training opportunities, checkout our website at www.dot.ga.gov/localgovernmnet/ltap

Most classes are free for local government representatives. To register for a class, please go to our website. You can also email us at LTAP@DOT.GA.GOV or call 1-800-573-6445.

Deploying New Innovations



INGENUITY IMAGINATION

INVENTION INNOVATION

Shortening Project Delivery Toolkit

It's a commonly held perception that it takes an average of 13 years to deliver a major highway project from planning through completion. This perception is based partly on the experiences of State DOTs and FHWA, and partly on data collected on projects that require the an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) document. FHWA believes that using innovative approaches will improve project delivery times. The toolkit will present the approaches for addressing a number of frequently-cited problem areas.

Planning and Environmental Linkages

This represents an approach to transportation decision-making that takes environmental, community, and economic information collected early in the planning stage and carries it through project development, design, and construction. This can lead to a seamless decision-making process that minimizes duplication of effort, promotes environmental stewardship, and reduces delays in project implementation.

Legal Sufficiency Enhancements

Decisions made early in planning and project development are often the root causes of problems identified later in the environmental review process when NEPA and Section 4(f) documents undergo legal scrutiny. Consultation with FHWA environmental attorneys at early decision points can help decision makers avoid problems later, saving time and costs.

Expanding Use of Programmatic Agreements

The continued and expanded use of programmatic agreements (PAs) has been very effective in saving time. When prior agreements exist for avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating impacts, projects are reviewed quicker and trust and improved relationships between DOTs and regulatory agencies is developed.

Use of In-Lieu Fee and Mitigation Banking

In projects that will impact waters of the United States (wetlands, for example), the permitting process under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act currently constitutes a major component of the project development and delivery process. This initiative proposes expanded use of in-lieu fees and mitigation banking

currently allowed under existing statute, FHWA regulations, State law and court decisions in order to save time and expedite project delivery.

Clarifying the Scope of Preliminary Design

This initiative will identify the amount of design work allowable under current law prior to NEPA completion regardless of contracting mechanism and develop guidance to allow this work to be done consistently.

Flexibilities in Right-of-Way (ROW)

The ROW process is currently a major part of the project development process and significant time savings can be achieved by employing flexibilities already provided. This initiative will underline opportunities for improved coordination with other key project development actions in preliminary design; land acquisition for utilities accommodation and relocation project activities; NEPA mitigation land needs; and other areas where streamlined approaches may prove beneficial.

Flexibilities in Utility Accommodation and Relocation

Potential utility conflicts exist on most transportation projects. It is estimated that half of all highway and bridge projects eligible for Federal funding involve the relocation of utility facilities, and construction generally takes longer and costs more when utilities need to be relocated. The initiative will spotlight existing flexibilities currently in place under Federal law and describe techniques that foster effective utility coordination during project development.

Enhanced Technical Assistance on Ongoing EISs

This initiative will provide additional FHWA technical assistance to identify major challenges on ongoing EIS projects and implement solutions. Candidate projects would ideally be those where 60 months have elapsed since issuance of the Notice of Intent (NOI) without issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD).

Source: Adapted from article at www.fhwa.dot.gov/everydaycounts/projects/toolkit/

FHWA Gives the Green Light to Adaptive Signal Control Technologies

Outdated signal timing contributes to traffic congestion; this doesn't need to be commonplace. Adaptive signal control technologies can use real-time traffic information to reduce congestion by determining which lights should be red and which should be green.



Improving Traffic Flow

Wait, go, stop, wait, wait some more; most drivers have spent time fuming at red lights. Maybe the intersection was empty, yet the light stayed red for a maddening amount of time. Or perhaps the road is so congested that you have to wait three or more full light cycles before you can make a left turn. Why don't traffic lights adjust to actual conditions? Adaptive Signal Control Technologies (ASCT), in conjunction with well engineered signal timing, can do just that. By receiving and processing data from strategically placed sensors, ASCT can determine which lights should be red and which should be green. ASCT helps improve the quality of service that travelers experience on our local roads and highways. Less unnecessary delays and traffic moves quickly and smoothly.

Faster Responses to Traffic Conditions

The traditional signal timing process is time consuming and requires substantial amounts of manually collected traffic data. Traditional Time-of-Day signal timing plans do not accommodate variable and unpredictable traffic demands. This produces customer complaints, frustrated drivers, and degraded safety. In the absence of complaints, months or years might pass before inefficient traffic signal timing settings are updated. With ASCT, information is collected and signal timing is updated continually.

Cutting Costs

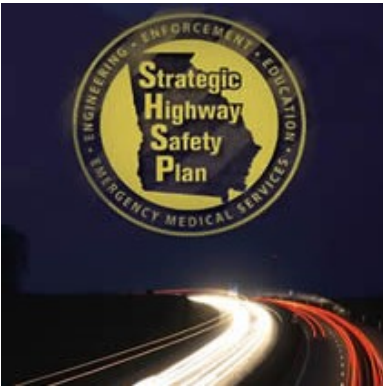
Outdated traffic signal timing incurs substantial costs to businesses and consumers. They account for more than 10 percent of all traffic delay and congestion on major routes alone. For consumers, this causes excess delays and fuel consumption. For businesses, it decreases productivity and increases labor costs. With ASCT, the data collection and analysis are done automatically. More important for travelers, signal timing updates are made as situations occur—stopping many complaints from ever happening.

Other Benefits

Adaptive signal control technologies are also kinder to the environment. Using ASCT can reduce emissions of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide due to improved traffic flow. Real-time management of traffic systems is proven to work, yet these systems have been deployed on less than 1 percent of existing traffic signals. FHWA already took the lead in making ASCT affordable when its Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center helped develop ACS Lite. The Agency is now working to bring these technologies to the rest of the country. For frustrated travelers, the optimal balance of red light/green light is on the way.

Source: Adapted from FHWA article at : www.fhwa.dot.gov/everydaycounts/technology/adsc/





Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Aims for Improved Safety at the Local Level

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has designated “improving roadway safety and mobility” as one of its top priorities. FHWA’s safety programs are focused on high risk areas such as roadway departures, intersections, and pedestrian safety. Their efforts include work in the areas of engineering, enforcement, and education.

Basic Principles of Highway Safety

When considering the safety of a roadway, it is important to think about the roadway, the vehicle, and the roadway users, including drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Efforts to improve highway safety are equally as important at the state level as they are at the national level. The Georgia’s Governor’s Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) has worked with partners throughout the state to develop a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). A SHSP is developed with the goal of identifying the state’s safety needs and guiding decision making aimed at reducing fatalities and injuries on Georgia roads. This statewide document, developed by GOHS in a cooperative process, includes input from public and private safety stakeholders. Arguably the most common application of this planned approach exists in the form of the four Es of highway safety:

1. **Education-** Programs used to teach safe behaviors on the roadway, such as special events, announcements, public relations, incentive programs and adults safe driving behaviors.
2. **Enforcement-** Efforts by law enforcement to aggressively enforce posted speeds and traffic laws to create safer driving habits.
3. **Engineering-** The design and building of facilities, roadways, sidewalks, lighting, signs to enhance the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Includes, for example, traffic calming methods.

4. **Emergency Medical Services-** The EMS strategic planning discussion considers the operation and administration of an effective, statewide EMS/trauma system and increasing emergency medical services.

The SHSP establishes statewide goals, objectives, and key emphasis areas. Georgia has 10 highway safety emphasis areas and area subgroups. Each of the safety areas has one or more corresponding Task Team(s). Each of the Task Teams develops comprehensive safety recommendations along with corresponding programs to achieve crash reductions, injuries, and fatalities. The SHSP contains education and enforcement countermeasures for reducing crashes, injuries and fatalities on Georgia roads. It also documents strategic, comprehensive, and collaborative efforts with the Engineering and Emergency Medical Services components to roadway safety in the State. This “4-E” approach will result in a balanced and effective strategy to saving lives on Georgia’s roads.

FFY 2010 GOHS Priority Goals:

- Increase safety belt use from 89.6% to 91% for drivers and front seat outboard passengers.
- Reduce the alcohol related fatality rate from 0.53 fatalities per 100 million VMT in 2006 to 0.48 fatalities per 100M VMT.
- Reduce the percentage of speed related fatal crashes from 24% in 2008 to 21%.
- Reduce the percentage of pedestrian related fatal crashes from 9% in 2008 to 7%.
- Continue implementation of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan with all roadway safety stakeholders in Georgia.

Safety Improvements at the Local Level

Safety improvements at the local level can pose significant challenges for local governments responsible for roadway networks ranging from several blocks to many miles. Similar to challenges faced by federal and state efforts, limitations, including financial and personnel constraints, can make it difficult for local agencies to develop and implement safety initiatives. Nevertheless, information is available to help local governments identify options and develop action plans for implementing safety countermeasures, some of which is highlighted in this series of fact-sheets.

There are several steps in the process for implementing safety improvements at the local level.

- **Identify your roadway safety problems:** Where are the most crashes happening? Where are the most serious crashes happening?
- **Identify possible countermeasures:** Which countermeasures will mitigate the identified problem?
- **Identify resources for implementation:** How will you pay for these improvements and do you have the personnel necessary for implementation?
- **Implement your countermeasure:** How does

your countermeasure implementation fit with your general project schedule? Have you allocated the human resources necessary to implement?

- **Examine countermeasure effectiveness:** Does the issue addressed by the countermeasure seem to be resolved? Are fewer crashes happening on the road segment where the countermeasure was implemented?

Considering the Benefits and Costs

Deciding what countermeasures to consider will often depend on how much you have to spend and what the anticipated benefits are. One important aspect of the decision should be the expected benefit-to-cost ratio. Ideally, any selected improvements have benefits that outweigh the associated costs.

The publication *Countermeasures That Work* developed by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration includes a list of easy solutions to keep our roadways safe, which can be found at:

www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/airbags/Countermeasures/

Source: Written by Beverly Fontenot, GDOT Staff Development/Training Coordinator



The Sun Glare and the Daily Commute



Here are a few ways you can reduce the hazards:

- Whether driving or walking, note where your shadow is. If your shadow is in front of you, it means that oncoming traffic probably can't see you.
- Be extra careful at traffic signals. When the sun is near an object, that object becomes more difficult to see. And if you can see your green light clearly, perhaps the other drivers can't see their red light.
- Vary your commute time by 10 minutes to avoid that moment when the sun is directly in our eyes.
- Wear polarized sunglasses, which can deflect and diffuse concentrated light waves.
- Keep your windshield clean, both inside and out.
- Don't use high-gloss cleansers on your dashboard, as it can reflect sun glare upward.
- Leave extra room between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead of you to ensure you have enough time to react.

Source: Written by Barbara Pratt, GDOT State Risk Manager

Seatbelt use...

Do we really need to discuss this again? Yes!!



I have to say that I am old enough to remember when cars did not have seatbelts, babies were held on the adults lap not in a car seat, children were not buckled in, and of course adults were pretty much unaware of the potential for death and injury. The first seat belts out were just lap belts, you know, the ones that felt like stiff cardboard with heavy metal buckles on the end. They were not very comfortable to wear or even to sit on as many people first tried to do. Eventually the material for the seatbelts was made softer and then shoulder belts were added to further improve the live saving capability.

Since those beginning years, the technology has continued to improve in seatbelt construction and ease of use, plus additional vehicle restraint/protective devices were developed to help improve the survivability of the driver and passengers in a wreck. Air bags, front and now side, crumple zones built into the vehicles, a warning light on the dash, and some type of audio reminder that the seatbelt needs to be buckled, plus many other advances have been put in place to supplement seatbelts. At one point there were even seatbelts that automatically retracted when you opened the car door and went back into place when you shut the car door, sort of an automatic buckler! Not everything tried succeeded.

Seatbelts were also added to heavy construction equipment that many local governments use on a daily basis. However for this type of equipment seatbelts are only useful to save lives when the equipment has a ROPS (roll over protective structure). The ROPS encloses the driver in a protective cage, so the driver will not get crushed if the equipment overturns. However, if the seatbelt is not worn then the driver tends to jump or get thrown from the equipment usually with death or serious injury as a result. The cost of the ROPS protection is built into the cost of the equipment, so you pay for it whether or not the protection it can actually provide is made complete by the driver wearing the seatbelt.

Seatbelt use has proven to be very effective in saving lives over and over, again and again. Some of the reminders I found from various sources include:

- 42% of passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2007 were unbelted
- Seatbelts used saved more than 75,000 lives from 2004 to 2008
- Wearing a seatbelt can reduce the risk of death or serious injury by 50%
- 3 out of 4 people ejected from a vehicle during a crash will die as a result
- There is 1 death every hour in the U.S. of persons not wearing their seatbelt
- In a crash occurring at 40 miles per hour, a 150 pound, unbelted occupant will be thrown from the vehicle with 6,000 pounds of force.

At 40 miles per hour when the vehicle crashes and comes to a stop the unbelted occupant will continue onward at approximately 60 feet per second until they are restrained by their seatbelt and airbag. If a seatbelt is not used then the occupant continues onward at approximately 60 feet per second until they strike the next object or objects, the dash, window, roof supports, or the ground, trees, signs, even the vehicle or piece of equipment itself if ejected.

So, why do we still need to be discussing the importance of seatbelts again? The answer is simple, employees of local governments here in Georgia continue to be killed and seriously/permanently injured in vehicle and equipment accidents because they are not wearing their seatbelts while driving your vehicle, their vehicles or your equipment.

- A tractor mowing alongside a road overturned. The driver tried to jump clear, but died when the tractor rolled over him. The tractor was equipped with a seatbelt and ROPS.
- A law enforcement officer lost his life after losing control of his vehicle, not in a pursuit, spinning across the opposite side of the road hitting a tree. He did not have his seatbelt on.
- A street sweeper had a hydraulic line burst going up a hill sending the sweeper rolling backwards out of control. The driver died when he was thrown or jumped from the sweeper. There was a seatbelt and ROPS.

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Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Call Before You Dig!

Since passage of the Georgia Utility Facility Protection Act in 2000, better known as the Georgia “Dig Law,” the State has built a damage prevention program second to none in the nation.

Utility services like phone, gas, power, water and cable that your family depends on are buried underground. In the U.S., one utility line is unintentionally struck every minute. Striking a single line can result in harm to yourself or someone else, costly fines and repair fees or inconvenient outages. The Georgia Public Service Commission reminds, “homeowners, landscapers, fence installers, farmers, plumbers, professional excavators, schools, public safety, public works, and municipalities – or essentially anyone doing a digging project, that before beginning their project, they are required to call 811 or 1-800-282-7411. Every digging project in any area of the State requires a call to 811 - even for small projects like planting trees, or shrubs installing mailbox posts, or fences, or creating new gardens. Georgia 811 is easy to remember and this call starts the process of getting underground utility lines marked. The call and the service are free.

Georgia 811 notifies member utility companies where and when you plan to dig. Dispatchers for these member companies’ locate technicians to mark the underground lines with colored paint and/or flags. By respecting the location of the paint marks

and flags you can avoid dangerous contact with underground facilities.

Notify the Georgia 811 Center at least two (2) business days before digging begins on public and private property, rights of way and easements. You’ll need to provide the following information: Your name, dig address and nearest intersection, how deep you are digging, type of work and where you need the property marked out. You must hand dig within 2 feet of mark-outs before using mechanized equipment. Be sure to have this information available when you call the Center. You will receive a ticket number, which you should keep until your project is safely completed. You cannot work outside the scope of work stated on your request.

Note that the color code markings for utilities are: Red-electric; Yellow-gas, oil, dangerous materials, product and steam lines; Orange-CATV communication; Blue-water; Green sewer; White-proposed excavation.

The checklist below will assist you to dig safely. Georgia 811, keeping Georgians safe and connected. Know what’s below. Call before you dig- simply dial 811 or 1-800-282-7411 from any area in the state **Before You Dig**, for every project, every time. For more information, visit the Georgia 811 web site at www.Georgia811.com.

Call Before you Dig Important Steps	
	Gather all important information: the municipality, street address, extent of work, caller’s name, contact person’s name, address and phone numbers etc...
	Call Georgia 811 at least two (2) business days before digging.
	Wait for the site to be marked. Marking could be paint, flags or stakes.
	Respect the marks. Note the color of all markings used and what type of facilities they indicate.
	Dig with care! Always hand dig within 2 feet on either side of any marked lines.
	If damage, dislocation, or disturbance of an underground utility line occurs, immediately notify the affected facility, utility or pipeline.
	If damage creates an emergency, take immediate steps to safeguard health and property, and call 911.



Street Name Signs and the MUTCD

There have recently been articles published about the Federal standard for street name signs and deadlines to comply with these standards. Some of these articles being published contain incorrect information. Federal requirements for Street Name signs are contained in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD). The Federal Highway Administration went through a rulemaking process to issue and adopt the 2009 edition of the MUTCD. This edition adopted new requirements and carried forward previous requirements related to Street Name signs.

The MUTCD required all Street Names signs, as well as most other signs, to be maintained to a minimum level of retroreflectivity. This requirement was established in 2007 as a result of a congressional directive and has two specific compliance dates for replacing signs: January 2015 for regulatory, warning, and other post-mounted signs and January 2018 for Street Name and other overhead signs. These compliance dates are based on useful service life of signs. Remember only signs that fall below minimum retroreflectivity levels need to be replaced, NOT all signs.

Here are key MUTCD requirements to remember when you replace Street Name signs:

- The lettering for Street Name signs shall be composed of a combination of lower-case letters with initial upper-case letters. This requirements applies immediately to any new Street Name signs. There is no specific compliance date for replacement of existing Street name signs that use all capital lettering. Existing Street Name signs using all capital letters can remain in place until they need to be replaced due to end of service life or some other reason. As a result, agencies do not incur any additional cost to meet this MUTCD requirement.
- The only acceptable background colors for Street Names signs are green, blue, and brown (with a white legend), and white (with a black legend). This requirement applies immediately to any new Street Name signs. Existing Street Name signs that have other background colors can remain in place until they need to be replaced due to end of service life or some other reason.

For addition requirements, refer to the 2009 MUTCD edition. This manual can be found on-line at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>.

Work Zone Safety Classes

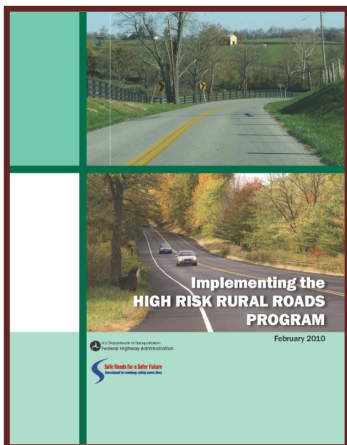
The LTAP Office offers Work Zone Safety Classes. These are available by request. Contact the LTAP office for more information or to set up a training course.

Resources From



Implementing the High Risk Rural Road Program

This publication is now available and can be accessed by the following link: http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local_rural/training/fhwasa10021/



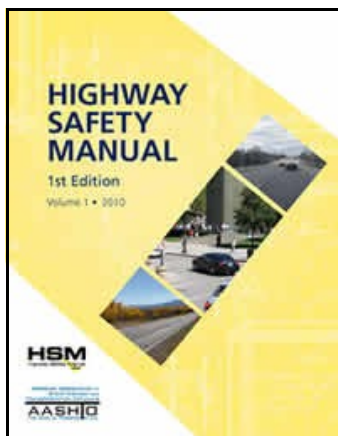
The document highlights common challenges to the High Risk Rural Roads Program (HRRRP); lessons learned and noteworthy practices shared by states. It is intended for use by states and relevant stakeholders to launch their HRRRP; identify next steps to a program already moving forward or implement noteworthy practices to improve an established program.

After four years of the HRRRP, the overall obligation rate for the program has remained low. Many states have struggled with their HRRRP; however, implementation of the HRRRP can make a difference in rural road safety. The publication contains useful information and resources.

The publication addresses common challenges of the HRRRP:

- Data –crash, exposure
- Project Selection
- Coordination
- Administration, Policies and Legislation

Highway Safety Manual



Prior to this first edition of the HSM, there were no widely accepted tools for engineers to use to quantify the potential for reductions in crash frequency and severity when making transportation facility design and operations decisions. The HSM begins to fill this gap, providing transportation professionals with knowledge, techniques, and methodologies to quantify the safety-related effects of transportation decisions – similar to the way operational impacts are quantified in the Highway Capacity Manual and environmental impacts are calculated through the NEPA process. The HSM provides the best factual information and tools in a useful form to facilitate roadway decisions based on the explicit consideration of their effects on potential future crash frequency and severity.

What types of benefits are expected with its use?

- Safety improvements
 - Improve the decision-making process and effectiveness of countermeasures to reduce the number and severity of crashes.
- Cost savings
 - Decisions can be made based on quantitative evaluations that predict crash reduction associated with improvements, instilling confidence that safety funds are being applied most effectively.
 - Time spent justifying a safety decision will be reduced by conducting a definitive, science-based analysis.
 - Integrate safety elements in the most cost-effective manner in the project development process.

* The LTAP office will be offering HSM training in the future.

(continued from page 1)

HB 277...

But even if there were no alternative options for reducing the number of vehicles on the road, the funds generated by motor fuel taxes would still be declining. The increase in fuel efficient cars and alternative fuel vehicles is growing. Virtually everyone who purchases a late model vehicle is reducing their contribution to the motor fuel tax fund by increasing the miles per gallon the new vehicle gets versus the older vehicle.



This new regional tax is not the same as a T-SPLOST, which is defined as a local option sales tax. This regional tax will not be optional for any area in the region – the whole region is either in or out. The citizens of each region have the power and the choice to approve the transportation tax, as well as the projects and progress it can bring to their communities.

Ultimately, a regional sales tax dedicated to transportation projects is one of the fairest ways to increase funding. Everyone who makes a purchase pays the tax, and everyone buying something is in fact using the transportation system. Even those people that have goods delivered to their home or office rather than going to the store themselves are truly using the system – somebody had to deliver those goods using some available form of transportation.

A few of the key components of the Transportation Investment Act include:

- 12 special tax districts based on the existing Regional Commission boundaries
- Creation of the Georgia Coordinating Committee for Rural and Human Services Transportation

- Changes the composition of the MARTA Board of Directors and allows for its expansion into other counties
- Provides for funds to be available beginning January 2013
- All the counties within the district will be in or they will be out, eliminating the chance for individual municipalities to decline participation in the program
- The 1-percent tax is for a 10-year term
- All money raised within a district stays in that district
- Funds are not restricted by Congressional Balancing
-

Each county in the district will receive a share of 25 percent of the total funds collected within the district based on a formula in the bill that includes lane miles and population in the county (15 percent for the ARC region)

The Department's Planning Division has worked hard to establish guidelines for project criteria to determine a "ranking" for proposed projects. The final proposed draft criteria will be voted on and may be amended by the Regional Roundtables in meetings during December 2010 and January 2011. Additionally, projects should come from an existing list such as the STIP or Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) long range plans, and be compatible with the Statewide Strategic Plan. There is also a recommended investment level for various types of projects designed to ensure that the tax revenue is allocated wisely.

The 12 Roundtables are comprised of one representative from each County Commission and one Mayor of a city in the county that is elected by the mayors of all the cities in the county. Essentially, each county has two votes on the Roundtable. The Atlanta Roundtable has a special makeup that also includes the Mayor of Atlanta for a total of 21 members. Each Roundtable also has an Executive Committee comprised of five members of the Roundtable and three non-voting members who are Legislators selected by the Chairs of the House and Senate Transportation Committees. More information on the Regional Roundtables may be found by visiting: <http://www.it3.ga.gov/Pages/Legislation.aspx>.

Georgia DOT's Director of Planning and the Planning Division are already working hard on developing a draft list of fiscally unconstrained projects to be reviewed by local governments, MPOs and the General Assembly by August 15, 2011. This list will give a comprehensive evaluation of each project, including congestion mitigation, increased lane capacity, public safety and economic development benefits, and will also include notice of the final Roundtable meeting. But there is still so much work to do before that point.

The Planning Director has been meeting with Human Resources representatives at the Department of Transportation on a regular basis to develop staffing plans for all the new activities required by HB 277. Department staff is wrapping up work on creating the draft of the fiscally unconstrained project list so that all the Roundtables may identify the best projects that can be completed during the 10-year tax period. Additionally, the planning area is continuing to work on the Department's regular Federal program to ensure that projects are ongoing across the state.

Georgia has a tremendous chance to increase funding for transportation with the Transportation Investment Act, but it is not the only answer. More ways to increase funding must be identified, alternative methods to get large projects underway must be pursued, and maintaining what is already built has to be a priority. Georgia's leaders have taken a step in the right direction with the Regional tax, and the Department will do everything possible to ensure the program is implemented the best way possible for Georgia's citizens and businesses.

Source: Written by Jill Goldberg, GDOT Deputy Press Secretary

APWA Equipment Show



Come join us for a great day of browsing the best Public Works equipment and services in our industry. Free Admission, Free Lunch, Cash Prizes! The 26th Annual Georgia Chapter American Public Works Equipment Show , Tuesday Feb. 8, 2011, Perry Ga. Ag. Center.



Go to www.georgia.apwa.net for registration details.

(continued from page 8)

Seatbelts...

- Two responding firefighters were involved in an accident in a fire truck. One died and the other was seriously injured. Seatbelts were not worn.
- A driver ran off the road and in trying to swerve back onto the road lost control of the dump truck he was driving. The truck flipped and the driver was ejected and died from his injuries. He was not wearing a seatbelt.
- A volunteer firefighter responding to a call in his personal vehicle lost control and crashed. He was ejected and seriously/permanently injured. He was not wearing a seatbelt.

These are just some of the examples from the claims handled here in Georgia. I won't even go into the costs of these accidents, the human side and dollar cost, let's just say and agree the costs are very substantial. There are many excuses and myths about why people do not want to wear seatbelts, none of which are very valid, and would have to be covered in another, separate, article.

It is well worth the time and effort for a city or county manager, or executive director of an authority, to take a close look at whether or not there is a seatbelt policy in place and if so, are the employees of all departments following that policy. Below is a list of questions to help guide you in your efforts.

- Is there a current written seatbelt policy in place that covers both drivers and passengers of all vehicles?
- Does it cover the use of employee or volunteer personal vehicles used in the course of your business?
- Does it cover mobile construction equipment if equipped with a ROPS system and seatbelt?
- Is the policy signed and dated by the current management team? (Nothing worse than having an old policy signed by someone who has been gone for ten years!)
- Does the current management team wear seatbelts themselves? (If so, great! If not, then expect the employees to follow your example!)

- Has the current management team had a meeting with all department heads to go over the policy and the expectations for them to carry out the policy?
- Did you ask/require your department heads to cover the seatbelt policy in a meeting with all of their employees? (Doesn't have to be a special meeting, include the review in a safety meeting or regular department meeting, etc.)
- Do you require the seatbelt policy to be reviewed with all employees at least once a year? (Again, doesn't have to be in a special meeting.)
- Does your disciplinary system include this specific policy or will there be a separate set of disciplinary actions that will be taken? (Whatever the system is it should be well documented.)
- Is your seatbelt policy required to be covered in all new employee orientation sessions? (Remember new employees are going to do what they know how and there may not have been a seatbelt policy at their last place of employment.)
- Do you include a question on any self-inspection form you might use on whether or not seatbelts are being worn at the time of the inspection?

I hope you will follow through in reviewing your seatbelt policy. It would be great if within the next couple of years we do not have any further accidents like those already mentioned.

Source: This article was adapted from one written by Dave Gelsthorpe, LGRMS Director and published in the LGRMS's "The Risk Connection"




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