



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

**Federal Highway Administration  
California Division**

November 9, 2011

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In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-CA

Mr. Malcolm Dougherty, Acting Director  
California Department of Transportation  
1120 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attention: Garth Hopkins, Chief - Office of Regional and Interagency Planning, M.S. #32

Dear Mr. Dougherty:

SUBJECT: California Planning Emphasis Areas for 2012

The letter is to communicate the 2012 Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs). The PEAs are policy, procedural and technical topics that should be considered by Federal planning fund recipients when preparing work programs for metropolitan and statewide planning and research assistance programs. The attached PEAs address objectives identified in Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Strategic Plans. They also address a mix of planning issues and priority topics identified during ongoing reviews of metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes as requiring additional work.

The FHWA California Division and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region IX have determined that the areas of emphasis for California's transportation planning and air quality program in Federal FY 2012 are:

- Work Program Development
- Performance Management
- Safety
- Livability

Work Program Development

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) provides metropolitan transportation planning program funding for the integration of transportation planning processes in the MPA (i.e. rail, airports, seaports, intermodal facilities, public highways and transit, bicycle and pedestrian, etc.) into a unified metropolitan transportation planning process, culminating in the preparation of a multimodal transportation plan for the MPA. FHWA and FTA request that all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) review the Overall Work Plan (OWP) development process to ensure all activities and products mandated by the metropolitan transportation planning regulations in 23 CFR 450 are a priority for FHWA and FTA combined planning grant funding available to the region. The MPO OWP work elements and subsequent work task should be developed in

sufficient detail (i.e. activity description, products, schedule, cost, etc.) to clearly explain the purpose and results of the work to be accomplished, including how they support the Federal transportation planning process.

### Performance Management

While the particulars of reauthorization remain uncertain, the proposed legislation in both chambers of Congress requires the States to adopt system performance goals and measures. The challenge is to position the MPOs to cope with program delivery challenges under the new legislative framework. Many of California's MPOs have developed Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) that contain performance measures. Once the measures have been established, the MPOs, in conjunction with the State and Federal agencies, may analyze how to improve upon the performance and then develop a plan of action for achieving better results. In short, FHWA would like to know what performance measures MPOs are currently utilizing to gauge the progress of their transportation decisions over time, and what kind of results are they achieving. The FHWA and FTA expect that MPOs be prepared to respond to these inquiries as part of the annual meeting.

The State and MPOs are highly encouraged to establish Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures to assess and/or track the performance of transportation investment decisions in the following areas: Safety, Infrastructure Condition, Mobility, Congestion, Freight, and Livability. The FHWA planner for your region can assist the MPO with the implementation of any agreed-upon performance measures in the Statewide and/or metropolitan planning processes.

### Safety

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), established the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) as a core Federal-aid program. The overall purpose of this program is to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads through the implementation of infrastructure-related highway safety improvements.

The specific provisions pertaining to the HSIP, are defined in Section 1401 of SAFETEA-LU, which amended Section 148 of Title 23, *United States Code* (23 USC 148) to incorporate these provisions. These requirements include the development of Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) in consultation with other key State and local highway safety stakeholders.

23 CFR 450.206 and 23 CFR 450.306 requires the State and Metropolitan transportation planning process be continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive, and provide consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users. 23 CFR 450.306 also requires the metropolitan transportation planning process to be consistent with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, as specified in 23 U.S.C. 148, and other transit safety and security planning and review processes, plans, and programs, as appropriate. Furthermore 23 CFR 450.216 requires that the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP)/Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP) include all safety projects included in the State's SHSP.

Caltrans and the MPOs are strongly encouraged to assure that all Regional Transportation Plans, FTIPs and the FSTIP are consistent with the Caltrans SHSP.

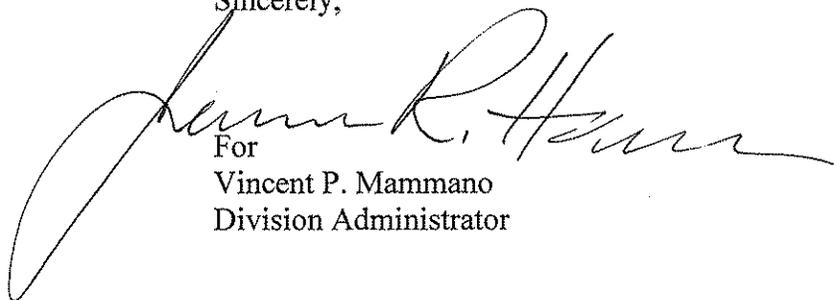
Livability/Sustainability

Livability/Sustainability is about tying the quality and location of transportation facilities to broader opportunities such as access to good jobs, affordable housing, quality schools, and safe streets. This includes addressing safety and capacity issues on all roads through better planning and design, maximizing and expanding new technologies such as ITS and the use of quiet pavements, using Travel Demand Management approaches to system planning and operations, etc. MPOs are encouraged to assure that new Regional Transportation Plans incorporate the following livability/sustainability principles:

- Provide more transportation choices
- Promote equitable, affordable housing
- Enhance economic competitiveness
- Support existing communities
- Leverage Federal policies & investment
- Value communities and neighborhoods

The FHWA and FTA view these PEAs as critical elements of the transportation planning process and highly encourage the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and all California MPOs to include each PEA within their respective planning processes. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jermaine R. Hannon, Planning and Air Quality Team Leader at [Jermaine.Hannon@dot.gov](mailto:Jermaine.Hannon@dot.gov) or (916) 498-85066.

Sincerely,



For  
Vincent P. Mammano  
Division Administrator

cc: (email)

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