

STUDY OFFERS POTENTIAL LESSONS IN REGIONAL TRANSIT GOVERNANCE

A report put out by the Eno Center for Transportation (Eno) in partnership with TransitCenter summarizes their findings from a study that “explore[d] how different regional governance structures help foster - or hinder - the ability of different transit systems to deliver improved service, mobility, and innovation.” Eno did an initial case study analysis in Chicago, which sparked the desire to broaden the study to analyze transit governance in a variety of regions in the U.S. Therefore, they partnered with TransitCenter to complete another five case studies: Boston, Dallas/Fort Worth, Minneapolis/St. Paul, New York City Tri-State Region, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

The analysis was based on extensive, and naturally subjective, interviews with senior officials across each region; in total, representatives from more than 70 organizations were interviewed. These interviews allowed the researchers to draw qualitative conclusions about regional transit governance in each region, glean key themes, and develop a set of broad recommendations that could potentially be applied to any city or region aiming to improve its transit governance structure.

This article summarizes some of the findings of the study report.

Chicago was the first case study region, home to three transit operators under the umbrella of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). According to the report, the RTA distributes funding to each agency based on “outdated formulas”, and has limited political or statutory power. Additionally, the state has little involvement in transit. The researchers assert that the RTA needs more authority in order to push individual agencies toward regional goals.

Unlike in Chicago, in Boston the state controls the region's primary transit op-



erator, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA,) through the state department of transportation. According to the report, this is justifiable given that Boston is the center of the state's economy and the location of the state government, and because the state provides significant funding for MBTA. The authors indicate this governance structure gives the state a vested interest in regional transit funding, but also diminishes the influence of localities, which do not make a significant financial contribution to the transit system.

The main transit operators in the third case study region, Dallas/Fort Worth, are Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), the Fort Worth Transit Authority (The T), and the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA). The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the region, playing a substantial role in bringing together the agencies to develop regional plans. However, as reported by the authors, limited land use authority makes it challenging to align these plans for transit investments with regional population growth.

In Minneapolis/St. Paul, the region's MPO, Met Council, operates the regional transit system. The MPO is con-

trolled by the governor, who appoints its board members. In 2008 the state legislature established the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB), a separate entity with transit capital and operating funding authority, to allow counties to tax themselves for transit investment and to help insulate the metropolitan area from the governor-controlled Met Council. According to the report, this case study demonstrates that there are potential benefits to the MPO operating the transit system.

The New York metro region has the largest transit network in the U.S. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) operates most of the network, but the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) and New Jersey Transit also provide commuter and urban services. The authors assert that due to overrepresentation of suburban areas on the MTA board, relative to ridership, there tends to be overinvestment in suburban capital projects. Additionally, the report identifies regional challenges based on a fragmented system, but benefits as a result of access to revenue flows from MTA-operated toll roads, tunnels, and bridges.

The final case study region was the San Francisco Bay Area. It is the least

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NOTES FROM THE TOP



BY MICHELLE HORNE

We want to thank all of you who attended the conference and congratulate the 2015 Extra Mile Award and FTA Award recipients. All your efforts and contributions illustrate the depth of commitment we have to providing and supporting public transit in Louisiana. We appreciate all you do! We also want to express our special thanks and appreciation to our many vendors who participated in and sponsored events.

You can find more about the conference award winners in the Spotlight Article in this newsletter.

Finally, we want to remind you about the upcoming application deadline for the Rural Public Transportation, JARC, Intercity Bus, and Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Programs. Applicants may visit DOTD's website and apply online through the Louisiana Transit Electronic Application Management system (LATEAM). However, the Intercity Bus applications – Section 5311(f) are available only online to download.

Please call the DOTD-Public Transportation Section at (225) 379-3060 with any questions. Electronic applications must be submitted by February 1, 2016. The Intercity Bus Program application should be submitted to the Public Transportation Office also by February 1, 2016.

Have a safe and happy holiday season! We look forward to seeing you all next year!

It's hard to believe how quickly 2015 is coming to a close and how many events have marked the year — a new Governor for Louisiana, DOTD Public Transportation successfully completed an FTA management review, we delivered a number of much needed new vehicles and a number of training classes and site visits, and successfully pulled off another Public Transportation conference.

The big event this quarter was of course the 2015 Annual Louisiana Public Transit Conference, hosted in Baton Rouge November 17-19, with a special focus on transit safety. It was jam packed with advanced training in topics we all need to do our job, but it was also a wonderful opportunity to network with our peers from across the state and talk about shared experiences in an industry that we all choose based on a true desire to better our communities and constituents lives.



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ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

From all of us at the DOTD Public Transportation Section, **we wish you all a wonderful and safe Holiday Season, and look forward to the New Year ahead!**



NTI COURSES

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.ntionline.com

JAN 4 - 6	Procurement Series III - RFPs and Competitive Contract Negotiations Nashville, TN
JAN 20 -21	Introduction to Transit Asset Management Wichita, KS
JAN 27 - 28	National Transit Database (Urban Reporting) Denver, CO

TRB EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.trb.org

JAN 10 - 14	Transportation Research Board 95th Annual Meeting Washington, DC Registration is open. For more information, visit: http://www.trb.org/AnnualMeeting/AnnualMeeting.aspx
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APTA EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.apta.com

JAN 30 - FEB 2	Transit CEOs Seminar Orlando, FL
FEB 21 - 23	Legal Affairs Seminar Santa Fe, NM

SWTA EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.swta.org

FEB 1 - 3	SWTA 2016 Freedom Through Transit Conference Mesa, AZ Registration is open. For more information, visit: http://www.swta.org/news_events/details/2016-swta-annual-freedom-through-transit-conference
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SPOTLIGHT ON...

2015 ANNUAL LOUISIANA PUBLIC TRANSIT CONFERENCE AWARD WINNERS

This year the Annual Louisiana Public Transit Conference was held in Baton Rouge from November 17-19 with the theme *Safety Starts with You!* The conference brought together providers and supporters of public transit from the public, private, and non-profit sectors into general and breakout sessions focused on leadership, education, and proactive implementation of safety management systems; as well as transit program updates and other important topics.

Additionally, FTA and LADOTD used the conference as an opportunity to recognize agencies and individuals who have gone above and beyond this year, presenting the DOTD Extra Mile and FTA awards. More details about the award recipients are provided below.

DOTD Extra Mile Awards:

Franciscan Pace, Inc.

Franciscan Pace, Inc. was nominated by the DOTD E&D Program Manager and Assistant Program Manager for personnel's tenacity to adhere to the agency's transportation goals. They have also been timely with every request from the DOTD office. Their monthly reporting is always on time, most of the time with no errors. Their recent site visit went smoothly and efficiently, and their staff was a joy to work with.

Claiborne Parish Public Transit

Claiborne Parish Public Transit was nominated by the DOTD Rural Program Manager and Assistant Program Manager. Clairborne Parish consistently exceeds expectations with monthly reporting and all DOTD due dates. Reports are accurate and response to communications are always timely. DOTD greatly appreciates their attention to detail

and their impressive timeliness.

Rose Jenkins – Jefferson Council on Aging

Ms. Jenkins was nominated by Pierre Rufin because she has improved the Jefferson Parish community by supervising the senior citizen transportation used for picking seniors up at their homes and taking them to the Senior Centers, on outings, and on tours in the greater New Orleans area. The transportation schedules and vehicle reliability have improved since Ms. Jenkins has been supervisor. In addition to her workload, Ms. Jenkins demonstrates a cheerful, upbeat, and positive attitude throughout the office atmosphere. Her dedication to community transportation enhances the effectiveness of Jefferson Parish public service. She also oversees the SCSEP (Senior Community Employment Program), which enables the seniors of Jefferson Parish to train and build job skills for future employment.

Darnell Smith, Sr. – Plaquemines Parish Public Transit

Reverend Smith was nominated by Othella Hughes because he is a team player and works extra hours whenever needed. He enters the data in STARS for the monthly transit reports. If there is a mechanical issue with the buses early or late he leaves his home to take care of the issue. Ms. Hughes said, "I am pleased and honored to nominate Reverend Darnell Smith, Sr., for the Extra Mile Award. I have enjoyed a long working relationship with Rev. Smith. Everything I know about him makes it easy for me to attest to his commitment to the Public Transportation Program and the people we serve."



SPOTLIGHT continued

FTA Award Recipients:

St. Martin Parish Council on Aging - Section 5311 Recipient

The St. Martin Parish Council on Aging provides transportation services for the elderly, disabled, general public, and employees throughout St. Martin Parish. The Council maintains training expectations through DOTD and FTA. They have continuously fulfilled all obligations to DOTD-related grants and keep detailed records on ridership and financial management.

Erica Grace has been dedicated to transportation for sixteen years and led the team as Transportation Coordinator since 2006. The new Director of the Council on Aging, Shanece Lewis, has continued setting high expectations for the agency and has maintained support for the transit program.

St. Martin Parish residents are fortunate to have a committed team of professionals who provide transportation and their 23% increase in ridership is a strong reflection of the quality service provided. They are to be commended on their dedication to transit services and their attention to meet the growing needs of their parish.

LaSalle ADD, Inc. - Section 5310 Recipient

LaSalle ADD, Inc. received the award for the 5310 program. LaSalle ADD, Inc. is a 5310 agency located in Jena, LA. They provide transportation services to the developmentally disabled in their community. The agency is always timely in submitting monthly reports and has submitted on time and correctly for the last two fiscal years. In addition to their monthly reporting, their Annual Compliance Reviews are also submitted in a timely manner. From FY 2013 to FY 2014, their ridership increased by 8% from 15,822 to 17,135. In September of 2015, they received one new vehicle and we suspect their ridership will continue to increase with committed service.



Lake Charles Transit – Section 5307 Recipient

Lake Charles Transit received the Excellence in Grant Management award for an Urban Area Program. The City of Lake Charles Transit Department provides fixed-route service within city limits, while paratransit service is offered $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile outside city boundaries to accommodate a large medical facility located just outside city limits. They have a new Transit Center which opened in 2012. They directly



operate a network of five fixed routes which originate and terminate from a new transfer center built next door to the Transit Center.

Mr. Al Hoover and the staff at Lake Charles Transit are dedicated to providing safe, dependable public transportation to the residents of Lake Charles and are responsive and cooperative to FTA. They have had a 5.3% increase in ridership and they have also provided timely and accurate grant management reports, timely corrective actions on triennial review findings and are in a fundable status with their civil rights programs. FTA appreciates their hard work and dedication to transit.

DOTD ON THE GO...



One of the DOTD PT Section's mandates is to provide information and technical assistance to transit providers in Louisiana in order to assist them in meeting their requirements for FTA funding. These activities come in many different formats and venues. DOTD PT provides numerous training courses, workshops, and training materials, as well as a website and an annual conference. To keep all of our constituents up to date on DOTD PT's activities, DOTD On The Go features just a few selected items each quarter.

SITE VISITS

Part of the outreach and assistance that LaDOTD provides to the Rural Public Transportation (Section 5311) and Elderly and Disabled (Section 5310) providers are site visits from the program managers. LaDOTD conducted four site visits for Section 5311 during this quarter in St. James, Plaquemines, Beauregard, and St. Landry Parishes. Additionally LaDOTD performed three Section 5310 site visits.

OUTREACH

To further the goal of providing some form of public transportation in all 64 parishes, as listed in the Louisiana Vision 2020 Plan, LaDOTD has been conducting educational visits to all the parishes in Louisiana that do not currently have some form of public transit service. LaDOTD conducted outreach meetings in three parishes this quarter: Caddo, Bossier, and Ascension.

TRAINING

DOTD staff provided STARS training in October and November in addition to Online Grant Application and In-Service trainings in December.

If your agency or someone within your agency deserves recognition for a job well done, or has already received recognition or an award, please let us know. Email or send a brief description, photos, and contact information to Donna.Lavigne@la.gov or to Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development/Public Transit Section, attn: Donna Lavigne, P.O. Box 94245, Baton Rouge, LA 70804.

consolidated with 26 independent operators providing transit services. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) serves as the regional coordinating body. This agency has significant funding authority over capital and operational funds and uses performance measures for project selection. According to the report, access to independent funding helps the agency promote better regional decision-making, though the region would benefit from some consolidation.

The report identifies common themes revealed during the study, which include the following:

- Each region has developed mechanisms to control the coordination of transit services and operators, with varying results.
- For the agency that hold the most planning authority, the method used to select members of the board of directors often drives regional priorities.
- For boards with local representation,

disproportionate board compositions tends to exacerbate the city-suburb tensions that often dominate transit-planning debates.

- The widely varying role of state government in regional transit planning, funding, and operations is a recurring issue in many major metropolitan regions.
- Different approaches to funding transit operations and capital improvements also have important implications for governance.
- Another important revenue source for regional agencies is cross subsidies derived from toll facilities.

Additionally, the study team proposed several recommendations that could potentially be applied more broadly to cities and/or regions across the U.S. to help improve transit governance:

- An effective MPO can provide a valuable mechanism for regional transit coordination.
- Access to an independent source of funding can benefit transit plan-

ning operations.

- State involvement, with appropriate accountability for outcomes, can provide benefits for transit.
- Regions need a performance-based capital planning system.
- Board representation and selection is critical.
- Consolidation typically provides policy and service benefits.

The authors emphasize that improvements in transit governance can help improve the credibility of the organizations responsible for implementation and allow for complex multimodal project execution; which in turn, could help build public support for transportation investments.

For the Full Report: *Getting to the Route of It: The Role of Governance in Regional Transit*, visit:

http://www.cfte.org/content_documents/7/Transit-Governance12.pdf

FROM CAPITOL HILL...

According to a USDOT press release, the agency has partnered with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to introduce a new online tool to help promote health through transportation. This tool provides compiled data for a range of health-related transportation indicators, presenting profiles of how transportation may be impacting statewide and regional human health.

Indicators include various measures of how many people are walking, cycling, and using transit; housing and transportation affordability; proximity to roadways with heaving traffic; and safety performance through road traffic fatalities and seat belt use. The tool can be used to see how one's state or region compares to others in terms of addressing key transportation and health issues. It also provides information and resources about the links between transportation and health and strategies that States and communities can use to improve health outcomes through transportation investments.

More information on this tool can be found by visiting: <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/dot-releases-new-online-tool-help-promote-health-through-transportation> and <https://www.transportation.gov/transportation-health-tool>.

THIS JUST IN: The FAST Act surface transportation bill has passed. Look for more about it in the next newsletter. More information can also be found at: <https://www.transportation.gov/fastact>.

