U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Transit
Administration**

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

July 12, 2012

Dear Colleague:

On Friday, July 6, President Obama signed into law a new two-year transportation authorization, entitled Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). The new law provides to FTA an authorization level of $10.6 billion in FY2013 and $10.7 billion in FY2014.

While the funding authorized is below the levels sought in President Obama's budget, Secretary LaHood has acknowledged that the new law is a good bipartisan bill that will provide steady and predictable funding for the next two years in order to keep construction workers on the job rebuilding our transit systems, roads, rails, and bridges. Consistent with the President's budget proposals, MAP-21 consolidates certain transit programs to improve their efficiency and provides significant funding increases specifically for improving the state of good repair of our transit systems.

MAP-21 will take effect on October 1, 2012. Until then, we will continue to manage our current programs under existing law (SAFETEA-LU), which expires on September 30, 2012. FTA is already hard at work on a plan to implement the new law and develop new guidance and information for our grantees, other stakeholders, and interested parties.

Here are some highlights from the bill:

- **Safety.** In an historic move, FTA has been granted significant new authority to strengthen the safety of public transportation throughout the United States—our highest priority. This is the culmination of a concerted effort that began in December 2009 when Secretary LaHood formally transmitted to Congress President Obama's legislative proposal to establish and enforce minimum federal safety standards for rail transit systems. MAP-21 includes many of the new authorities included in the Administration's original proposal and also includes important safety provisions for bus-only operators. FTA looks forward to implementing the new law in consultation with the transit community and our Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS), which has been working since September of 2010 to help guide this effort.
- **State of Good Repair.** In his FY2012 and FY2013 proposed budgets, the President called for record state-of-good-repair investments in our nation's transit systems, sounding the call to reinvest in and modernize our assets. MAP-21 places new emphasis on restoring and replacing aging transportation infrastructure by establishing a new needs-based formula program, with a new tier for high-intensity bus needs. The new program defines eligible recapitalization and restoration activities, with a goal of bringing all systems into a state of good repair. Under the new law, grantees will be required to establish and use an asset management system to develop capital asset inventories and condition assessments, and report on the condition of their system as a whole.

- **Formula Program Consolidation & Elimination.** MAP-21 places new emphasis on cutting red tape to improve the efficiency of grant program operations. The President's budget set the pace for this important evolution with our commitment to consolidate certain programs and eliminate others. Under MAP-21, our annual formula programs have been amended as follows:
  - The new State of Good Repair Program (5337) replaces the Fixed Guideway Modernization Program and includes funding to support high-intensity bus systems.
  - The Urbanized Area (5307) and Rural (5311) programs now allow funding to be used for activities that were eligible under the Job Access and Reverse Commute program.
  - A new formula Bus and Bus Facilities Program (5339) is established for grants to all agencies operating bus service in lieu of the current Bus Discretionary Program (section 5309).
  - The Elderly and Disabled Program (5310) merges with the New Freedom Program (5317), and funding formulas are modified in light of new eligibilities and program features.
  - The Bus Discretionary program, Alternatives Analysis (5339), Clean Fuels (5308), Transit in the Parks (5320), and Over the Road Bus (3038 of TEA-21) programs will end with the expiration of SAFETEA-LU. The elimination of these discretionary programs underscores the need for grantees to carefully prioritize the needs of their own systems and align their operations with the new streams of formula assistance.
- **New Starts Streamlining and Core Capacity Project Eligibility.** Based on extensive feedback from project sponsors and other stakeholders, MAP-21 streamlines the New Starts process and accelerates project delivery by eliminating duplicative steps in project development and simplifying the evaluation criteria, which will enable FTA to review project proposals more quickly, without sacrificing effective project oversight. Major capital projects focused on improving or restoring the core capacity of fixed-guideway systems will be newly eligible for discretionary capital funds. Additionally, MAP-21 makes changes to the Small Starts program that will speed up the construction of Small Starts projects.

Looking forward, I must ask for your patience as we take the necessary steps over the next several weeks to prepare for full implementation of MAP-21. Our goal is to provide clear, consistent, and timely information. Please be aware that as part of this transition, we will need to prioritize agency actions and resources to focus on implementing the new law.

Let me strongly encourage you to watch our website (www.fta.dot.gov/map21), where we will post and update useful information as it becomes available. You can also sign up for timely e-mail bulletins here.

Enactment of the MAP-21 law signals yet another opportunity for us to work collectively to strengthen our transit systems and better serve the American public. We at the FTA look forward to working with you and your stakeholders to address the challenges laid out for us by Congress and the President in MAP-21.

Sincerely yours,

Peter Rogoff