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OTHER FTA PROGRAMS

While the major portion of FTA funding is for transit capital and operating assistance, financial support is also provided for a variety of other programs that are described below:

UNIVERSITY TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH PROGRAM *(49 U.S.C. § 5505)*.
This program provides higher education for the next generation transportation professionals, students who will become future transportation research analysts, educators, policy planners, and transit system managers. When these transportation professionals enter the transit industry, they will be involved in managing the transportation workforce, resources, equipment, and facilities, as well as setting transportation policy and procedures. Research will be conducted to direct technology transfer in ways to mitigate the impacts of surface transportation on the environment, evaluate and monitor infrastructure conditions, improve information systems for infrastructure construction and management, increase transportation capacity and enhance safety. Building professional capacity and promoting education in transportation-related fields supports the DOT/FTA strategic goal of Economic Growth and Trade. This program also provides a focus within the ten federal regions for transportation education and careers at all levels. FTA will continue to suggest research and projects to the universities based on transit industry needs. This program functions as a research investment, using federal dollars in conjunction with public and private local funds to solve real transportation problems. Technology transfer activities are monitored and documented to foster the application of research results to day-to-day operations. TEA-21 specifically linked FTA funding to centers at Morgan State University, North Carolina State University, Northwestern University and the University of Minnesota. Contact: Chuck Morison, Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation, 202-366-0245.

NATIONAL RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM *(49 U.S.C. § 5314(a)).*
Consistent with Departmental goals, FTA has identified the following strategic goals: safety and security, mobility and accessibility, economic growth and trade, human and natural environment, and quality organization. Continuing innovation is needed to help achieve these strategic goals and to promote customer-friendly, community-oriented transit facilities and services that not only provide personal mobility and increase system safety and efficiency, but also enhance the quality of life in communities. FTA's vision in pursuing these goals is to lead the way into the 21st century by establishing U.S. excellence in transit technology, institutions, and services.

The mission of the FTA Research and Technology Program is to partner with the transportation industry in establishing preeminence in U.S. transit technology, institutions, and customer services to increase the quality and level of transit services. The program's core effort is the deployment of technological innovation to improve personal mobility, ensure safety and security, minimize fuel consumption and air pollution, increase ridership and enhance the quality of life of all communities. Emphasis is placed on mainstreaming proven cost-effective technological innovation through the FTA planning and capital assistance programs. Primary target areas are major investment planning, bus operations planning, clean fuels and new starts projects.

FTA has identified societal benefits of congestion management and livable communities as desired outcomes of investment in a seamless, safe, secure, accessible and affordable public transit system. Transit plays an important role in ensuring safety and mobility for all, including the elderly and economically disadvantaged individuals, and persons with disabilities. Continued deployment of innovations assists in attaining these benefits.

Starting in 1997, FTA worked with the transit industry to develop a Research and Technology Five-Year Plan that identified research and technology priorities. Major areas of priority are: system safety and personal security, lower-cost and environmentally-friendly vehicles, labor-management relations, customer service quality, equitable access, innovations in planning and infrastructure development, professional development, and new paradigms in mobility management. Information on FTA research and technology programs is available on the FTA Web site at www.fta.dot.gov. Contact: Henry Nejako, Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation, 202-366-0184.

TRANSIT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM *(49 U.S.C. § 5313(a))*. The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) focuses on issues significant to the transit industry with emphasis on local problem-solving research. FTA's Strategic Plan and Research and Technology Five-Year Plan provide the framework for TCRP efforts, which include research in a variety of transit fields such as: planning, service concepts, vehicles and equipment, facilities, operations, human resources, maintenance, policy, and administrative practices. TCRP synthesis reports summarize best transit industry practices and have been useful to transit operators.

Since the TCRP's inception in 1992, more than 1,200 research problem statements have been submitted, and the TCRP Project Selection and Oversight Committee, comprised of industry representatives, has designated 244 projects and studies to address these problems. More than 1,200 representatives of the transit industry have served on panels which guide TCRP projects, providing a direct channel for promptly disseminating results to those who can apply them in practice. TCRP products to date include 42 Research Reports, 32 Transit Synthesis Reports, 32 Research Results Digests, 12 Legal Research Digests, 9 Transit IDEA Reports on development of innovative products and processes, and 6 software products. Over 270,000 copies of these products have been distributed. The Transportation Research Board, which administers the TCRP, maintains a publications list and description of all TCRP studies on its Web site at www2.nas.edu/trbcrp."
Contact: Lisa Colbert, Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation, 202-366-9261.

NATIONAL TRANSIT INSTITUTE (NTI) *(49 U.S.C. § 5315).* The National Transit Institute (NTI) develops and teaches new methods and techniques to improve transit workforce performance and increase productivity in the workplace. Courses are conducted locally at sites nationwide on a wide variety of subjects, ranging from advanced technology and multi-modal planning to management development and training effectiveness. Transit Trainers Workshops are conducted annually to bring together trainers and human resources specialists from the industry to learn the latest techniques in training and to share training experiences on the job. In addition, NTI and FTA are working together to develop and present workshops and seminars designed to assist the transit industry in understanding and implementing advanced public transportation systems. Programs on geographic information systems, automatic vehicle locator, smart card and innovative technologies are just a few of the topics under development for future presentation.
Contact: Chuck Morison, Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation, 202-366-0245.

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