



## **THE FAST ACT: A 5-YEAR SURFACE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION**

### **BACKGROUND:**

On December 4, 2015, the FAST (Fixing America's Surface Transportation) Act (P.L.114-94) was signed into law. The 5-year bill authorizes \$305 billion for federal highway and transit programs.

### **FAST ACT HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Creates a new formula program for highway freight projects.
- Establishes a new grant program for large-scale projects, the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (NSFHP) program
- Modifies the National Freight Network created by the previous surface transportation authorization bill MAP-21 and requires re-designation of the network every 5 years
- Continues the set-aside for off-system bridges and expands funding available for on-system bridges located off the National Highway System
- Converts the Surface Transportation Program (STP) into a block grant program; increases STP suballocation to local governments from 50 to 55 percent
- Rolls the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) into STP; allows 50 percent of certain TAP funding suballocated to local areas to be used on any STP-eligible project
- Reinstates a competitive grant program for bus and bus facilities funds with a 10 percent set-aside for rural projects

The FAST Act does not make any changes to the federal recognition granted under MAP-21 to Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) for areas outside the boundaries of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). MAP-21 also elevated the participation of rural local officials in the statewide transportation planning process. States may establish and designate RTPOs to enhance the planning, coordination, and implementation of statewide strategic long-range transportation plans and State Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs). Long-range transportation plans shall be developed in "cooperation" with non-metropolitan local officials or, if applicable, through RTPOs. States are also required to "cooperate" with non-metropolitan local officials or, if applicable, through RTPOs on project selection. If a state chooses not to establish or designate RTPOs, the state shall "consult" with affected non-metropolitan local officials to determine projects that may be of regional significance. See table on reverse for more information on rural participation in transportation planning.

**For more information, please contact Susan Howard, Legislative Director at 202.624.8590 / [showard@nado.org](mailto:showard@nado.org)**

### Four Cs of Federal Transportation Planning Participation

Under federal transportation planning rules, the statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes are guided by four levels of intergovernmental collaboration and outreach. Each of the following definitions holds a specific meaning that state DOTs must follow with their local government partners.

- **Consideration** means that one or more parties takes into account the opinions, actions, and relevant information from other parties in making decisions or determining a course of action.
- **Consultation** means that one or more parties confer with other identified parties in accordance with an established process and, prior to taking action(s), consider the views of the other parties and periodically inform them about action(s) taken.
- **Cooperation** means that the parties involved in carrying out the transportation planning and programming processes work together to achieve a common goal or objective.
- **Coordination** means the cooperative development of plans, programs, and schedules among agencies and entities with legal standing and adjustment of such plans, programs, and schedules to achieve general consistency, as appropriate.

Level of Participation for Rural Local Official/ Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs)		
	SAFETEA-LU (P.L.111-68)	MAP-21 (P.L. 112-141)
Scope of Planning Process	Consult	Cooperate
Long-Range Plan	Consult	Cooperate
STIP Development	Consult	Consult
Project Selection	Cooperate	Cooperate
RTPO Designation	None - Rural Planning Organization means a voluntary organization of local elected officials and representatives of local transportation systems	Yes - States may establish and designate regional transportation planning organizations to enhance the planning, coordination, and implementation of statewide strategic long-range transportation plans and STIP