



The Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin is a statewide nonprofit organization that advocates building and maintaining an efficient, reliable and interconnected transportation system that addresses our state's needs for safe mobility and economic growth.

October 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>30-Day Extension of Surface Transportation Programs and Funding</i>	1	<i>DOT and EPA Announce New Program</i>	5
<i>Executive Perspective</i>	2	<i>Aviation Programs Extended Again</i>	6
<i>Building Wisconsin's New Economy</i>	3	<i>TRB Report on VMT</i>	6
<i>Zoo Interchange Delay Could Cost Millions</i>	4	<i>GAO Releases Report on MPOs</i>	6
<i>Milwaukee Wants More Gas Tax Funds</i>	4	<i>Transportation in the News</i>	7
<i>Doyle Announces New Plan for RTAs</i>	4	<i>Interesting New Coverage</i>	8
<i>Wisconsin Submits High-Speed Rail Application</i>	5	<i>Association Notes</i>	9

If you would like to receive this publication by email, please contact the TDA office at (608) 256-7044 or general@tdawisconsin.org.

30-Day Extension of Surface Transportation Programs and Funding

Congress was not able to come to an agreement on extending surface transportation programs before the expiration of SAFETEA-LU on September 30th. As a result, the surface transportation extension was wrapped into the 30-day continuing resolution (CR) written by the appropriations committees. The CR was enacted early on the morning of October 1st.

While states normally receive a full fiscal year's apportionment of new contract authority on the first day of the fiscal year, the CR means that states and transit agencies will only receive one month's worth of funding. To make matters worse, the CR dispenses contract authority at an annualized rate based on the final FY 2009

amount, which was reduced by about a third by two large rescissions. According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), this situation results in a \$1 billion reduction in federal highway contract authority for October 2009 as compared to October 2008.

Prior to the passage of the CR, the House had passed a three-month extension. The Senate has long supported the Obama Administration's request for an 18-month extension, but Senators Boxer and Inhofe attempted to bring the House extension to the floor just hours before the expiration of SAFETEA-LU.

Extension continued on page 8

Executive Perspective

By Craig Thompson, TDA Executive Director

Reauthorization: The Real Stimulus Program

President Obama recently met with top legislative leaders to discuss ways to spur the economy on the heels of the latest climb in the national unemployment rate, which is now at a 26-year-high. News accounts have reported that plans for a second stimulus package were discussed at the meeting.

This is unfortunate, because the President and Congress do not need to pass another stimulus package nearly as much as they need to address the urgent matter of authorizing the nation's surface transportation programs. This authorization has already expired, been renewed on an emergency basis for 30 days, and is set to expire again at the end of this month. This means that state departments of transportation throughout the country are living month-to-month right now rather than being able to strategically plan their spending for the next fiscal year.

Back when the first stimulus package was being debated, there was a tremendous amount of talk about employing thousands of Americans in order to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure. While the stimulus package did indeed provide important funding to get some ready-to-go projects moving forward, in the end less than 10 percent of the stimulus package was directed at transportation infrastructure.

All the while, the legislation that is actually responsible for funding our nation's roads, bridges and transit systems has been in urgent need of reauthorization, yet Congress has still not acted. Now Congressman Oberstar and the House of Representatives want an additional three-month extension in order to deliberate and find consensus on reauthorizing the nation's surface transportation programs. The President and leadership in the U.S. Senate advocate putting off action for the next 18 months.

How can we possibly talk about the importance of roads and bridges and public transportation to our nation's economy on one hand and, on the other, delay any action for more than a year and half on the measure that funds those very services?

Any discussion of passing another stimulus package while setting aside reauthorization sounds like a case of government suffering from Attention Deficit Disorder. It would be akin to deferring mortgage payments on your house so you can purchase a vacation property.

What is driving this seemingly schizophrenic behavior? Any responsible reauthorization legislation will require increased revenue – especially as current revenue streams were not able to cover SAFETEA-LU expenditures. Despite other supplementary ways of raising revenue, the only realistic way to raise what is needed at this time is to increase the gas tax – and that has Congress scared stiff. As Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell recently said, not so delicately, “There's fear in Washington about raising the gas tax. We've elected the biggest bunch of wussies I've ever seen in politics. They're scared of their shadow, they're scared to invest, they're scared to spend – they're terrified.”

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Trucking Association, and AAA have all called on Congress to get moving – to pass a surface transportation authorization and to increase the gasoline tax in order to fund it. These groups represent folks who normally oppose any tax increase and yet they are comfortable advocating for an increase in the gas tax because they know how desperately our nation's transportation infrastructure needs it and what it will do for jobs and the economy.

Reauthorization continued on page 5

Building Wisconsin's New Economy

On October 1st, TDA members from across the state traveled to Madison for TDA's annual meeting. The purpose of the meeting – Building Wisconsin's New Economy – was to explore Wisconsin's significant opportunities to expand and grow in the emerging new economy.

Topics covered at the meeting ranged from the state of the Wisconsin economy to the outlook for future federal transportation funding. Jeff Solsby, American Road & Transportation

Builders Association, reviewed the Federal Aid Highway Program and funding, the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act, federal surface transportation authorization and the condition of the transportation



construction industry nationally. George Lightbourn, Wisconsin Public Research Institute, and Bill McCoshen, Competitive Wisconsin, presented the need for a strategic plan to grow Wisconsin. Randy Wade, HNTB, and Ron Adams, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, highlighted the benefits of the proposed Madison-to-Milwaukee high-speed rail line and the next steps. The meeting was closed out by a presentation on building the Great Lakes Transportation Enterprise Institute with representatives from UW-Milwaukee College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS), UW-Madison Traffic Operations and Safety (TOPS) Lab, and Traffic & Parking Control Company, Inc (TAPCO).

Also at the meeting, President Phil Ramlet of OMNNI Associates, Inc. passed the gavel to incoming president Rick Jones from the City of Racine. Mary Ellen O'Brien presented the 2009 Transportation Service Award to Dave Mumma, City of Janesville Transit, for his more than

twenty-five years of service within the transit community and his many contributions to TDA, including being a past president.

TDA thanks those who attended the 2009 TDA Annual Meeting to hear from state and national experts regarding the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for Wisconsin and the important role transportation plays. Visit the TDA website, www.tdawisconsin.org, to view speaker presentations.

THANK YOU SPONSORS

AECOM

AFSCME, Wisconsin Council 40

American Council of Engineering Companies of Wisconsin

CH2M HILL

FABCO Equipment, Inc.

HNTB Corporation

International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 139

Mead & Hunt, Inc.

Miller-Bradford & Risberg, Inc.

OMNNI Associates, Inc.

Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc.

Transportation Environmental Management, Inc.

Wisconsin Asphalt Pavement Association

Wisconsin Concrete Pavement Association

Wisconsin County Highway Association

Wisconsin Laborers' District Council

Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association

Zoo Interchange Delay Could Cost Millions

A report from Michael Baker Jr. Inc, an engineering consulting firm, projects that delaying the reconstruction of the Zoo Interchange could cost motorists \$15.5 million a year due to continued congestion and higher than average crashes.

The report assumes that reconstruction of the interchange will not begin until 2020 and will not be completed until 2024. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) takes issue with this assumption. However, the state has not released a new construction schedule after delaying the start from 2012 due to current economic conditions.

In August, WisDOT announced weight limits on the Zoo Interchange. According to state transportation officials, they imposed the weight limits to slow the deterioration that was discovered in recent examinations of the bridges in the interchange.

The Zoo Interchange was completed in 1963 and currently carries roughly 345,000 vehicles a day – a much higher volume than was anticipated at the time it was designed. The cost to reconstruct the interchange with safety improvements and eight lanes is estimated to be \$2.3 billion.

Milwaukee Wants More Gas Tax Funds

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett said in his 2010 budget address that he is seeking “a new approach to the state’s transportation aid formula that recognizes the importance of local streets and infrastructure in the regional economy and prioritizes the maintenance of existing infrastructure.”

Doyle Announces New Plan for RTAs

As promised when he vetoed the Milwaukee Regional Transit Authority (RTA) in the 2009-11 state budget, Governor Doyle came back with a revised plan to help regional transit in Southeast Wisconsin.

Doyle’s proposal would let each county – Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee – establish a separate authority to pay for transit. Over time, Doyle’s plan would encourage the three separate RTAs to dissolve and merge with the regional authority.

The plan would give Milwaukee County the authority to raise the local sales tax rate by .5 percent. Unlike the budget provision, this revenue could only be used for transit. Racine and Kenosha counties, which have balked at increasing the sales tax, could receive state matching funds as an incentive to join the regional transit authority.

Doyle laid out “basic RTA structural principles” as opposed to detailed legislation. Governor Doyle would like to see the legislation pass this fall.

Green Bay’s Situation

The proposal doesn’t address Green Bay, a community that stands to lose at least \$500,000 in federal transit funding if the population of Green Bay Metro’s service area exceeds 200,000 in the next census. The cuts could go as high as \$2.5 million according to Chris Phelps, transit director.

After a two-hour debate, the Green Bay City Council passed in mid-September a plan to ask the state legislature to pass legislation that would allow the formation of a regional transit authority in Green Bay, but only after such an RTA was approved by the council and by the voters in a referendum.

Wisconsin Submits High-Speed Rail Application

Wisconsin submitted an application to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for federal funds to develop a \$651.8 million high-speed passenger rail line between Milwaukee and Madison.

Wisconsin's application calls for track, signal and infrastructure improvements, the acquisition of two train sets and eight, energy-efficient "next generation" locomotives, a new maintenance facility and positive train controls for the corridor.

The service would operate as an extension of Amtrak's existing Chicago-Milwaukee Hiawatha Service, with six round trips between Milwaukee and Madison including intermediate stops in Brookfield, Oconomowoc and Watertown.

The Obama administration said it has received applications from 24 states seeking \$50 billion for high-speed rail projects in response to the October 2nd deadline. This amount represents more than six times the \$8 billion designated in the economic stimulus plan.

A decision on which projects will receive funds will be made this winter, Joseph Szabo, head of the Federal Railroad Administration, said in a statement.

"Our selections will be merit-based and will reflect President Obama's vision to remake America's transportation landscape," Szabo said.

In August, the agency received 214 applications from 34 states totaling \$7 billion for corridor planning and smaller projects, which would include trains traveling less than 110 miles per hour, the rate defined as high-speed in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

DOT and EPA Announce New Program

U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Ray LaHood and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Secretary Lisa Jackson have proposed a rule to improve vehicle fuel efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This program represents the formal regulatory details of the Obama Administration proposal announced earlier this year after reaching agreement with auto manufacturers to accelerate implementation of higher gas mileage standards.

The proposed program would require the automaker's vehicle fleet to achieve 35.5 miles per gallon by model year 2016 – 4 years ahead of the standard passed by Congress in 2007. The rule would also establish the first ever national greenhouse gas standards. The proposed standard would require model year 2016 vehicles to meet a combined average emissions level of no more than 250 grams of carbon dioxide per mile.

"These proposed standards would help consumers save money at the gas pump, help the environment, and decrease our dependence on oil – all while ensuring that consumers still have a full range of vehicle choices," said Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood.

Reauthorization continued from page 2

Hopefully, our federal representatives are listening. We need to make sure that Wisconsin's delegation understands that we must take care of the business at hand. It may sound easier to invest in our transportation infrastructure with one-time, borrowed money than to vote for a tax increase but as is usual with the easy way out, it only makes matters worse down the road.

Aviation Programs Extended Again

President Obama recently signed yet another extension of the authorizing legislation for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) programs. The bill (H.R. 3607) extends through December 31, 2009 expenditure authority from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund and the excise taxes and fees that support the trust fund. The bill also provides \$1 billion in funding for the Airport Improvement Program.

This extension will give Congress more time to complete long-term reauthorization of the FAA. The House passed its multi-year reauthorization in May (H.R. 915). However, the Senate bill is still a work in progress. The Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee has reported out a two-year bill (S. 1451), but the Finance Committee has not acted on a revenue title.

This is the sixth short-term extension since the last FAA reauthorization expired September 30, 2007.

TRB Report on VMT

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) report, *Implementable Strategies for Shifting to Direct Usage-Based Charges for Transportation Funding*, identifies a broad range of potential vehicle miles travelled (VMT) options, examines their relative strengths and weaknesses, and determines whether any of the options would be suitable for near-term implementation. The report also lays out the necessary steps to implement a VMT program nationally by 2015.

Three VMT options appear most promising. These include mileage metering based on fuel consumption, on-board units using cellular technology and on-board units utilizing GPS technology.

GAO Releases Report on MPOs

The newly released Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, *METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS: Options Exist to Enhance Transportation Planning Capacity and Federal Oversight*, examines the role of the nation's planning organizations and the effectiveness of their transportation planning efforts. According to the report, "As the September 2009 expiration of SAFETEA-LU approaches, more complete information on the effectiveness of MPOs' transportation planning activities is needed, especially in light of government and industry associations' proposals for increasing or modifying MPOs' authority, responsibilities, and funding."

As part of its research for this report, the GAO surveyed all 381 MPOs (with an 86 percent response rate) to gain information on their varying roles, responsibilities and capabilities. The survey also addressed the challenges MPOs face in meeting their planning responsibilities and options to improve the transportation planning process. The GAO found that these organizations vary greatly in size, capacity and function. According to the report, the biggest challenges faced by MPOs relate to funding, staffing, authority and technical capacity.

The GAO recommends Congress consider making MPO transportation planning more performance-based. This could be achieved by identifying specific transportation outcomes for transportation planning and having the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) assess MPOs' progress in achieving these outcomes in the certification review process. The GAO also recommends USDOT develop a strategy to improve data gathering and traffic modeling at the MPO level.

Visit www.gao.gov to view the entire report.

Transportation in the News

Dallas – A new section of the longest light-rail line being built in the U.S. recently opened in Dallas. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) opened four new stations east of downtown on the Green Line. This line will eventually stretch 28 miles from Carrollton to Pleasant Grove. By 2013, DART will also add service on the Orange and Blue lines to Irving, Las Colinas and Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. The system currently has 45 miles of track and will double over the next four years. The first segment of light rail in Dallas opened in 1997.

Florida – The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) credits new tolled express lanes with reducing chronic traffic congestion on a section of Interstate 95. According to FDOT, motorists who use the two variable-toll express lanes now travel on average of 56 miles-per-hour during peak travel times – 36 miles faster than before the toll lanes opened a year ago. Drivers using the four free lanes have also seen their travel speeds increase – from 20 miles-per-hour to 42 miles-per-hour on average.

Minnesota – Minnesota has opened more High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes – this time on I35W. According to the Federal Highway Administration, this project is one of the first in the nation to make use of all lanes, including the shoulders during peak times. The Priced Dynamic Shoulder lanes may be used by buses and carpools at no charge. During peak periods, the lanes may also be used by low occupancy vehicles for a fee. The interstate previously had High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes. The I394 express lanes – the first in Minnesota – opened in 2005.

Missouri – Missouri has received federal approval to rebuild Interstate 70 across the state with dedicated truck lanes. The \$4 billion project would be the first of its kind nationally and could potentially be part of an 800-mile corridor stretching from Kansas City to the Ohio/West Virginia border.

The new design calls for two inside lanes in each direction for trucks, separated from cars by a grass median. A concrete barrier would separate eastbound and westbound trucks. In some areas, drivers wanting to exit the freeway would take a ramp into the general traffic. In other places, trucks would use a truck-only interchange.

The major hurdle: money, of course. A dedicated funding source for freight corridors in the next surface reauthorization would certainly help I-70's chances of getting substantial federal money in the future. The state also needs to come up with a plan for its share of the project.

Transportation Fatalities – According to preliminary figures released by the National Transportation Safety Board, transportation fatalities in the United States decreased by almost 10 percent in 2008 as compared to 2007. This marks the third consecutive year of decline in transportation-related deaths. A little less than 40,000 Americans lost their lives in transportation-related incidents last year – approximately 94 percent of which were highway deaths.

Vehicle Miles Traveled Up Again – Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in July 2009 were up slightly over 2008 levels. This is the fourth consecutive month with an increase after five quarters of decline. VMT for the first seven months of the year is even compared to the same time period in 2008.

Interesting New Coverage

Extension continued from page 1

WisBusiness.com October 6, 2009 – “DOT’s 20-year plan includes a closer look at freight movement” <http://www.wisbusiness.com/index.iml?Article=172520>

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel October 4, 2009 – “Milwaukee area seen as hybrid hub” <http://www.jsonline.com/business/63490772.html>

The Cap Times October 4, 2009 – “Bus rapid transit’ a commuter rail alternative” http://host.madison.com/ct/news/local/govt_and_politics/article_d46c0601-b5cb-530d-b62c-6f7d3b02e76d.html

USA Today September 14, 2009 – “E-ZPass expansion connects Midwest and East Coast” http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2009-09-14-ezpass_N.htm

NBC26.com Green Bay September 2009 – “Electric vehicle that will talk to the grid” <http://www.nbc26.com/Global/story.asp?S=11135001>

Politico.com September 14, 2009 – “Ray LaHood has a unique place in President Obama’s cabinet” <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0909/27111.html>

USA Today September 8, 2009 – “Denser development may cut pollution” http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/environment/2009-09-08-density_N.htm

NPR September 2, 2009 – “A hitch for rail riders: getting to final destination” <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112467963>

This very short extension will leave state departments of transportation unable to plan for major projects due to the uncertainty of future federal funding. Congress will have to act this month to extend surface transportation programs and funding beyond October 31st.

Both chambers have passed their versions of the 2010 appropriations bill for the U.S. Department of Transportation. A conference committee is expected to reconcile the two bills this month for final passage before current funding expires.

Chamber and Three Other Major Business Organizations Call for Action

Shortly before the expiration of SAFETEA-LU, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Trucking Association, and AAA called on Congress to swiftly enact a multiyear surface transportation authorization and to fully fund it with an increase in the gas tax. The group also requested program reforms so Americans know where their extra tax dollars are going. The groups would not cite a specific cent-per-gallon figure they would support. However, they said they would consider supporting a specific level once they knew how the money would be spent.

Association Notes

Calendar of Events

2009 ITS Forum – October 20th at UW-Milwaukee School of Continuing Education. Visit www.itswisconsin.org for more information.

STEMnow Conference – October 20th-21st at the Bradley Center in Milwaukee. Visit www.systemnow.org for more information and to register.

Wisconsin Freight Rail Day – October 21st at the Best Western Inn on the Park in Madison. Click [here](#) for a registration form.

Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers Fall General Membership Meeting – October 24th at the Harmony Café in Green Bay from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information call or email Mark Weitenbeck, weitenbeck@sbcglobal.net or 414-541-1112.

Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association Fall Meeting – October 27th at the Marriott Madison West. Visit www.wtba.org for more information.

WisDOT Annual Freight Railroad Conference – November 3rd at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Madison. Contact WisDOT's Frank Huntington at frank.huntington@dot.wi.gov for information.

Save these Dates

- 2010 TDA Fly-in – March 10th-11th

Visit the events page on the TDA website, www.tdawisconsin.org, for event details and any future changes in the schedule.

Save on AAA Membership, Auto & Home Insurance



Visit the AAA website for a listing of membership benefits. You'll also be eligible for high-quality auto and home insurance coverage through AAA at a discounted TDA group rate too. Keep in mind, even if you already have AAA membership or insurance through AAA, you can save even more under this group plan. Enrollment is convenient through a statewide network of AAA offices.

Go to www.aaa.com or call 1-800-236-1300 to find an office near you.

To receive your AAA discount provide your AAA group number TRN003.

Join today and take advantage of the great benefits and savings.

Milwaukee continued from page 4

The condition of Milwaukee's streets has been a major concern for many years. A 2007 report from City Comptroller W. Martin Morics revealed that the city was taking on average 163 years to repave or replace residential streets. A 2008 audit also conducted by Moric's office found 21 percent of the city's side streets were in poor condition.

Barrett's proposed 2010 city budget would boost spending on streets 16.5 percent and cut the replacement cycle to 61 years.

VMT continued from page 6

In order to successfully transition to a VMT system by 2015, the authors recommend funding a set of preparatory activities including: planning, analytic studies, research and development, multi-state VMT trials and public education and outreach.

Visit www.trb.org to view the entire report.