

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

Module 5

Part 1, Chapter 14

Acronyms

- FTA – Federal Transit Administration
- ACE – Alternative Corridor Evaluation
- LPA - Locally Preferred Alternative
- PE – Preliminary Engineering
- MAP-21- Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century
- CATX – Listed Categorical Exclusion
- DCE – Documented Categorical Exclusion
- ROW - Right of Way

Why Transit?

- Greater emphasis on transit projects statewide
- Chapter undergoing modification to cover the full breadth of FTA projects
- Based on MAP-21 FTA is working on interim guidance and updated regulations
- The training is **not** based on the current chapter



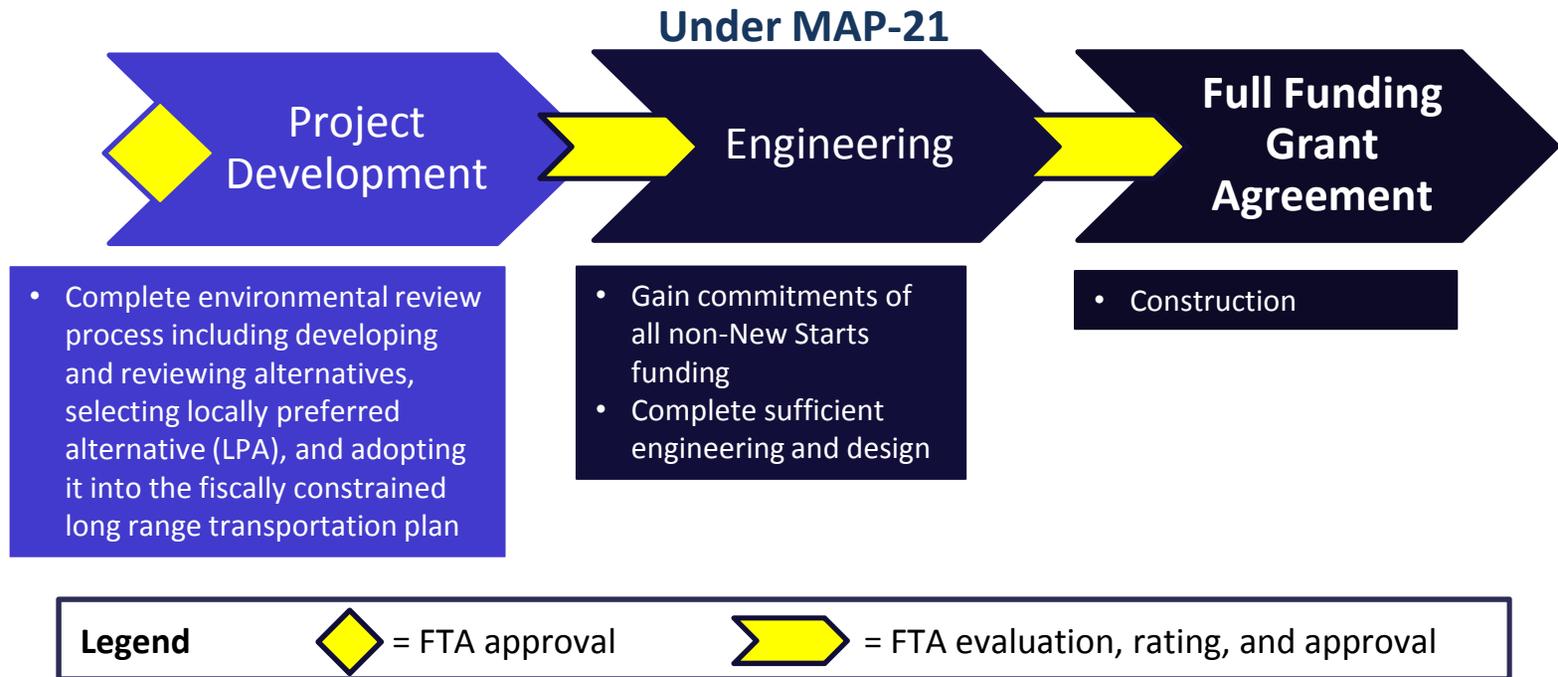
Doing Business with FTA

- Several types of grants and programs
- Funding for major projects is competitive
 - ▣ Needs to meet criteria
 - ▣ Qualifying thresholds
 - ▣ Application preparation
 - ▣ Approval by FTA

New Starts Eligibility

- New Starts funding sought is $> \$75M$ and/or project cost $\geq \$250M$
- New fixed guideway minimum operable segment or extension to existing fixed guideway system
- Fixed guideway BRT:
 - ▣ Majority operates in separate right-of-way
 - ▣ Represents substantial investment in a single route in a defined corridor
 - ▣ Includes defined stations, traffic signal priority for transit, and short headway bidirectional services for substantial part of weekdays and weekend days

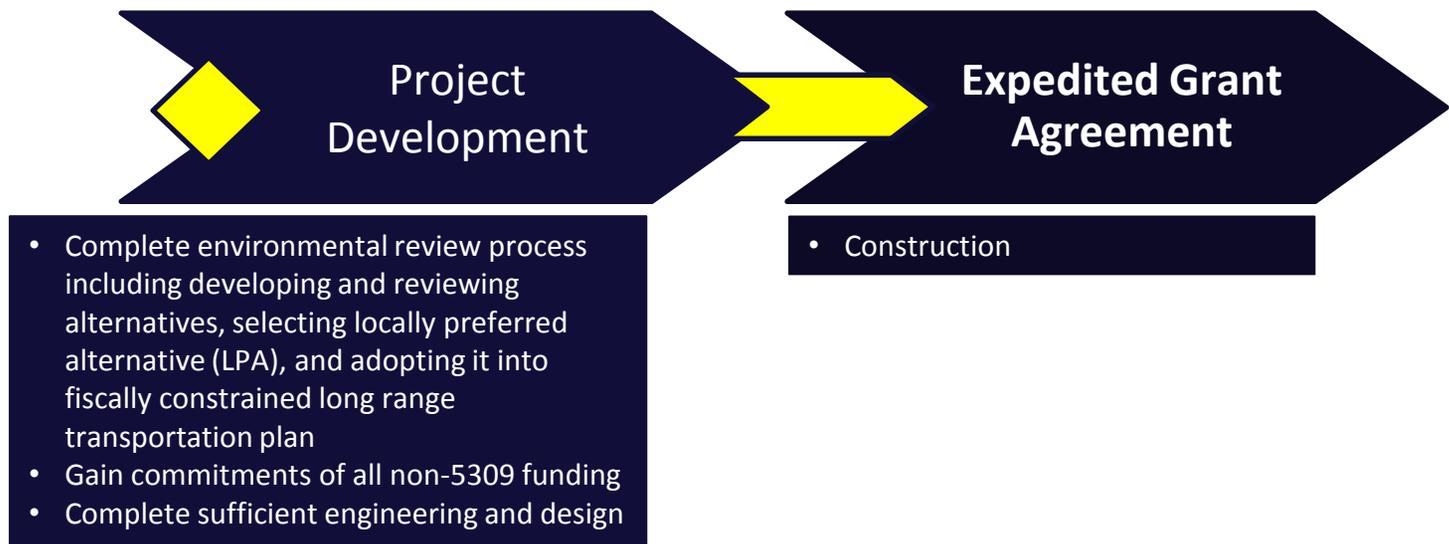
New Starts Process



Small Starts Eligibility

- Cost <\$250 million and Small Starts share <\$75 million
- New fixed guideway systems and extensions
- Fixed guideway BRT
- Corridor-based BRT that represents a substantial investment in a defined corridor, with features including:
 - Defined stations
 - Traffic signal priority for transit
 - Short headway bi-directional services for a substantial part of weekdays and weekend days

Small Starts Process



Legend

 = FTA approval

 = FTA evaluation, rating, and approval

Core Capacity Eligibility

- Corridor-based investment in existing fixed guideway system
- Project must:
 - ▣ Be located in a corridor that is at or over capacity or will be in five years
 - ▣ Increase capacity by 10%
 - ▣ “not include project elements designed to maintain a state of good repair”

Core Capacity Projects

- Definition includes:
 - Acquisition of real property and ROW
 - Double tracking
 - Signalization improvements
 - Electrification
 - Expanding system platforms
 - Acquisition of rolling stock for increasing capacity
 - Infill stations
- Specifically says “does not include elements to improve general station facilities or parking or acquisition of rolling stock alone.”

Core Capacity Process



- Complete environmental review process including developing and reviewing alternatives, selecting locally preferred alternative (LPA), and adopting it into the fiscally constrained long range transportation plan

Legend



= FTA approval



= FTA evaluation, rating, and approval

What is FTA Looking For?

Core Capacity	New Starts	Small Starts
<p>Project Justification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mobility; • environmental benefits; • congestion relief; • economic development; • capacity needs of the corridor; • cost effectiveness (cost per trip) 	<p>Project Justification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mobility; • environmental benefits; • congestion relief; • economic development; • land use; • cost effectiveness (cost per trip) 	<p>Project Justification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mobility; • environmental benefits; • congestion relief; • economic development; • land use; • cost effectiveness (cost per trip)
<p>Local financial commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acceptable degree of local financial commitment including evidence of stable and dependable financing sources 	<p>Local financial commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acceptable degree of local financial commitment including evidence of stable and dependable financing sources 	<p>Local financial commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acceptable degree of local financial commitment including evidence of stable and dependable financing sources

Class of Action

- FTA MUST authorize entry into NEPA
- Environmental regulation is 23 CFR 771 (just like FHWA)
- Class of Action
 - ▣ Class I – Environmental Impact Statement
 - Known significant impact(s)
 - ▣ Class II – Categorical Exclusion
 - No significant environmental impacts
 - ▣ Class III – Environmental Assessment
 - Significance of impacts unknown

Class II: Categorical Exclusions

- Categorical Exclusions Listed (CATX)
 - ▣ Identified in 23 CFR 771.117(c)
 - Pending approval of 23 CFR 771.118
 - ▣ Normally do not require any further NEPA approvals
- Documented Categorical Exclusion (DCE)
 - ▣ Listed in 23 CFR 771.117(d)
 - ▣ Need to verify finding
 - ▣ Approved by FTA
- No public hearing required

FTA Region 4: CEs

- Listed CEs (CATX)
 - ▣ CE checklist
 - ▣ Approved by FTA
- Documented CE (DCE)
 - ▣ CE checklist plus additional documentation
 - ▣ Approved by FTA



Class I: EIS

- Typically screened through EST
 - ▣ May use ACE
- Analysis based on purpose & need and scoping
- Similar issues/resources as FHWA EIS
- Greater analysis on impacts identified as significant
- Support from FTA oversight consultant
- Requires public hearing

Class III: EA

- Analysis based on purpose & need and scoping
- Similar issues/resources as FHWA EA, yet shorter more concise document
- Greater focus on issues where there is a question of significance
- Support from FTA oversight consultant
- Public hearing optional, based on consultation with FTA

ETDM Qualifying FTA Projects

- Projects that do not meet the criteria to be classified as a CATX and DCE
- Major projects including rail transit systems and bridge replacement projects with potential for greater environmental impacts
- Consult with FTA
 - ▣ If qualifies as major, screen in EST
 - ▣ See PD&E Manual Part 1, Chapter 2 for typically qualifying project

ETDM Planning Screen

- Coordinate with FTA prior to screening
- Early agency input
- Early scoping
- ACE for anticipated EISs
 - ▣ Help identify reasonable corridors
 - ▣ Help identify relevant issues for analysis

ETDM Programming Screen

- ❑ Coordinate with FTA
- ❑ Advanced Notification through EST
- ❑ NEPA scoping
- ❑ COA in coordination with FTA
- ❑ FTA authorizes NEPA, PD&E Study



Project Development

- FTA authorizes study Initiation
- Environmental analysis
- Development of Alternatives
 - ▣ Alignment
 - ▣ No-Build, TSM Alternative, and Build Alternatives
- Select Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)
 - ▣ Must be incorporated into MPO's LRTP
- Adopt into Cost-Feasible LRTP (yes, planning consistency)

NEPA Analysis

- Authorization to begin NEPA required from FTA
- Addressing of issues and resources similar to FHWA projects per the PD&E Manual
 - ▣ Noise is assessed slightly differently (e.g., ground born vs. airborne and vibrations are highly considered)
- Analysis to select MPO adopted and FTA approved LPA
- Approval of final document similar to FHWA approvals
 - ▣ NEPA approval authorizes PE

PD&E Manual Update

- Part 1, Chapter 14 – FTA Process (New name)
- Addresses FTA major and minor (e.g., CEs) projects
- Draft in progress
- CEMO working with Transit Office
- FTA regulation change is pending
- Addressing impact of MAP-21
- Anticipated approved chapter early 2013