MAP21 – Ideas from the SWTA Nation

As of 2/22/13

The following have been collected from SWTA members at two separate listening events, February 5 and 21, 2013. More events have been planned. We will continue to document the ideas and comments, while creating a unified position from the SWTA Nation.

FUNDING

1. *We support a 2-prong approach to funding with the purpose of stabilizing the Highway Trust Fund. Short term, increase the gas tax now. Long term, encourage and support Congress in efforts to develop a fair, equitable, robust funding mechanism to replace the national user fee on gasoline.*
2. Ideas for other revenue sources
    a. VMT on electric vehicles
    b. Take Dept of Energy funds for CNG and Electric vehicle purchases and put into transit
    c. VMT tax in general
    d. Infrastructure investment should be off the books
    e. Funding should be based on an indexed gas tax fixed to inflation
    f. Funding should be tied to economic development and jobs
    g. Split taxes on new business with foreign ownership, split with local government
    h. Vehicle TAG tax
    i. Clean fuels tax credit
    j. Cut US Agency for International Development Budget by 20% and put into transit
    k. Raise gas tax formula so that transit receives more revenue
    l.

PROGRAM IDEAS AND COMMENTS:

1. FTA's rule RE: $5000 max for vehicle reimbursement needs to at least catch up with the times. If a vehicle, that has served its useful life, is sold for more than $5000, the difference must be given back to FTA. This creates a logistical nightmare for FTA at the regional level, keeps transit agencies from using all the money available for local match, and creates an environment for dishonesty. Please have language put into the next round that at least raises the amount to $10,000. The original amount is from 1972 (or so).
2. Encourage more inclusive planning at the state and national levels. i.e. In the same way MAP21 requires inclusion of local input in a statewide transit plan, FTA should use operational subject experts when creating guidance. Transit operators of all sizes should be in on the beginning of the discussion, not just providing comment after the guidance and rules have been created.

3. In previous funding, bus operations and bus capital purchases comprised 20 percent of the total pot with 40 percent going to New Starts and Extensions and 40 percent Fixed-Guideway Modernization to make up the balance. Now bus is 10% with a distribution of 43:47:10. This is unacceptable.
4. Performance measures need to be based on the productive outcome of the trip, not how many butts are in the seat. Look at the number of people working, number of people living independently, number of people getting to healthcare services and increased economic development.
5. Bottom line, more bus and bus facility capital funding for small urban and rural transit agencies. MAP21 does not provide enough funding the replace buses.
6. Funding for alternative fuel vehicles
7. Keep operating/capital flexibility. Could be expanded more aggressively to local decision-making.
8. If no discretionary funding is available, then the formula must be adequately funded
9. Fund to agencies, not the state.
10. Positive Train Control is an unfunded mandate. This is not effective.
11. New Freedom and 5310 programs – while the streamlining is good, there is a net loss on funding. We cannot efficiently execute the programs.
12. New asset management requirements seem to be more important than current capital challenges.
13. Change various funding categories to streamline application process and issuance of grants. Timing is crucial on the ability for transit systems to be in a position to sustain transit.
14. We need discretionary funding put back into the mix.