

THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUDING FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY PROPERTIES IN THE
STATEWIDE AND METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

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Although few people live or work within their boundaries, the lands owned and managed by federal land management agencies attract large numbers of visitors each year, generate substantial economic revenues for local economies, typically occupy considerable geographic areas, and are predominantly located in proximity to small and medium sized urban areas. For these reasons, it is important for these properties to be appropriately considered in both the statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes.

The United States depends on a safe and efficient transportation system to strengthen communities, provide access to jobs, services, and centers of trade, and retain and enhance our economic competitiveness in the global marketplace. The transportation planning process is a forum through which transportation investment decisions are made to address these issues. The State departments of transportation, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and Federal Land management Agencies are required to conduct continuing, comprehensive, and collaborative intermodal transportation planning activities that facilitates the efficient, economic movement of people and goods in all areas.

Title 23 U.S.C. Section 204 requires the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Federal Lands Highway (FLH), in consultation with the Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMAs), to develop transportation planning processes and procedures that are generally consistent with the metropolitan and statewide planning processes as defined in 23 U.S.C. Sections 134 and 135. These complimentary legislative directions thus create the requirement for a two way flow of information and activity between the traditional State and MPO planning partners on one side and the FLMAs on the other side. In the middle of these interactions are the rural communities, small and medium-sized urban areas that have been historically identified as the "gateway communities" to these federal land properties.

Moreover, through the regular and continuous involvement of federal land management agencies in their respective statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes, State DOTs and MPOs also have the opportunity to address the planning emphasis areas that have been identified by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. First publicized in 2014 and emphasized again in the spring of 2015, these planning emphasis areas highlight the importance of: transitioning to a performance based planning and programming process as called for in the MAP-21 legislation, the benefits of regional models of cooperation, and the need to give appropriate consideration to addressing ladders of opportunity. The better integration of the transportation issues and concerns facing federal land management agencies such as the National Park Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and the US Army Corps of Engineers into the statewide and metropolitan planning processes administered by small and medium size communities and state DOTs can thus provide the opportunities for a collective "win - win" outcome for all involved parties.

This presentation/paper will highlight some recent examples of how the Office of Federal Lands Highways and its FLMA partners are becoming more regularly involved in the well-established statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes and note some potential opportunities for future improvements to this process.