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**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Listening Session  
National Bike Summit®  
Washington, DC  
March 6, 2002**

**Opening Remarks**

**Melé Williams**, Director of Government Relations for the League of American Bicyclists, opened the session with introductions of **Cynthia Burbank**, FHWA Program Manager of the Office of Planning and Environment, and **Andy Clarke**, the Executive Director of the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, who also moderated the meeting.

Ms. Burbank welcomed everyone and stressed FHWA's desire to receive input from all of its partners. With regards to bicyclists, she stated that FHWA "particularly value(s) the ideas from the bicycle community because it is an important part of our transportation system, one that needs more emphasis and support." She emphasized how Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta described TEA-3 as building upon the successes of both ISTEA and TEA-21. Their approach for the new bill will be multi-modal and flexible, emphasizing environmental and community impacts and based on an inclusive and stronger planning process at the state and local level. In addition, it will include goals that the transportation system needs to fulfill including goals that bicycles and bicycle transportation can advance. There will also be a lot of emphasis on flexibility and incentive based-programs. The toughest question, as with all reauthorization bills, is how much funding will be available.

Mr. Clarke framed the discussion to follow as an opportunity to provide the FHWA with inspiration for accommodating cyclists, and listed several ways that TEA-3 could do just that. Among the options are: increasing eligibility for bicycling projects throughout the bill; creating new programs targeted at bicycling and bicyclists; and several types of technical changes, including changes to rules, Guidances, eligibility or matching funds.

He closed his introductory remarks by noting that, in spite of the vast amount of progress made by cyclists since the 1991 ISTEA bill, this progress has only been

“making bicycling less awful...” and now the question for all involved becomes “how can we make it better?”

Mr. Clarke briefly described the format for the session and explained the voting technology. (Everyone in the audience was given voting devices in an effort to gather information in real-time.) Some questions were prepared in advance, some were collected from Summit participants prior to the session, and some questions came from the floor during the session.

### **Question and Answer Session**

1. Would you describe yourself as an...
  - a. Advocate (55%)
  - b. Agency representative (22%)
  - c. Consultant (2%)
  - d. Bike industry representative (21%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

2. In your community, how has the level of support for bicycling changed since ISTEA was enacted in 1991?
  - a. Support has increased significantly (31%)
  - b. Support has increased (55%)
  - c. No change (13%)
  - d. Support has decreased (1%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

3. Would you prefer more transportation funding decisions to be in the hands of the...
  - a. Federal government (14%)
  - b. State DOT (22%)
  - c. MPO (32%)
  - d. City/County (32%)

Audience feedback:

- Some audience members preferred decisions at the federal level, because the State DOT's are often inclined to do only the minimum to help cyclists, and the federal government is in a position to raise the minimum standard.
- Some voted for the MPO choice for a couple of reasons: some felt that State-level policies are fixed, whereas MPO's could be more flexible in meeting cyclists' needs. Others noted that MPO's, as regional representatives, have more clout than others with the state DOT's.

- Some felt that the federal government is too remote from on-the-ground decisions; they argued that bicycling is better served at the City/County level because this is where cyclists' interests are heard.
  - Some audience members sought a mix of Federal and local control as a way to reconcile the concerns about both outlined above. Others suggested that the answer varies by locality, and at which level the bicycling-friendly staff is found.
4. In your experience, where have you encountered the greatest obstacles to implementation of ISTEA and TEA-21 as they relate to bicycling?
- a. FHWA Headquarters (2%)
  - b. FHWA Division office (3%)
  - c. State DOT (64%)
  - d. Local government (31%)

Audience feedback:

- Since the state government dispenses the money; the state level is where you meet the challenges. Guidance isn't enough. You need mandates similar to the seatbelt law.

5. What is the most useful thing FHWA currently does to improve conditions for bicycling?
- a. Research (21%)
  - b. Publish best practices (34%)
  - c. Enforce non-compliance with the legislation (9%)
  - d. Provide guidance to States (37%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

6. Have you visited [www.bicyclinginfo.org](http://www.bicyclinginfo.org) or [www.enhancements.org](http://www.enhancements.org) within the last 30 days?
- a. Bicyclinginfo.org only (33%)
  - b. Both bicyclinginfo.org and enhancements.org (13%)
  - c. Enhancements.org only (3%)
  - d. Neither (52%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

7. Should TEA-3/FHWA continue funding for information clearinghouses such as these?
- a. Yes (88%)
  - b. No (0%)
  - c. Don't know (12%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

8. What is the most useful thing FHWA could do to improve conditions for bicycling and walking? (Answers provided by audience.)
  - a. Training (46%)
  - b. Research/Statistics (11%)
  - c. Enforcement of MPO's that do not comply with the legislation (37%)
  - d. Additional clearinghouses (i.e. CMAQ) (5%)

Audience feedback:

- One participant noted that the most useful thing FHWA could do for bicycling and walking is to ensure that neither can be designed out of any plans
- Ms. Burbank asked the audience if performance measures would help them. The response was that yes, they would help, as long as they incorporated all of the different modes of transportation.

9. In general, would you prefer to see funding for bicycle projects...
  - a. Encouraged by the use of incentives (50%)
  - b. Mandated in set-aside programs (40%)
  - c. Remain "broadly eligible" as now (10%)

Audience feedback:

- Several audience members indicated that "all of the above" would have been their answer preference.
- One person pointed out that mandates risk marginalizing cyclists instead of integrating them into overall transportation plans.
- Another person pointed out that mandates can put capacity where it is not needed.
- Someone noted that enhancements have been overwhelmingly successful, whereas incentives tend to underperform. In order to triple the number of people biking, a combination of set-asides and incentives is needed.

10. For the HEP, would you prefer to see funding for bicycle projects...
  - a. Encouraged by the use of incentives (29%)
  - b. Mandated in set-aside programs (57%)
  - c. Remain "broadly eligible" as now (14%)

Audience feedback:

- Several participants noted that mandates were more important for cyclists' interests in the HEP versus other programs, because money in the HEP is difficult to get.
- Someone noted that the safety requirement makes it difficult to compete for funds because the number of bicycle fatalities don't meet the standard.
- Furthermore, participants noted that bicycling and/or cyclists do not qualify for money under the program.

- The usage requirements often create a circular problem: hazards may keep people from bicycling, but without sufficient usage by cyclists, money to eliminate the hazard is not forthcoming.

11. What incentives might make a difference for the enhancement program?

- More favorable matching ratio (37%)
- Exemption from environmental reviews (16%)
- Require states to accept in-kind matching funds (17%)
- Other (29%)

Audience feedback:

- Suggestions for the “Other” category included: withholding other funds; non-motorized transportation coordinator (at MPO or state level) to inventory non-motorized uses; more education about the availability of funds; and streamlining the process for obtaining funds for small projects.
- It was noted that although the letter of the law is frequently followed, the spirit of the law is not.

12. Should enhancement projects be allowed to bypass the planning process?

- Yes (28%)
- No (72%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

13. Would you favor more enhancements program categories? (i.e. new canals, eliminate TCSP as discretionary program and make it an eligible activity under enhancements)

- Yes (43%)
- No (57%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

14. What incentives might make a difference for the CMAQ program?

- More favorable matching ratio (51%)
- Exemption from environmental reviews (12%)
- Require states to accept in-kind matching funds (8%)
- Other (29%)

Audience feedback:

- Someone commented if there are projects that negatively impact the environment, which could be eliminated as eligible?
- Someone noted that CMAQ seems to be an incentive to be a non-attainment area. Money is provided to clean something up, but once clean the money is no longer available. Ms. Burbank

acknowledged that the conformity onus on non-attainment is far more of a problem than the value of the CMAQ funds.

- One participant suggested allowing CMAQ funds to be used in attainment areas for bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- Another said that the requirement that CMAQ projects demonstrate a reduction in air pollution makes it difficult to use the money for bicycling projects, which are often seen only as recreational, not necessarily replacing car trips.
- Set-aside programs tend to have a longer life on Capitol Hill.
- It was further noted that this recreational/non-recreational distinction is not made of automobile trips, no matter their actual purpose.

15. What impact has the FHWA's Design Guidance policy had, in your experience?

- a. Has been adopted and is being implemented (5%)
- b. Has increased likelihood that bicycle projects [are] included (49%)
- c. Has had no impact (46%)

Audience feedback:

- Mr. Clarke asked the participants from California to address their experience with Deputy Directive #64, which requires routine accommodation of bicycles in all state transportation planning. The response was that, often, the Directive has not been adopted at the city level, and has not had as full an impact as it might otherwise have had.

16. Should TEA-3 attempt to clarify or address the issue of rumble strips?

- a. Yes (69%)
- b. No (31%)

Audience feedback: (These comments preceeded question 16, which led to the question. No further comments were added after the question was asked.)

- Does the FHWA Guidance address rumble strips? Mr. Clarke shared that it touches on the subject, but only in passing. It's not a technical advisory, but a policy advisory. Ms. Burbank added that the FHWA Rumble Strip Technical Advisory specifically addresses bicycling impacts.
- Participants expressed disappointment in the recently released FHWA technical advisory regarding rumble strips, given the efforts of the bicycling community to coordinate with FHWA to find an amenable solution to the problem.
- Ms. Burbank responded with the important safety role that rumble strips play in preventing run-off-road crashes. Somehow there has to be an ability to accommodate bicyclists and serve the important

safety need that rumble strips serve. She asked for more specifics from bicyclists as to how to get to that trade-off. How far do you want to see it go to accommodate bicyclists?

17. Should the next transportation bill...
- Require accommodation in all transportation projects (80%)
  - Require states to adopt design guidance (17%)
  - Encourage states to adopt the guidance (3%)
  - Not say anything more on the issue (0%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

18. How would your state DOT respond to question #17?
- Require accommodation in all transportation projects (13%)
  - Require states to adopt design guidance (8%)
  - Encourage states to adopt the guidance (33%)
  - Not say anything more on the issue (47%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

19. Should the requirement that bicycle projects be “principally for transportation purposes” be...
- Left in the law (46%)
  - Stripped from the law (46%)
  - Doesn't matter (8%)

Audience feedback:

- Mr. Clarke asked, “Why should it be kept?” The response was that it gives the bicycle legitimacy as a mode of transportation.
- Mr. Clarke asked, “Why should it be dropped?” Two participants responded separately that the requirement trivializes cycling, emphasizing its recreational use disproportionately.

20. Did the change in planning factors in TEA-21 affect the chances of bicycling projects getting funded?
- Made it more likely (35%)
  - Made it less likely (5%)
  - No change (28%)
  - Don't know what you're talking about (32%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

21. Should state and MPO planning documents be required to have a bicycle element?
- Yes (98%)
  - No (1%)

- c. Don't know (1%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

22. How effective is your state DOT bicycle coordinator?

- a. Very effective (19%)
- b. Effective (27%)
- c. No impact (20%)
- d. Ineffective (33%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

23. Should the requirement for state DOT's to have a bicycle and pedestrian coordinator be extended to require

- a. A full time position (43%)
- b. A separate pedestrian position as well (54%)
- c. Nothing more (3%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

24. Should the requirement for state DOT's to have a bicycle and pedestrian coordinator be extended to require similar positions at...

- a. MPO's over 200,000 (9%)
- b. MPO's and cities over 200,000 (40%)
- c. All MPO's (49%)
- d. None of the above (2%)

No other audience feedback on this question.

25. What would be the public's priorities in the next reauthorization? (This question was posed in a way that the audience could rank, in order of priority, what they thought the public would say)

- a. Freight transportation (Ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>...7.88)
- b. Bicycle improvements (Ranked 4<sup>th</sup>...7.61)
- c. Transportation security (Ranked 1<sup>st</sup>...9.12)
- d. Rural transportation (Ranked 5<sup>th</sup>...7.20)
- e. Passenger rail (Ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>...8.18)

No other audience feedback on this question.

26. What should FHWA say to Congress? (Answers from the floor)

- a. Bikes belong
- b. Connect existing projects
- c. Reverse trend of longer, slower commutes
- d. FHWA won't be hurt by helping bicycles
- e. More choices

- f. Mainstream bicycling
- g. We've done a great job on building roads; now let's catch up on everything else
- h. Bicycle accommodation=better quality of life
- i. We need an energy policy that looks at the long term

### **Closing Remarks**

Ms. Burbank thanked the attendees for their input and participation in the Listening Session. She suggested that, as bicyclists work on TEA-21 reauthorization over the next year, they make their requests and comments to the FHWA as specific as possible, to enable FHWA to provide them with accurate and timely information. She looks forward to continuing an open dialogue and working with the bicycling community during the reauthorization process.

*The survey questions from this listening session will be posted on the League of American Bicyclists website to gather additional responses, and those results will be provided to the FHWA.*