

MAP-21 Section 5310 Requirements Can Be Met, Say California Researchers

Mineta Transportation Institute's free white paper addresses challenges, solutions

San Jose, Calif., April 29, 2014 – How will MAP-21 Section 5310 program requirements and their potential implications affect California? This is a question many other states also may be asking about themselves. To address the specifics in California, the Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) has just released a white paper, [*Building Consensus and Partnerships for Implementing the MAP-21 Section 5310 Program in California*](#), authored by Christopher E. Ferrell, PhD and Bruce S. Appleyard, PhD. Some identified issues and solutions could provide useful insights for other states facing the same challenges. The paper is available for free, no-registration download at <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1229.html>

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) – the legislation that currently provides funding for federal transportation – allows metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) or eligible large, urbanized area (UZA) agencies to assume administrative responsibility for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section the 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities grant program. Currently, it is administered by state departments of transportation.

“This changing scenario presented both positive and negative possibilities,” said Dr. Ferrell. “Caltrans – California’s department of transportation – wanted the best outcome, so it asked MTI to survey the Section 5310 stakeholders, engage a dialog, and make recommendations. Outreach activities for this project included two workshops and an online survey. During the first workshop, stakeholders and Caltrans staff identified three statewide implementation options.”

Those options were:

1. Continue with the current administrative system under Caltrans
2. Make a full transition to MPOs administering their respective large UZAs
3. Create an administrative hybrid – a partnership between MPOs and Caltrans

In a follow-up survey, 61 percent of all stakeholder respondents (including MPOs, transit agencies, NGOs, etc.) preferred Option 3. With 26 percent of the vote, Option 2 came in as second choice. Option 1 received only 9 percent support.

Dr. Appleyard said, “The hybrid/partnership of Option 3 has the distinct advantage of making the strengths of each partner agency available to address any challenges. In short, it is better to face these challenges together, in partnership, than to go it alone.”

In any case, MAP-21 will expire and require reauthorization (with potential revisions) in 2014. The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is lobbying Congress to revert administrative responsibilities for 5310 back to the states. This long-term uncertainty about who will eventually run the program suggests that California, and perhaps other states, should remain flexible. The hybrid/partnership option can provide maximum program flexibility over the long term while building the administrative capacities of all partners.

Several key findings emerged from this research and dialogue:

- A full transition to MPO program administration could significantly reduce the benefits of the 5310 program for the entire state.
- A full transition could leave smaller MPOs lacking sufficient administrative funds to adequately run the program in their jurisdictions.

- Local project funding priorities may not receive enough attention if Caltrans retains sole administrative responsibilities for the program.
- A majority of stakeholders prefer to pursue a partnership with Caltrans to jointly run the 5310 program.
- The hybrid/partnership option can provide the maximum amount of flexibility for the program over the long term while building the administrative capacities of all partners.

In addition, MTI and Caltrans identified key issues, including administrative duplication and redundancy, overlapping jurisdictions, and concerns about the future of the New Freedom (5317) program. In addition, MPOs/large UZAs would not have access to the state's Fund 055, which is used to extend "bridge loans" to grant recipients to make 5310 program vehicle purchases while waiting for federal fund reimbursement.

Download the free 22-page white paper at <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1229.html>

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Christopher Ferrell, PhD, began his planning career in 1995 with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) on Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) applications for traffic management. Since 2000, he has been a transportation consultant, and in 2010 he co-founded CFA Consultants, a transportation planning and research firm. He completed his doctoral studies in city and regional planning at the University of California, Berkeley in 2005. His research and consulting practice focus on the relationships between transportation, land use and travel behavior with the aim to help build more livable, resilient, and vibrant communities.

Bruce Appleyard, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of urban planning at San Diego State University and a principal with the planning and research and firm CFA Consultants. Previously, he was an associate research professor of city and metropolitan planning in the College of Architecture and Planning at the University of Utah (UU) and an adjunct professor of real estate development in the UU David Eccles School of Business. Dr. Appleyard contributes 20 years of experience as a planner and urban designer, focusing on the intersection of transportation, design and environmental quality to support the achievement of sustainability and livability objectives.

ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE (MTI):

MTI conducts research, education, and information transfer programs focusing on surface transportation policy and management issues, especially related to transit. MTI was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and won national re-designation competitions in 2002, 2006 and 2011. The Institute is funded by Congress through the US DOT Research and Innovative Technology Administration, by the California Legislature through Caltrans, and public and private grants. In 2006 the US Department of Homeland Security selected MTI as a National Transportation Security Center of Excellence. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI is the lead institute for the Mineta National Transit Research Consortium, an affiliation of nine university transportation research centers. MTI is affiliated with San Jose (CA) State University's College of Business. Visit transweb.sjsu.edu

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