

Waco Urban Transportation Study  
**Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board**

**Meeting Date:** October 19, 2009

**Agenda Item: Review and Discussion on the status of the Federal Surface Transportation Authorization Act and impacts to MPO operations.**

**Comments:**

SAFETEA-LU, the federal surface transportation authorization, officially expired on September 30, 2009. Congress approved a one month extension of SAFETEA-LU which continues federal programs to October 31<sup>st</sup>. Without further extensions or approval of a new authorization, federal highway and transit programs cannot be reimbursed with federal funds.

The current sticking point is that the House is insisting on a short extension of SAFETEA-LU (3 months or less) in anticipation of quick approval of a new authorization. The Senate and Administration prefer a longer term extension (18 months) in a more realistic anticipation that a new authorization will take considerable time to approve.

Programs that have cash to provide the local match (e.g. Waco Transit) can continue operations using the local or state funds provided, although those funds may not be sufficient for more than a couple of weeks. The MPO, however, does not receive cash from any non-federal source. As a result, the MPO would have to discontinue operations on November 1<sup>st</sup> without an authorization despite the fact that we have considerable carry-over funds from FY 2009.

Additionally, SAFETEA-LU required an \$8.7 billion rescission of obligation authority on September 30, 2009. Congress failed to eliminate this provision, thus Texas was required to return nearly another \$800 million in highway obligations to the federal government. This rescission also impacted MPO operations in that it required the return of about 25% of the PL funds authorized for FY 09. TxDOT had previously stated that they would use State Planning Funds to offset this. As of October 12<sup>th</sup>, TxDOT has not stated whether this will occur.

Despite the rescission, the MPO has sufficient carry-over to continue operations, provided Congress continues the authorization of the surface transportation program.

**Action Required:** Discuss federal authorization proposals and impacts to MPO operations.

**Motion By:**

**Seconded:**

**Content of Motion:**

**Vote:**

