



The Federal Transit **Administration**

A National Perspective

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology –
Center for Transportation Studies**

March 15, 2005



Federal Transit Administration Overview

- 1 of 10 DOT Modal Agencies
- Provides Capital, Planning & Operating Assistance for Public Transit Improvements
- 500 Employees
- 10 Regional Offices
- Jenna Dorn, FTA Administrator



We've Come A Long Way

- \$300 Million Loan Assistance Program in 1964
- \$7.6 Billion Grant Program in FY 2005



Why invest Federal dollars in public transportation?

- A healthy economy depends on healthy local economies, and people mobility is critical to local economic health
- Public transportation is a critical component of multi-modal mobility
 - Shorter commute time means higher productivity
 - Low income mobility means access to jobs and consumer spending



Why invest Federal dollars in public transportation?

- Transit infrastructure reduces economic downsides of sprawl and congestion
- Special transportation services reduce costs in other Federal programs (Medicare, TANF, unemployment benefits)
- Public transportation is essential for effective emergency preparedness and response



Transit is a Catalyst for Economic Development & Livability of Communities

- Sustains Prosperity and Expands Economic Growth
- Elevates the Quality of Life
- Builds and Strengthens a Sense of Community



Impact of Rising Transit Investment Funding Levels

- Transit use has been growing
- People made almost 10 billion transit trips last year
- In small urban and rural areas, a 62% increase since 1994



FTA Funding Distribution

- **Formula Program**
 - To urbanized areas for capital, planning and operating expenses
 - To states for rural and elderly/disabled transit services and planning activities
- **Capital Program**
 - Bus Discretionary
 - Fixed Guideway Modernization
 - New Starts

Note: 451 Bus and 58 New Starts earmarks in FY 2005



Earmarking

- **Congress now earmarks all Bus and New Starts Discretionary Funds**
 - Grantees must actively work with their Congressional delegation
 - House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee is one of the most sought-out committee assignments
- **FTA does not support earmarking**
 - Lumpy distribution
 - Backlog of unspent funds



New Starts Funding

- FTA has helped fund many new rail systems across the country
 - Atlanta, Baltimore, Miami, Portland, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Dallas, etc.
- Over the past several years, a huge competition for funds has developed



New Starts Funding

- FTA rates projects according to the New Starts Criteria: ridership, financing, mobility, environmental, land-use, etc.
- FTA rates projects as Highly Recommended, Recommended, and Not Recommended
- FTA proposes full funding grant agreements to the Congress
- Congress makes final funding determinations



New Starts Funding

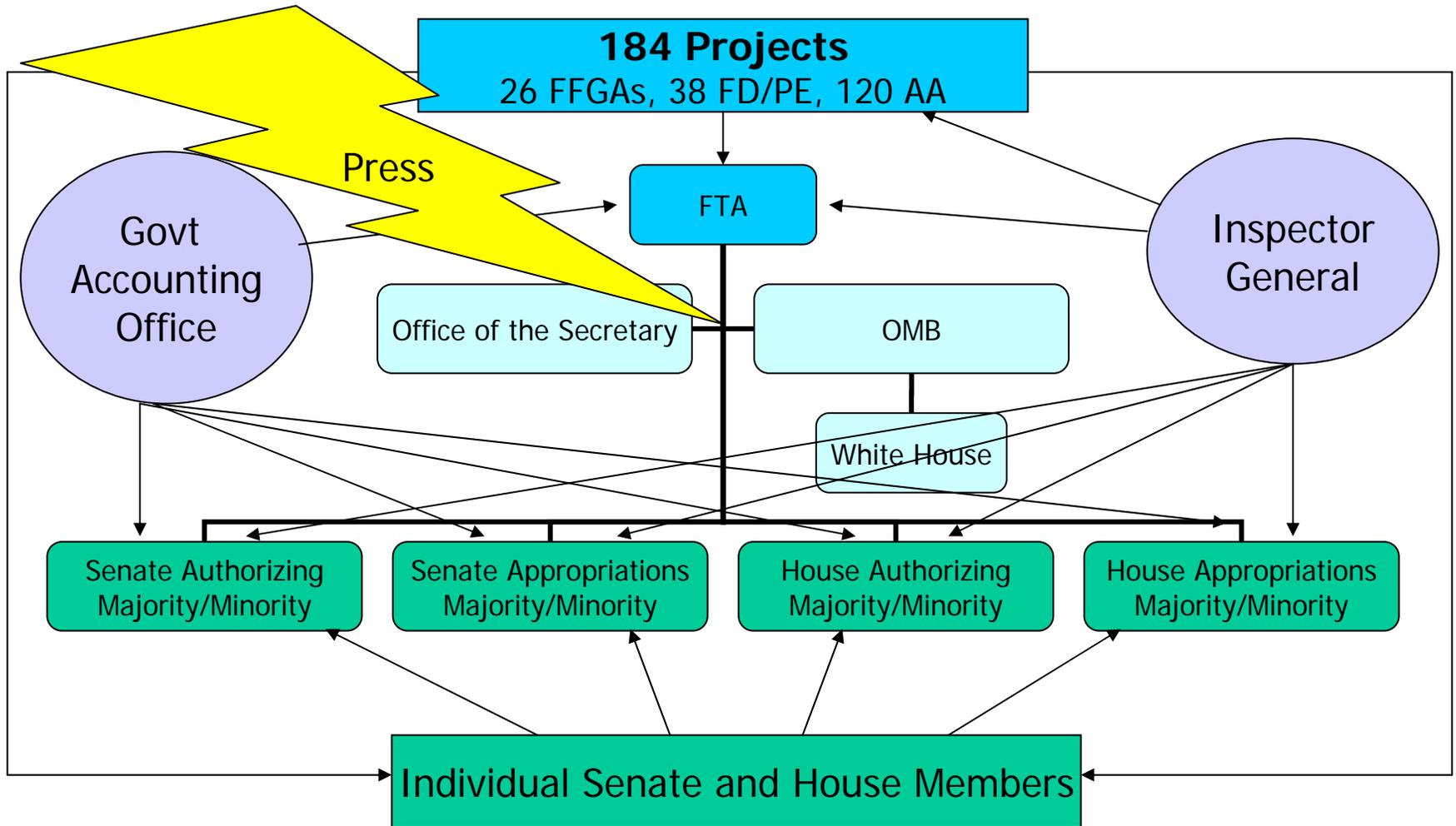
- FTA (and Congress) have proposed reducing the Federal share for projects
- Any New Starts project requires a long-term commitment of both capital & operating resources
- Project sponsors need to closely examine ridership, alternatives and long-term operating costs



New Starts Funding

- FTA is seeking to open up the New Starts Category to non-rail alternatives
- 10 Bus Rapid Transit Demonstration Projects
 - Silver Line recently opened in Boston

The New Starts Environment





Address Congressional Directives

- Report on highway congestion relief benefits
- Report on land use factor and weighting
- Report on transit alternatives in planning
- Monthly report to Appropriations Committee staff on status of projects
- 30-day Congressional notice before PE and Final Design approvals
- Continued annual GAO review of New Starts program



Reauthorization

Highway & Transit Program (Six Years)

- **Administration - \$256 Billion**
 - SAFETEA
 - \$47 Billion for Transit
- **Senate - \$318 Billion (Legislation Passed Last Year)**
 - \$56.5 Billion for Transit
- **House - \$284 Billion**
 - Recently passed by House of Representatives
 - \$52.3 Billion for Transit (Guaranteed)
 - Administration will support this level



Reauthorization

- Administration Position – No New Taxes
- No matter what an expanded transit program
- Finally, it looks like there will be a Bill!



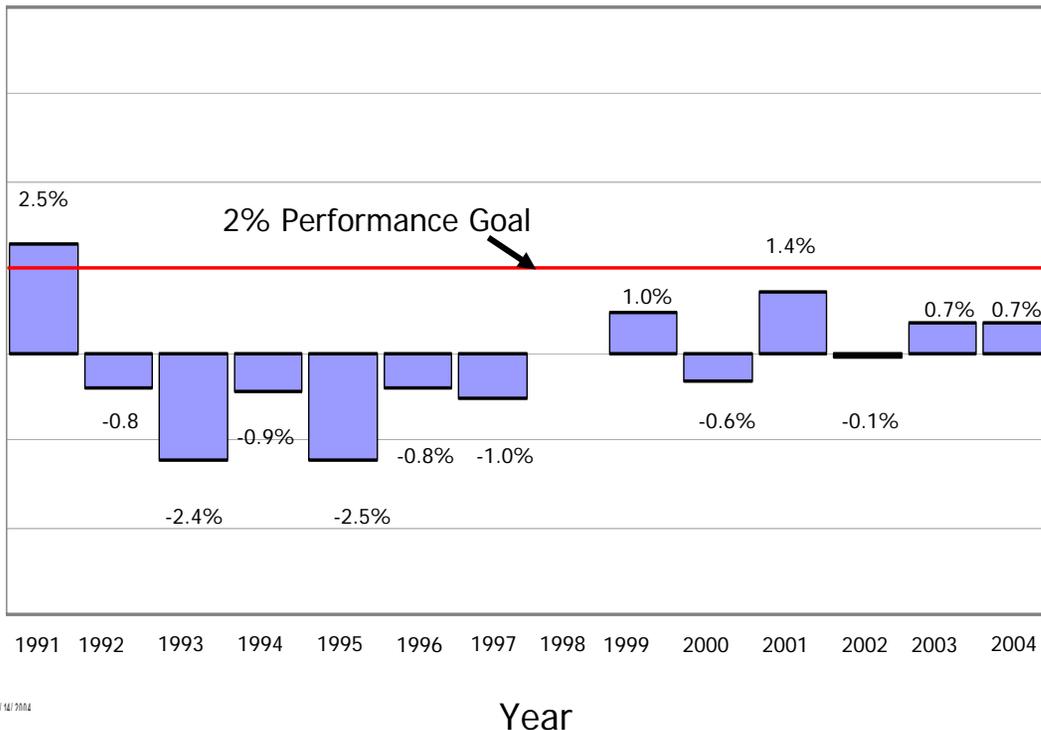
FTA Core Accountabilities 2005

- Transit ridership growth
- Safety and security readiness
- Major project cost control
 - **NO BIG DIGS!**
- Timely approval of grant funds
- **Bottom Line: Accountability**

Transit Ridership Growth

Focusing On What Matters – Transit Riders

**Annual Change in Ridership Adjusted
for Employment Change 1991-2004**



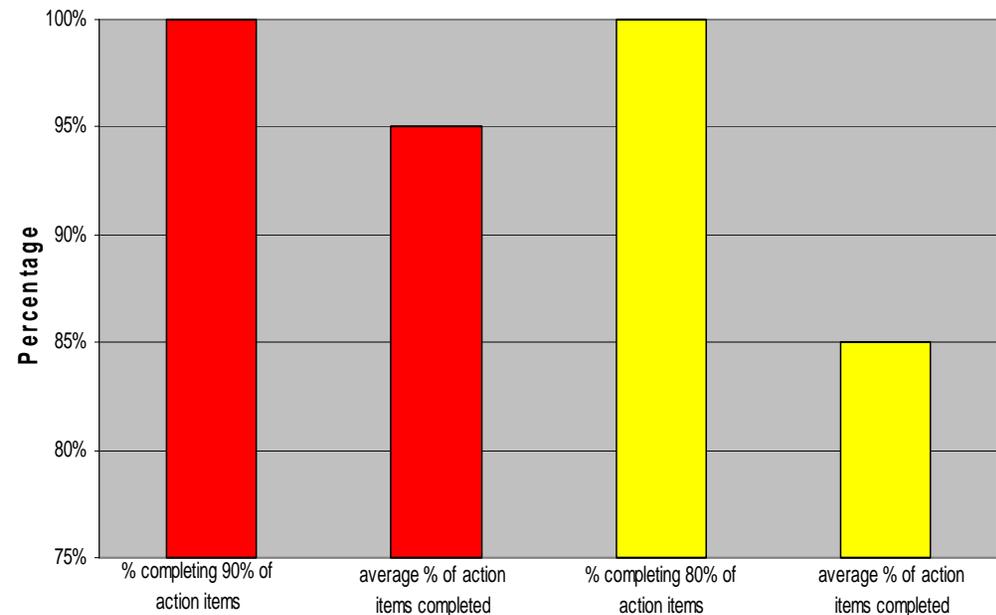
- Launched “Innovative Practices” Ridership Webpage
- Completed initial phase of 4 city pilot of Individualized Marketing Campaign
- Developed new NTI course – “Market-Based Strategies for Increasing Ridership”

Safety and Security Readiness

Transit Systems Are More Secure Than Ever

- Deployed technical assistance teams to 35 transit agencies
- Expanded transit security training portfolio to include
 - Mode-specific security awareness
 - Passenger screening
 - Immediate actions for front-line employees
- 20 FTA-funded emergency response drills conducted
- Expanded “Transit Watch” to include “unattended baggage” issue

Safety and Security Readiness



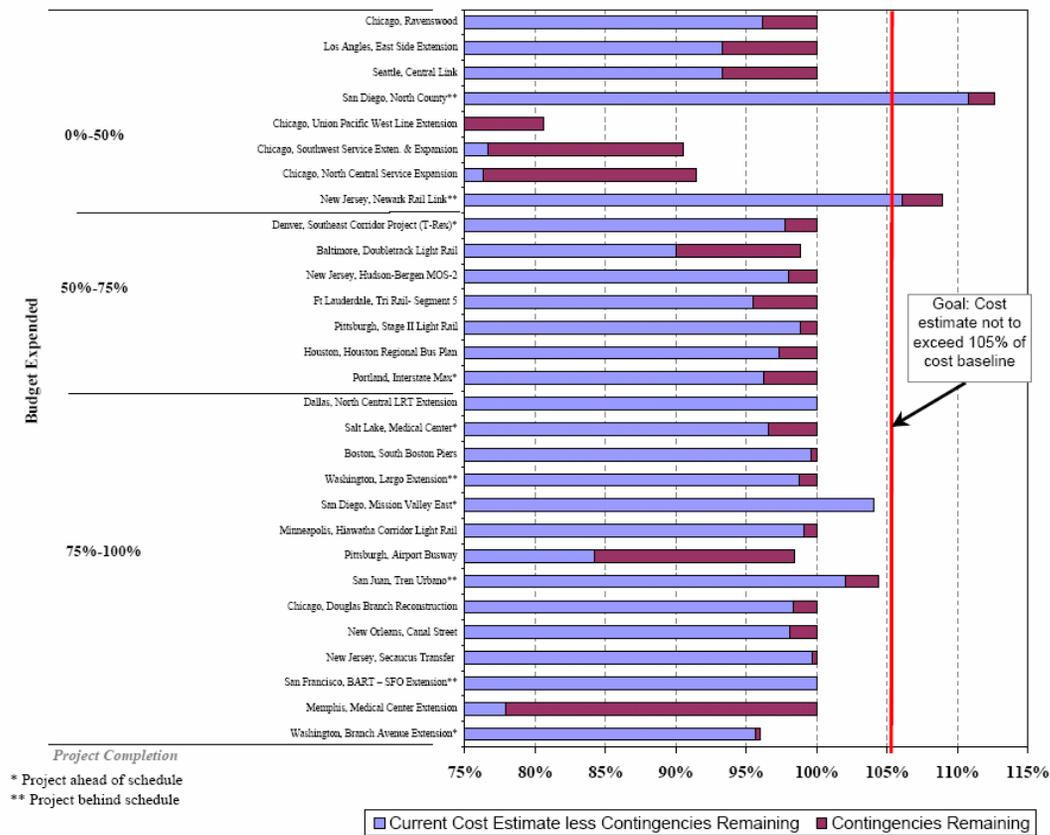
 30 largest transit agencies

 20 next largest transit agencies

Major Project Cost Control

Major Transit Projects Are On-time and On-Budget

Current Project Cost Estimate As a Percent of Cost Baseline (as of 9-30-04)



- Developed new tools for managing capital projects
 - New Starts Risk Assessment Management Plan
 - Guide to Conducting Risk Assessments for FTA Contractors and Staff

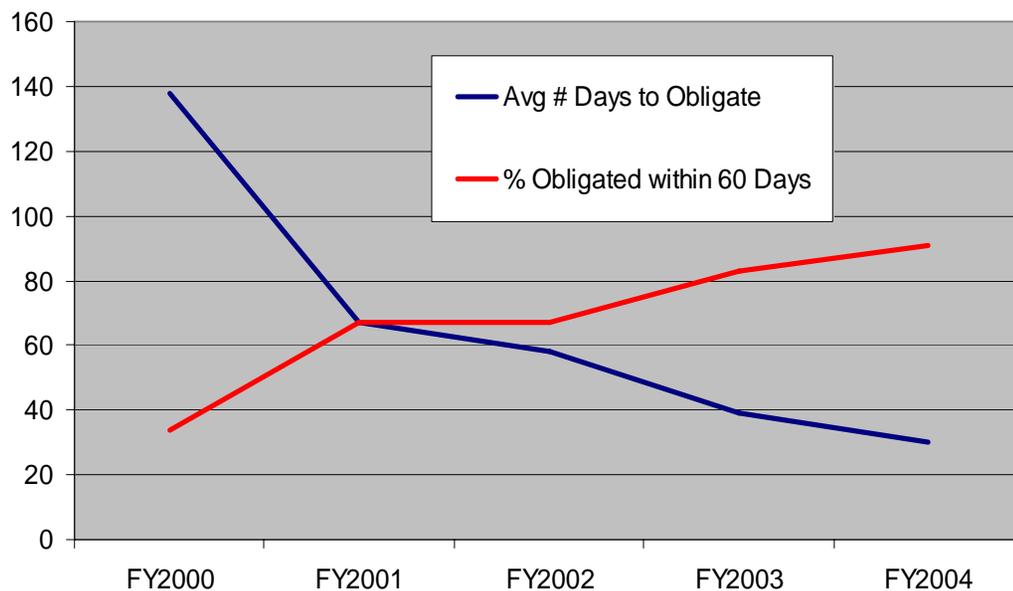
- Introduced new project monitoring tools
 - Project-based risk assessment summaries
 - Early action recovery plans

Grant Processing Efficiency

Putting Transit Funds to Work In Record Time

- Unusual combination of continuing resolutions and TEA-21 extensions made this goal highly challenging
- Implemented electronic approval process for grants over \$1 million
- Recognize and addressing regional consistency issues

Grant Processing Summary





Transit Career Opportunities

- **FTA is looking for a few good men and women**
 - Challenging public sector career, impacting American communities every day
 - Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program
- **Other employment**
 - Public transit authorities
 - Engineering, planning and construction firms



More Information is Available

- www.fta.dot.gov
- www.usajobs.com



Federal Transit Administration

*Working To Make Public Transportation
America's Mode of Choice*

