



FHWA 61-10
Thursday, October 28, 2010
Contact: Doug Hecox
Tel: 202-366-0660

FHWA Approves Three-Year Pilot Program To Improve Accountability on Nebraska Highway Projects

Four highway projects chosen to showcase improved project delivery

LINCOLN, Neb. – Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez today announced the start of a three-year pilot program developed in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) to improve state oversight of federal-aid highway projects administered by local public agencies (LPAs).

“Public money and public projects require a level of public responsibility, transparency and accountability,” said Administrator Mendez. “NDOR shares our commitment to improving the way public infrastructure projects are managed as evidenced by their willingness to enhance their oversight of LPA projects.”

The pilot program is one of the elements outlined in a five-point action plan developed by the FHWA after last March’s transportation summit held in Nebraska to address concerns of local government officials. The focus of the pilot program is to monitor state oversight of LPA projects that use private consulting firms to manage both the preliminary engineering and construction engineering on the same federally funded highway project, which the FHWA prohibited in Nebraska in 2009. A lack of state oversight and the potential for conflicts of interest prompted the ban.

At today’s meeting, FHWA Division Administrator Joe Werning and NDOR also announced the selection of four model projects. The projects will demonstrate the renewed federal-state-local partnership, the enhanced communication and coordination process, and a set of milestones that will shorten project delivery for Nebraska highway projects. These four model projects include:

- Constructing viaducts over railroad tracks at 3rd, 12th and 18th Avenues in Columbus;
- Widening 12th Street from Elm Avenue to 6th Avenue from two lanes to three in Hastings;
- Widening 108th Street from Decatur to N. Bridge Road in Omaha; and
- Improving roadway approaches on both sides of the Filley North bridge in Gage County.

Over the next three years, FHWA will work with NDOR and its LPAs to evaluate the newly established oversight controls and ensure these safeguards are implemented.

#