



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**



# NEPA Assignment Peer Exchange

Texas Department of Transportation

South Austin Campus, 6230 East Stassney Lane, Austin TX

Austin, Texas

January 27 - 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026

## AGENDA

| Tuesday, January 27 <sup>th</sup> |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM                 | <b>Breakfast at the Hotel</b><br><br>Stephen F. Austin Royal Sonesta<br>701 Congress Avenue<br>Austin, TX 78701  |
| 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM                 | <b>Transfer from Hotel and Check-In</b><br><br>Attendees will have Uber Codes to pay for transfers from the hotel. We encourage you to carpool and AASHTO staff will be on hand to help coordinate rides.  |
| 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM                 | <b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marc Williams, Executive Director, TXDOT (Confirmed)</li><li>• Jim Tymon, AASHTO (Confirmed)</li><li>• Sean McMaster, Administrator, FHWA (Invited)</li></ul>   |
| 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM                | <b>The NEPA Assignment Program Summary and Foundation</b><br><br>Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will present the fundamentals of the NEPA Assignment Program, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 23 USC 326 (Categorical Exclusion Assignment)</li><li>• 23 USC 327 (Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program or Program Assignment)</li></ul> |

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### Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM | <p><b>The Benefits and Value of the NEPA Assignment Program</b></p> <p>NEPA Assignment States will share their experiences and their measured successes, benefits, and value of assuming NEPA Assignment responsibilities. This will include their processes for quantifying, measuring, and tracking the data, such as the use of the Federal Permitting Dashboard.</p> |
| 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM  | <p><b>Lunch</b></p>  |
| 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM   | <p><b>Building and Maintaining a Successful and Compliant NEPA Assignment State Program</b></p> <p>FHWA and NEPA Assignment States will share their experience for developing and maintaining a successful program to implement NEPA Assignment responsibilities.</p>  |
| 3:00 PM - 3:30 PM   | <p><b>Break</b></p>  |
| 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM   | <p><b>Break Out Workshop Session</b></p> <p>NEPA Assignment States and non-assignment states will be paired to collaborate on important steps and procedures related to a state's readiness to assume NEPA Assignment such as preparing a letter of interest and application, developing internal procedures/SOPs, and assessing resource needs.</p>                     |

### Wednesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM  | <p><b>Breakfast at the Hotel</b></p>  |
| 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM  | <p><b>Transfer from the hotel</b></p>   |
| 9:00 AM - 10:30 PM | <p><b>How It Started and How Its Going</b></p> <p>Current non-assignment states will share their interest, the stage of their process, and progress they've made towards assuming NEPA.</p> |



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| Wednesday, January 28 <sup>th</sup> |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 10:30 PM - 12:00 PM                 | <p><b>NEPA Assignment Monitoring and Audits</b></p> <p>FHWA will explain the process and requirements for monitoring and audits. State DOT assignment States will share their experiences and lessons learned from an audit and monitoring processes.</p>  |
| 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM                  | <p><b>Lunch</b></p>  |
| 1:00 PM - 2:15 PM                   | <p><b>The Challenges of NEPA Assignment and the Potential for Improvement</b></p> <p>NEPA Assignment States and FHWA will discuss their experiences and challenges of implementing the NEPA Assignment program, including comments and input for potential improvements to the program.</p>            |
| 2:15 PM - 3:45 PM                   | <p><b>Legal Considerations and Implications of NEPA Assignment</b></p> <p>NEPA Assignment States and FHWA will discuss the legal foundation and principles of NEPA assignment, including waiver of sovereign immunity, legal sufficiency, litigation, and precedents and case law examples.</p>        |
| 3:45 PM - 4:00 PM                   | <p><b>Break</b></p>  |
| 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM                   | <p><b>Accelerating Project Delivery Beyond NEPA Assignment</b></p> <p>FHWA and State DOTs will share their experience and expertise on strategies for accelerating project delivery, including programmatic CEs, programmatic agreements, planning and environment linkages, and federal liaisons.</p> |



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| Thursday, January 29 <sup>th</sup> |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM                  | Breakfast at the Hotel  |
| 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM                  | Transfer from the hotel   |
| 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM                 | <p>Not Just Highway Projects; NEPA Assignment for Transit and Rail Projects</p> <p>FTA, FRA, multi-modal Assignment States and State DOTs interested in Transit or Rail assignment will provide a foundation for NEPA assignment and share their process and latest progress.</p> |
| 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM                | <p>Digital Solutions to Implementing NEPA Assignment</p> <p>State DOTs will share digital tools and solutions to manage and implement their NEPA Assignment programs, including the cost of building and maintaining these tools and systems.</p>                                 |
| 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM                | <p>What's Next?</p> <p>AASHTO and FHWA will provide closing remarks to include a wrap-up of comments, opportunities, and takeaways from the event.</p>  |
| 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM                 | Lunch   |

