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Reform of state DOTs

Reform of the state departments of transportation has been a key goal of new urbanists for years — and it appears to be actually underway in two major states, Pennsylvania and Texas.

In May, Pennsylvania allocated \$59.2 million for transportation projects that support smart growth and walkability. The Smart Transportation program is led by PennDOT secretary Al Biehler, who has a transit rather than a highway background, says Mary Taylor Raulerson, a consultant for Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin in Orlando, Florida.

Glatting Jackson put together a Smart Transportation Guidebook for PennDOT and has trained 1,500 of the department's 12,000 employees, she told a CNU gathering in June. Also, she notes that the money is being leveraged through competitive grants. Municipalities submitted 400 applications. She described the program as a "laboratory so folks in Pennsylvania would know what we mean by smart transportation planning and great communities." Go to www.smart-transportation.com to find out more.

Meanwhile, Texas has become the first state to officially adopt the Urban Thoroughfares manual written by CNU and the Institute of Transportation Engineers, says Fort Worthbased planner Scott Polikov. Moreover, TxDOT has revised its Project Development Process Manual to require that context sensitive design be considered in project evaluations, Polikov told New Urban News. The New Urbanism is mentioned by name in this TxDOT process manual, probably another first. The changes were published in June, and the pdf document is available online at: <http://onlinemanuals.txdot.gov/txdotmanuals/pdp/pdp.pdf>

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