

BUILD NEBRASKA ACT **THE NEXT 10 YEARS**

Build Nebraska Act Regional Meeting Ashland, NE - January 21, 2016

In the last of four regional meetings, NDOR met with Nebraska citizens on Thursday, January 21, in Ashland talk about how to best invest \$600 million in state highway capital improvement projects under the next cycle of the Build Nebraska Act (BNA).

Informational materials and conversations focused on expanding the capital improvement project prioritization process to better consider economic impacts and include more stakeholder input. NDOR also shared the list of candidate projects to be considered for the next round of BNA funding and asked participants if there are other projects that should be considered.

Like the previous meetings in Alliance, Lexington and Columbus, participants expressed support for the concept of expanding the process, and additional projects were suggested for consideration. Specific topics included:

- **Leveraging of investments** - Participants think highway investments should be connected to other community investments and should support the long-term vision or plans communities have identified.
- **Critical importance of connections and access** - Projects should support access to the expressway system. Access to and from rural and urban areas is important, and access to agricultural fields should not be overlooked. In addition, participants mentioned the importance of connections to a multi-modal transportation system.
- **Safety and travel time considerations:** Safety is a high priority and needs to be a key factor in decisions. Participants also mentioned the importance of considering travel time and opportunities for reduction in those times.
- **Importance of sustainability** - In addition to the cost of construction, a project's long-term costs, including maintenance and operations, should be considered.
- **Economic performance considerations.** - Participants in the Ashland meeting would like the following issues to be considered as the economic performance evaluation process is developed:
 - While some participants suggested freight movements as a priority, others pointed out that commuter traffic is also important.
 - Some participants suggested that weighting for engineering and economic performance should vary depending on the region.
 - Consider the potential job growth as a ratio to the overall population. Also, consider impacts to the economically distressed communities differently.

Participants also suggested several projects be added to the candidate list.

Based on feedback from the meetings, NDOR staff will refine the expanded prioritization process and begin scoring projects. Additional meetings will be held in spring 2016 to discuss specific projects, and announcement of the next round of BNA projects is planned for summer 2016. Future meeting dates and locations, as well as all the information being presented at the meetings, can be found at: <http://www.roads.nebraska.gov/projects/bna/next10/>.

Don't forget to share your input – look for the comment card on the website.