

BUILD NEBRASKA ACT **THE NEXT 10 YEARS**

Build Nebraska Act Regional Meeting Columbus, NE - January 19, 2016

On Tuesday, January 19, NDOR staff members were in Columbus to discuss how to best invest \$600 million in state highway capital improvement projects under the next cycle of the Build Nebraska Act (BNA). In this third of four regional meetings, informational materials and discussions 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 other projects should be considered.

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

- **Safety is the top concern.** - Some participants suggested creating a three-part prioritization approach with safety, engineering and economic analysis as the three primary categories for scoring and suggested those categories be weighted equally. Other participants suggested economic performance should be weighted between 40% – 60% versus engineering, with safety rated mostly highly within engineering factors.
- **Community and regional impacts** - Participants encouraged NDOR to consider how a project might impact both a specific community and a region because lots of residents commute to work in this region.
- **Economic performance considerations.** - Participants in the Columbus meeting would like the following issues to be considered as the economic performance evaluation process is developed:
 - Not all economic development is equal – meaning 10 jobs created in a rural area may have a much larger impact than 100 jobs created in an urban area.
 - The analysis should be easy to understand and transparent.
 - If you consider economic impacts of transportation projects and invest in projects that improve the Nebraska economy, ultimately there will be more funds available for highway improvements.
 - We need to focus on the factors businesses consider when they expand or locate.
 - See if there is an opportunity to incorporate a community or organization's' input data into NDOR's analysis.

Participants also suggested several projects be added to the candidate list, including a north/south interstate. Participants in the Columbus, Lexington and Ashland meetings suggested candidate projects should match the vision established by local planning processes.

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.