



PWC holds Transportation Forum: Moderated by Fife of ASCE

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"Infrastructure improvements aren't expenditures, they're investments to remain competitive and create jobs," that was the opening clarion call made by William Fife, P.E., former Aviation Council chair, ASCE Transportation & Development Institute, the moderator of the annual Transportation Forum presented by Professional Women in Construction at The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen in New York City.

Welcome words to an audience that included many business owners seeking A/E/C bid opportunities.

James Weinstein, executive director of NJ Transit detailed the agency's \$1.152 billion capital program noting that the ongoing need to maintain a State of Good Repair is accomplished through regular replacement or rehabilitation of vehicles, bridges, track and electric traction systems. A prime example is the Northeast Corridor, where 80% of NJ Transit customers - the Corridor's heaviest users - "rely on a piece of infrastructure that is over 100 years old."

Through the end of 2012, NJ Transit expects to advertise over \$35 million in contracts for bus garage improvements (Paterson, Maplewood and Washington Township); and station work at Bloomfield, Frank R. Lautenberg at Secaucus Junction, New Brunswick and Wesmont.

The agency's strong DBE participation record - in 2011, \$19 million or 10.8% to DBEs - 6.9% to minorities, 3.9% to women - hopes, he said, to increase the numbers further this year.

Hilary Ring, senior director of capital programs for the MTA (Metropolitan Transportation Authority), told all that he needs to slash over \$2 billion in spending "without cutting the benefits" to customers and employees from the MTA's \$24 billion capital program. "It can't be business as usual" any more, said Ring.

The good news? Projects up for bid in the 2010-2014 program are fully-funded including the #7 train extension, the Second Ave. subway and East Side Access. Megaprojects actually represent only about a quarter of the program and 130 planned projects are for under \$5 million.

Shown (from left) are: William Fife, PE, principal, The Fife Group; Patrick Foye, executive director, PANYNJ; Joan McDonald, commissioner, NYSDOT; Hilary Ring, senior director capital programs, MTA; James Weinstein, executive director, NJ Transit and Lenore Janis, president, PWC.

"We have projects for the biggest construction companies in the world, projects for small mom-and-pops, and everything in-between," said Ring.

"Investing in transportation is one for the fastest and most effective ways to create and sustain jobs," said Joan McDonald, commissioner of the NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). She outlined key goals of Governor Cuomo's NY Works program which is adding \$1.2 billion for transportation infrastructure improvements for roads, bridges, airports, ports and railroads to the core capital plan of \$1.7 billion. She noted that the DOT has been partnering with the FHWA and

state agencies to "expedite the design, bid and award process."

The 42 NY Works transportation contracts cover nearly 300 sites statewide including over \$27 million in paving for the Prospect and West Shore Expressways and the Major Deegan; replacement of 16 bridge parapets on LI (26% MWBE participation) and replacement of the Kosciuszko Bridge. The state agency is highly committed to providing opportunities for large and small firms since "that will benefit all New Yorkers, and lead to a stronger, more vibrant State economy."

Patrick J. Foye, executive director of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, spoke about the progress at the World Trade Center site, where the "imperative to rebuild was national." He noted that over last five years the Port Authority awarded \$1.2 billion in WTC contracts to MWBEs. In 2011, the Port Authority made \$450 million in MWBE contract awards, or 18.5 percent of all agency contracts.

Mr. Foye said the Port Authority is renewing its focus on transportation infrastructure but has significant needs "not covered by our \$25 billion 10 year preliminary capital plan." To meet those needs, the agency is seeking public-private partnerships "where feasible." He said private capital will participate in the rebuilding of LaGuardia Airport's Central Terminal Building, the planned renovation of Newark Liberty Airport's Terminal A, and the replacement of the Goethals Bridge.

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