



EXPERTS | 2013

HNTB expert:
Elizabeth Rao
Chair Public Transit Services
HNTB Corporation

Our nation has a game-changing opportunity to elevate transit to achieve a balanced, integrated transportation system for our nation. The increased attention and funding for transit will produce a multi-generational payoff similar to that of the Interstate Highway System.

Elizabeth “Liz” Rao joined the firm in 2008 and serves as HNTB’s national public transit services chairperson. With more than 25 years in the transit industry, Rao has gained experience in transportation planning and program development. Her capabilities range from transit systems planning to alternatives analysis, NEPA documentation, preliminary engineering, final design and construction. Rao is fully conversant with the FTA New Starts project development process and she has served as a national resource in this field. Throughout her career, Rao has worked proactively with clients and business partners, elected officials, governmental agencies and the community-at-large to successfully implement transit projects.

Prior to joining HNTB, Rao was assistant general manager for planning and development for the Regional Transportation District in Denver in which she was responsible for program development of the FasTracks Plan. Rao has had direct involvement in program and project management, supervising multi-billion dollar transportation projects with full budget and schedule control.

Journalists can turn to Rao for insights related to:

Successful cities need public transit. A successful city’s underpinning is public transportation, whether bus, commuter train, light rail or streetcar. America’s

most successful and livable cities generally have low crime rates, low costs of living, low unemployment and great opportunities for higher education. And, there has never been a better time for cities to build, improve or expand those systems.

Funding for public transit. The Obama Administration has set aside more money for transit development than any other administration in the past 20 years. There are Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants, sustainability grants and planning grants – literally hundreds of millions of dollars waiting to be awarded. The problem is those federal monies require a local match, and many cities, forced to cut basic services, don’t have the cash to ante up their share. However, economically viable cities make transit a priority because they realize they can generate multiple, positive economic outcomes with a single investment.

According to the American Public Transit Association, for every \$1 cities invest in public transportation, they generate \$4 in economic returns. With the help of federal grants, cities that turn to transit to solve their mobility issues and spur their economies today will be the successful, viable, desirable places to live tomorrow.

Education:

- Business and Finance, 1983, coursework, Queens College, City University of New York
- Bachelor of Arts, 1975, English and education, Queens College, City University of New York

Professional affiliations:

- Second Vice Chair – American Public Transit Association Subcommittee for Major Capital Investments
- Member, Past President – Colorado Association of Transit Agencies
- Member – Women’s Transportation Seminar

Awards and recognition:

- Denver Regional Transportation District, General Manager’s Award for Excellence in Performance 1997, 2000 and 2004
- Women’s Transportation Seminar, 2004 Woman of the Year (Colorado Chapter)
- “16 People to Watch in 2001,” *The Denver Post*

Select media and appearances:

- ProgressiveRailroading.com, June 7, 2011 – **Audio podcast: "HNTB's Rao on the importance of smart transit investments"**
- *Passenger Transport*, May 23, 2011 – **Quoted in story, "Tipping point approaching for gas prices and transit"**
- National Journal.com, Transportation Experts Blog, Oct. 12, 2010 – **“The "It" factor of successful cities”**
- *Engineering News-Record*, Sept. 24, 2010 – **Viewpoint Transit: The "It" factor of successful cities**
- National Journal.com, Transportation Experts Blog, June 28, 2010 – **“What to look for in transportation-housing projects?”**
- *Engineering News-Record*, Jan. 25, 2010 – **Quoted in story, “DOT is revamping its criteria for transit project proposals”**
- *Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 15, 2010 – **Quoted in story, “New transit-funding rules make streetcars more desirable”**

To schedule an interview with Elizabeth Rao and for more information, contact:

MEDIA CONTACT

Sara Prem
Public Relations Manager
(816) 527-2258
sprem@hntb.com

ALTERNATE MEDIA CONTACT

John O’Connell
Senior Public Relations Manager
(816) 527-2383
joconnell@hntb.com