



The National Beat

January 9, 2026

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USDOT Announces SS4A FY 2025 Awards

USDOT announced **\$982.2 million** in FY 2025 awards through the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program, supporting **521 projects** across 48 states, 18 Tribal communities, and Puerto Rico. The awards include a mix of Planning and Demonstration grants and Implementation projects, all aimed at reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries across all modes.

USDOT framed this year's awards as part of a broader effort to sharpen the program's focus on **measurable safety outcomes and faster project delivery**, although previous SS4A award cycles also emphasized data-driven and speedy interventions. Earlier this year, the Department finalized changes to the FY25 SS4A NOFO that removed references to prior Administration executive orders related **to equity, environmental justice, and climate, while narrowing eligibility and evaluation criteria**. Those shifts are clearly reflected in this round of awards (read AMPO's analysis of the FY 25 SS4A NOFO [here](#)).

The TL;DR: USDOT awarded \$982.2 million through the FY25 SS4A program to 521 projects nationwide. AMPO identified 30 MPO-led or MPO-partnered awards, most of which support planning, data-driven safety analysis, and project development.

What the MPO Awards Tell Us

AMPO has identified **30 MPO-led or MPO-partnered awards** in the FY25 SS4A selections. While MPOs represent a relatively small share of total SS4A recipients nationwide, the funded projects underscore the central role MPOs play as regional safety planners, data integrators, and conveners. Of the selected MPO awards:

- **The majority are Planning and Demonstration grants.** Only a one MPO received full Implementation funding, and the award was grounded in a previously adopted Action Plan.
- Projects span **both urban and rural regions**, with many projects designed to support multijurisdictional coordination across counties, municipalities, and rural planning areas.
- Common themes across MPO-funded projects include:
 - **Intersection and corridor safety studies**
 - **Speed management strategies**
 - **Pedestrian crossing improvements and lighting**
 - **Systemic safety treatments**
 - **Safe Routes to School planning**

Note: several MPOs were funded to advance post-crash care and emergency response strategies (e.g., EMS coordination, dispatch system upgrades, and regional trauma-care pilots).

Funding and Award Patterns

Award sizes among MPO recipients are relatively consistent:

- Most MPO Planning and Demonstration awards fall between roughly **\$400,000 and \$1.2 million**.



- A smaller number of MPOs received larger awards (**\$2–5 million**), typically tied to multi-county or large metropolitan regions, advanced analytics or modeling tools, regional pilot programs, and multi-year demonstrations.

Across the board, MPO awards closely track FY25 NOFO priorities. Successful applications tended to emphasize:

- **Quantifiable safety outcomes**
- Clear **links to eligible Safety Action Plan** components
- Practical, **near-term implementation** pathways
- Strong **economic and cost-effectiveness** rationale

Broader equity or climate narratives played a more limited role than in prior SS4A rounds, consistent with USDOT's revised evaluation framework.

AMPO will continue to track SS4A implementation. Please reach out to Katie Economou, Legislative Director, at keconomou@ampo.org with any questions or for assistance.



Congress

Congressional “Vibe” Check

Appropriations. After weeks of stop-and-start negotiations, appropriators are finally showing signs of forward motion. The House has already advanced a bipartisan, bicameral three-bill minibus covering Interior–Environment, Energy–Water, and Commerce–Justice–Science, and is preparing to move another package next week that would include Homeland Security, Financial Services, and State–Foreign Operations.

Transportation funding is not part of this first package. However, House Appropriations Chair Tom Cole (R-OK) has indicated that the **THUD bill is [expected to be included](#) in a final, high-stakes package** alongside Defense and Labor–HHS. Rep. Cole described this potential bundle as the chamber’s “finale” and the largest in dollar terms, aligning with similar expectations circulating among Senate appropriators.

Timing remains tight. With the [current Continuing Resolution](#) (CR) **expiring January 30**, pressure is mounting to wrap up full-year funding and avoid another short-term extension or shutdown. Movement on this initial minibus suggests momentum, but timing for THUD remains fluid.

Reconciliation...again? There are early signs that some Republicans may be eyeing a second reconciliation bill. Senate Budget Committee Chair Lindsey Graham (R-SC) [has indicated](#) he plans to begin work on a new budget resolution this winter, which could open the door to another filibuster-proof package in the Senate. (AMPO previously broke down the first reconciliation package in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act analysis [here](#)).

Congressional Calendar. Midterm elections are already shaping the calendar. Senators kicked off 2025 with an unusually heavy workload, spending 13 of the first 14 weeks in session, but the rest of the year tells a different story. The calendar includes **21 weeks away from Capitol Hill** for in-district work periods, with long stretches during August recess and the pre-election period in October and November. **Fewer legislative weeks mean higher stakes for moving important items**, including appropriations and reauthorization.

Reauthorization. Reauthorization activity continues to accelerate as committees refine draft language and begin shaping the next surface transportation bill.

Where things stand:

- **House T&I.** Majority and minority staff are actively exchanging draft sections. Titles covering NHTSA, FMCSA, and FTA have already circulated internally, with the highway title expected next. Staff-to-staff negotiations on base text are now underway, and other House






committees and off-committee members are beginning to surface their own reauthorization priorities.

- House timing remains aggressive. Bill text is *expected* to be released in early 2026, with markups anticipated in Q1 and potential floor consideration in early spring. Chairman Graves has stated his **goal of passing a bill out of the House this spring**. With the IIJA set to expire on September 30, 2026, and with Chairman Graves in his final term amid an approaching midterm election cycle, House leadership has strong incentives to complete work this Congress.
- **Senate.** Among Senate committees, Environment and Public Works (EPW) is furthest along. Chair Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) has indicated **plans to release draft text and hold a markup in early March 2026**. By comparison, the Commerce and Banking Committees are continuing early-stage drafting, and their timelines remain less defined.
- **Administration.** On the Administration side, FHWA, FTA, and other USDOT operating administrations are transmitting their reauthorization proposals to the Office of Management and Budget, the final step before formal submission to Congress.

A general note on timing: Given the remaining FY 2026 appropriations work, expected policy debates, and the long history of surface transportation bills missing deadlines, a Continuing Resolution remains possible. Even so, MPOs should operate under the assumption that reauthorization could move on time. This engagement window will not open twice, and once base text is released, shaping major provisions becomes significantly harder via amendment.

Congressional Buzz on Reauthorization

-  **House T&I Member Day:** The House T&I Committee will hold a “Member Day” hearing on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 10:00 AM. Member Day hearings provide an important opportunity, particularly for members not serving on the committee, to raise district-specific transportation priorities and policy concerns as the committee lays the groundwork for reauthorization.
 - **Important note:** This is a key opportunity for regional priorities to be elevated. Now is an ideal time to educate your delegation and ensure they are equipped to speak to your region’s needs.
-  **Chairman Graves (T&I) on the Surface Bill’s Focus:** Speaking at a Kennedy Center retreat, Chairman Graves emphasized a return to a more “traditional” highway bill focused on roads and bridges, contrasting it with what he described as the climate- and clean energy-heavy approach of the IIJA. He is also advancing a proposal to stabilize the Highway Trust Fund through annual fees on electric and hybrid vehicles, while rejecting mileage-based user charges, framing the effort as a member-driven process intended to build broad stakeholder support.
-  **EPW Outlook on Reauthorization:** EPW Chair Capito has reiterated her expectation to release and markup a bipartisan highway bill in early March. Early fault lines are already emerging, particularly around climate and energy policy and potential fees on electric and hybrid vehicles. EPW Ranking Member Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) has warned that recent administration [energy project cancellations](#) and funding cuts could undermine incentives for Democratic cooperation.

- [!\[\]\(849840539e55921a3851a4ff96d7400d_img.jpg\) **Automated Traffic Enforcement Cameras in the Crosshairs:**](#) Automated traffic enforcement in Washington, D.C. may become a reauthorization issue after USDOT officials signaled opposition and explored using the surface bill to prohibit speed, red-light, and stop-sign cameras in the District. A proposal sent to OMB would eliminate systems that generated \$267.3 million in revenue in 2025, while Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA) has [**introduced legislation**](#) asserting the cameras prioritize revenue over safety. Reaction within House T&I has varied: Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA) said he was not closed off to the idea, while Chairman Graves noted it is not currently a focus. [**Mayor Muriel Bowser warned**](#) the move could jeopardize public safety and create a roughly \$1 billion gap in the District's financial plan.
- [!\[\]\(c176e0b06f6c5dd85a4598b214d1ebba_img.jpg\) **The DC Transportation Funding Equality Act is Introduced:**](#) Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC) introduced H.R. [**HR 6950**](#), which would treat the District as a state for purposes of certain transportation grant programs, including formula bus funding, the national culvert program, and the Safe Streets and Roads for All program.
- [!\[\]\(66a18e26647fc145bd9198dd182dd107_img.jpg\) **Bipartisan Backing for AI Technology and Infrastructure:**](#) Senators John Boozman (R-AR) and Alex Padilla (D-CA), with Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS) as a cosponsor, introduced the [**Roadway Safety Modernization Act**](#). The bill would support State DOT adoption of artificial intelligence, telematics, and advanced data analytics to identify deficient infrastructure, better understand how roadway conditions influence driver behavior, and target safety investments that reduce crashes and fatalities while improving system efficiency.

National Perspectives on Reauthorization

- [!\[\]\(756219e9389f679d57027482aa5cf5fc_img.jpg\) **AMPO – Reauthorization Timeline and Funding Outlook Take Shape:**](#) At the MAP Forum, AMPO's Executive Director Bill Keyrouze shared early signals from Congress on reauthorization, suggesting a potential shift back toward formula-based funding as lawmakers reconsider whether large discretionary programs should be integrated into core programs. He underscored [**AMPO and the Local Officials for Transportation \(LOT\) Coalition's position**](#) that regional and local access to federal funds must be preserved, particularly through suballocation and stronger regional decision-making if discretionary programs are folded into formula structures. Keyrouze also pointed to growing bipartisan interest in elevating local and regional voices, ongoing debates over Highway Trust Fund revenues, and a renewed emphasis on permitting reform to accelerate project delivery.
- [!\[\]\(fcb77b2d9531d23794a07d244b7a89bc_img.jpg\) **AASHTO – Presidential Agenda for 2025 - 2026:**](#) AASHTO released its 2025–2026 presidential agenda under Russell McMurry (GDOT), prioritizing surface transportation reauthorization, project delivery, and safety. Framed as going “back to basics,” the agenda calls for rebalancing programs toward formula funding to states, expanding state flexibility through tools such as NEPA assignment, streamlining Buy America implementation, and leveraging technology and innovation to reverse persistent roadway fatality trends.



What's Making Headlines? A number of transportation issues on the Hill are drawing attention this week outside of reauthorization.

- [!\[\]\(444b1eae2189e5cd8d096594c07a0a6e_img.jpg\) **World Cup Transportation Funding:**](#) With less than a year until the 2026 FIFA World Cup, US host regions and cities are ramping up efforts to ensure their transportation systems can handle a major surge in visitors. Despite repeated requests from World Cup organizers for



dedicated federal transportation support, Congress has not advanced new appropriations, leaving host areas largely dependent on existing resources. Bipartisan legislation has been introduced in both chambers, including the “Transportation Assistance for Olympic and World Cup Cities Act of 2025” ([S.1218](#)) introduced by Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) and [a House bill introduced](#) by T&I Ranking Member Larsen (D-WA) and Rep. Owens (R-UT). Both bills would authorize **\$50 million** in funding each fiscal year, but remain stalled with no funding attached (read AMPO’s analysis [here](#)).

- [🔗 House Passes Plan to Fast-Track Infrastructure Projects](#): The House passed the SPEED Act on December 18 by a 221–196 vote, sending the measure to the Senate. The bill would fast-track federal approvals and litigation timelines for certain energy and infrastructure projects by narrowing reviews under NEPA. The legislation is expected to face significant resistance from Senate Democrats.
- [🔗 T&I Leaders Mark the Passing of Rep. Doug LaMalfa](#): T&I Committee Chairman Sam Graves and Ranking Member Rick Larsen issued bipartisan statements honoring the life and service of Doug LaMalfa following his passing.
- [🔗 Senate EPW Hearing on Permitting](#): The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works will hold a hearing on January 28 at 10:00 AM ET to examine proposals aimed at improving the federal environmental review and permitting process.



Administration & Agencies




USDOT

- [🔗 USDOT Announces \\$33M in University Grants for Innovation](#): USDOT announced \$33 million in funding for University Transportation Centers (UTC) to help advance transportation science and innovation (view the NOFO [here](#)). This follows the administration’s [May cancellation](#) of seven university grants totaling \$54 million for funding.
 - [🔗 USDOT’s Cancellation of UTC Grants](#): A federal court filing reveals how the administration moved to cancel more than \$50 million in UTC grants deemed inconsistent with its priorities on climate and diversity initiatives. The affected projects addressed issues such as transit safety, mental health response, autonomous vehicles, and infrastructure resilience. While USDOT argues the cuts reflect lawful stewardship of taxpayer dollars, universities contend their work was mischaracterized and aligned with stated safety goals. Some grants have been temporarily reinstated through litigation, but appeals continue, leaving several research centers in limbo.
- [🔗 California Sues USDOT Over \\$33 million Grant Cut](#): California has filed suit against USDOT after the FMCSA rescinded more than \$33 million in Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) funding. USDOT cited the state’s alleged failure to enforce federal English-language proficiency requirements for commercial drivers. The lawsuit seeks to prevent FMCSA from re-obligating the funds to other states.
- [🔗 California Drops Their High-Speed Rail Lawsuit with USDOT](#): California has withdrawn its legal challenge to the federal government’s decision to terminate \$4 billion in grants for the state’s high-speed rail project, effectively abandoning efforts to restore federal funding.

-  [USDOT Announces \\$118 million for CDL Compliance](#): USDOT announced \$118 million in grant awards through the FMCSA to help states comply with federal regulations and ensure the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) issuance process is secure.


USDOT Enforcement Actions on CDL Compliance



USDOT is significantly escalating enforcement of federal commercial driver's license (CDL) requirements, signaling that states that fail to correct identified violations risk losing substantial federal transportation funding. Recent actions involving California, Colorado, and North Carolina suggest this approach could have broader implications for federal transportation funding.

-  [California: USDOT Withholds \\$160M](#): Secretary Duffy announced that FMCSA **will withhold \$160 million in federal transportation funding** after determining the state failed to revoke more than 17,000 improperly issued non-domiciled CDLs by a January 5, 2026, deadline. FMCSA issued a Final Determination citing unmet corrective action requirements and **will begin withholding funds in FY 2027 from both the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) and the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program**. The penalty equals roughly 4 percent of California's allocation under each program, increasing to 8 percent if compliance is not achieved. California's DMV has disputed the finding, stating it remains compliant with FMCSA standards and had been engaged with USDOT on a possible deadline extension.
 - **Important Note:** *The STBG program includes both state-controlled and suballocated funds. While USDOT has not clarified how penalties will be applied within each program, these actions raise concerns that locally controlled transportation funding could be affected, even though local governments and MPOs have no authority over state CDL licensing practices. AMPO will continue monitoring these enforcement actions and seek clarity on how suballocated funds may be treated.*
-  [Colorado](#): USDOT has warned Colorado that it could withhold **\$24 million** in federal highway funding **and potentially decertify the state's CDL program** following an FMCSA audit that found roughly 22 percent of non-domiciled CDLs were issued unlawfully. FMCSA cited delays in completing a full audit and revoking improper licenses as grounds for potential enforcement action.
-  [North Carolina](#): FMCSA has similarly flagged North Carolina after a review found that more than half of the state's non-domiciled CDLs were issued in violation of federal requirements. USDOT has warned that nearly \$50 million in federal transportation funding could be withheld if the state does not take timely corrective action. The finding is part of a broader federal review of state CDL programs initiated by USDOT earlier this year.





National News

-  [South Carolina Seeks Major Increase in Road Funding as Costs Rise](#): South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster has asked state legislators to allocate an additional \$1.1 billion for road projects to address construction cost inflation. The request nearly matches what the state has spent on roads and bridges over the past four years combined. Rising construction costs are a growing concern nationwide, as documented in recent research by [Eno Transportation](#).


-  [**Eno's "Planning in the Age of Uncertainty"**](#): A new white paper from the Eno examines how transportation agencies can adapt planning practices amid technological change, climate impacts, shifting travel behavior, and fiscal uncertainty by using Decision Making Under Deep Uncertainty. A case study from Sacramento Area Council of Governments shows how these methods improved confidence in long-range plans and reduced the risk of over- or under-investment.
-  [**Protected Bike Lanes Linked to Higher Micromobility Use and Fewer Crashes**](#): A new study from the League of American Bicyclists found substantial increases in shared bike and scooter use following the installation of protected bike lanes. Baltimore saw a 207 percent increase in trips along corridors with new bike lanes, while Nashville and Phoenix recorded increases of 39 percent and 35 percent, respectively. All three cities also experienced at least a 19 percent reduction in safety incidents on routes with protected facilities.
-  [**Congestion Pricing Cuts NYC Traffic**](#): One year after congestion pricing took effect, Manhattan is seeing an estimated 73,000 fewer vehicles per day entering the central business district, equivalent to roughly 27 million fewer car trips annually. Since January 5, 2025, drivers have been charged \$9 during peak periods to enter Manhattan.
-  [**Strengthening Land-Use Policies through Community Planning**](#): The Urban Institute released new research highlighting how traditional land-use planning processes often sideline community voices, particularly in communities shaped by historic exclusionary policies. The Institute's Community Planning Academy Project supports local governments and community partners through research, technical assistance, and a national community of practice to strengthen more inclusive and locally driven land-use decision-making.
-  [**UCLA Study Metro Transit Ambassador**](#): A [**study**](#) by UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies found that Los Angeles Metro's Transit Ambassador Program has improved passenger experiences and filled safety and customer service roles not fully addressed by traditional enforcement approaches.
-  [**Oregon Governor Calls for Repeal of Newly Enacted Transportation Law**](#): Oregon Governor Tina Kotek is urging lawmakers to repeal [**House Bill 3991**](#), a transportation funding package passed after months of negotiation, following a successful effort to block its tax increases. Facing a \$242 million funding shortfall at the Oregon DOT, the Governor has proposed a "redirect, repeal, and rebuild" approach that would free existing funds for maintenance, avoid a November tax vote, and return to the legislature in 2027 with a broader funding proposal. The plan has support from labor groups but has drawn criticism from trucking associations and Republican lawmakers.

Notice of Funding Opportunities

-  [**Tribal Transportation Program Safety Fund \(TTPSF\)**](#): TTPSF emphasizes the development of strategic transportation safety plans using a data-driven process as a means for Tribes to identify transportation safety needs and determine how those needs will be addressed in Tribal communities.
 - **Deadline:** January 15, 2026
 - **Note:** Multi-jurisdictional groups are eligible.
-  [**Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program – National:**](#) Provides funding for capital projects that reduce the state of good repair backlog, improve



performance, or expand or establish new intercity passenger rail service, including privately operated intercity passenger rail service, if an eligible applicant is involved.

- **Deadline:** February 6, 2026
-  **Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program:** The goal of the program is to fund projects that will have a significant local or regional impact and improve transportation infrastructure (see analysis in the “Feature Focus” section).
 - **Deadline:** February 24, 2026

 Access **AMPO’s NOFO Tracker** [here](#).

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