# The National Beat

July 24, 2026

## In This Issue

AMPO

# Feature Focus

*IIJA Implementation Guidance for STBG, Appropriations and Advance Appropriations Update, and USDOT's Surface Transportation Reauthorization Recommendations*

## Implementation Guidance for STBG - IIJA

On June 11, FHWA issued **updated implementation guidance** for the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG), replacing its **June 2022 guidance**. The memo provides updated information on program funding, eligible activities, federal share, transferability, suballocation requirements, and other STBG rules under the IIJA.

The guidance confirms that STBG funds remain available for obligation for the fiscal year in which they are authorized plus three additional fiscal years. It also explains that, after the Transportation Alternatives set-aside, 55 percent of each state's STBG apportionment is suballocated among four population-based categories for fiscal years 2022 through 2026. The remainder may be used anywhere in the state.

> ***The TL;DR:*** *FHWA's updated STBG guidance raises questions about **whether funds suballocated to urbanized areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000 may be used throughout the full Metropolitan Planning Area or only within the Census-defined Urbanized Area**. AMPO supports allowing MPOs to use these funds across the MPA, consistent with their planning responsibilities under 23 U.S.C. 134 and 23 CFR Part 450, and is actively working with FHWA to clarify the issue.*

### Geographic Eligibility Questions for MPOs

The guidance has raised questions about where certain population-based STBG suballocations may be obligated. The program-code table on page 4 identifies separate funding categories for urbanized areas over 200,000 and urbanized areas between 50,000 and 200,000.

Section E.2 of the guidance treats the two urbanized-area funding categories differently.

**For TMAs (urbanized areas over 200,000)**

- The guidance states that the funds may be obligated in the MPA established under 23 U.S.C. 134 that encompasses the UZA.
- These areas are generally designated as TMAs, but the statutory funding category itself is based on UZA population.

**For areas between 50,000 and 200,000**

- The state must consult with the MPOs representing those areas before obligating the funds.
- The state must describe how the funds will be allocated equitably among the applicable urbanized areas.

**The key distinction is that the guidance does not include the same express MPA-wide spending authority for the 50,000-to-200,000 category.** Paragraph (a) expressly allows funds for UZAs over 200,000 to be obligated in the broader metropolitan area, while paragraph (b) contains no comparable language for areas between 50,000 and 200,000 (**page 12**).

That omission raises an important question: Are funds attributed to the 50,000-to-200,000 category limited to the UZA itself, or may FHWA provide additional flexibility for projects located elsewhere within the MPO's MPA?

## Why This Matters

An MPO's MPA is generally broader than the Census-defined UZA. Under 23 CFR 450.312, the MPA must include:

- The full existing UZA
- The contiguous area expected to become urbanized during the 20-year planning horizon
- Any additional territory included through agreement between the MPO and governor

Federal metropolitan planning requirements are built around that full MPA. For example:

- Under 23 CFR 450.326, the MPO develops the TIP for the MPA
- The MTP is also developed for the MPA
- Federal law frames the MTP and TIP as tools for supporting an integrated transportation system across the broader planning area.

The STBG guidance separately states that projects must:

- Be included in the applicable TIP and STIP
- Be consistent with the MTP and State Long-Range Transportation Plan

However, inclusion in the MTP and TIP may not, by itself, establish that every population-based STBG suballocation can be used at that project location.

In practice, this could leave an MPO responsible for planning and programming investments throughout its full MPA while facing a separate restriction on whether funds attributed to a UZA with a population between 50,000 and 200,000 may be obligated outside that UZA.

Similar questions may also arise under the **Carbon Reduction Program**, which uses comparable population-based geographic categories.

## Funding Category Changes After Obligation

The updated guidance also more clearly cautions against changing federal funding categories after a project has been obligated. FHWA states that project **agreements should not be modified to replace one federal fund category with another unless specifically authorized by statute**, citing 23 CFR 630.110(a).

If a project is obligated under the wrong STBG program code or later found to fall outside the applicable geographic category, the state may not be able to easily substitute a different source of federal funds after authorization. The underlying regulation is not new, but the 2026 guidance gives the restriction greater attention. That added emphasis is relevant to the current questions around MPA and UZA eligibility, since a disagreement identified after obligation could be more difficult to correct.

## AMPO Position

AMPO supports providing MPOs with flexibility to use suballocated funds throughout the full MPA. The MPA reflects the communities, local governments, transportation systems, and growth areas for which an MPO is federally responsible for planning and programming. Providing flexibility throughout the MPA would better align federal funding eligibility with the regional planning responsibilities assigned to MPOs under 23 U.S.C. 134 and 23 CFR Part 450.

> *Note: This issue does not apply to Metropolitan Planning, or PL, funds. PL funds support eligible planning activities throughout the MPO's full MPA. The question here concerns whether certain population-based STBG and CRP project funds may be obligated outside the UZA.*

### AMPO Seeking Clarification

**Implementation may also depend, in part, on decisions made by individual FHWA Division Offices**. AMPO has heard from one small MPO that it was given until 2028 to change its current practice. We are seeking additional information on the basis for that deadline and whether similar direction is being provided elsewhere.

AMPO's immediate priority is to determine whether this issue can be addressed through clear, consistent FHWA guidance or existing administrative flexibility. If the underlying statute does not provide sufficient authority to allow MPOs serving areas between 50,000 and 200,000 to use these funds throughout their full MPA, AMPO will pursue a legislative change to address the gap and better align funding eligibility with MPO planning responsibilities.

### Member Action

Please reach out to Katie Economou, Legislative Director, if your MPO **receives guidance from an FHWA Division Office or state DOT regarding the use of suballocated funds outside the UZA**. Information from members will help AMPO understand how this issue is being interpreted and implemented across states as we continue working with FHWA toward consistent national clarification.

---

## 🔗 Appropriations and Advance Appropriations Update

### Background

The House approved a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the federal government through Dec. 4 and avert a government shutdown ahead of the Sept. 30 fiscal year deadline. While the House bill simply extends current funding levels, the Senate is weighing a modified version that would include additional White House funding requests, including several provisions affecting USDOT programs, setting up negotiations when Congress returns in September.

> ***TL;DR:*** *The House passed a stopgap funding bill to keep the government open through Dec. 4, but the Senate is considering changes that include several transportation funding provisions, setting up negotiations this fall. The House bill also does not extend IIJA advance appropriations, meaning many competitive transportation programs would still expire on Sept. 30 without a reauthorization or separate extension.*

### Context

On July 21, the House passed a CR to avoid a government shutdown ahead of the end of the federal fiscal year on Sept. 30. The measure was passed along partisan lines with a final vote of 220-205. **The House-passed legislation would fund the government until Dec. 4**, allowing House Republicans to avoid shutdown logistics during midterm elections, and bumping appropriation negotiations until this December. Democrats are not content with the legislation as it lacked significant Democrat input and, similar to the recent reconciliation bill earlier this summer, contains no guardrails on providing immigration enforcement with additional funding.

The legislation now advances to the Senate where Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) is already considering a different approach for the funding measure. Similar to the House, Senate Majority leadership plans on voting on a CR before the chamber leaves for August recess. While the House passed what is a considered a "clean" resolution as it only extends FY 2026 funding levels, the Senate is considering a CR with **additional funding exceptions at the request of the White House**. These include additional funding for military, national security, and operational requests, as well as specific USDOT funding changes:

- Extend disbursement authority for CIG supported projects until FY2031, ensuring FTA CIG projects can continue after Sept. 30, 2026.
- Provide NHTSA with an additional $79 million to maintain current operations and support staff that would otherwise likely be furloughed under remaining IIJA balances.
- **Update the transfer authority to allow USDOT to continue using unobligated FY 2022 to 2026 NEVI program funds available as of Sept. 30, 2026, to fund Highway Infrastructure Program accounts during a CR.**

Currently, Senate Republicans are considering some of these exceptions as they develop their funding measure. This could prove to be a contentious disagreement between both chambers of Congress as the House currently is set on passing a "clean" funding measure that does not include the White House exceptions currently being considered by the Senate. With the House now on leave for August recess, both chambers will target September to pass a funding resolution. This, in addition to interest in a passing another Reconciliation package, will consume most political bandwidth during September.

**Reconciliation Update:**
The House approved the $95 billion reconciliation package framework on July 22. This measure now heads to the Senate where Senate Leadership is holding off on voting on the framework until they can fund the government until December through a continuing resolution.

| Continuing Resolution v. Extension: What is the Difference? | |
|---|---|
| **Continuing Resolution (CR):**<br>A CR is a temporary funding bill that continues federal agency operations at current fiscal year funding levels. These are temporary and happen when Congress does not pass their annual appropriation packages. | **Extension:**<br>An extension is a specific legislative action that renews the statutory authorization or advance appropriation for an individual program set to expire. An extension is what's needed for Division J advance appropriation funded programs, since a CR only continues funding provided through annual appropriations acts and does not cover them. |

## Reauthorization and Continuing Resolutions

Regarding reauthorization or the expiration of some of the IIJA funded competitive programs, the CR would not include an extension for programs funded under Division J of the IIJA, or those funded through advance appropriations. While cited within the CR, the inclusion of Division J within the legislative text was a relevant procedural inclusion, and the specific public law that was referenced would not include the funding provided to Division J specific programs. As a result, if the current CR is adopted by the Senate, Division J advance appropriation program would not continue following Sept. 30 without either Congress passing a surface transportation reauthorization or an additional extension being approved.

As a result, on July 21, AMPO and transportation industry stakeholders signed onto a letter led by the America Road and Transportation Builders Association calling on Congress to avoid a lapse in government funding this September, to continue advance appropriations given there is a CR, and to complete a surface transportation reauthorization to help create multi-year funding certainty for federal transportation investments. Specifically, the letter calls for the House to consider passing the BUILD America 250 Act prior to the Sept. 30 expiration of the IIJA.

➡️ See the letter here.

---

## 🔗 USDOT Reauthorization Priorities

### Background

On July 22, Secretary Duffy released USDOT's surface transportation reauthorization priorities. Encompassing recommendations for highways, bridges, transit, safety, and freight, USDOT's recommendations urged Congress to pass a surface bill prior to the Sept. 30 expiration of the IIJA. The letter also recommended that given a short-term extension is needed, Congress should make additional considerations on which programs will be continued and which should not be funded.

> ***TL;DR:*** *USDOT released its priorities for the next surface transportation bill, calling on Congress to pass a reauthorization before the IIJA expires while proposing major policy changes that emphasize highway capacity, transit safety, autonomous vehicles, and consolidation of competitive grant programs. For MPOs, the recommendations signal a continued shift away from Complete Streets and emissions-focused policies, though proposed changes like a formula-based SS4A program and streamlined discretionary grants could create new opportunities.*

### Context

USDOT released recommendations for the next surface transportation reauthorization. Besides urging Congress to pass a surface bill before the IIJA expires on Sept. 30, USDOT proposed policy specific changes they would like to see in the next reauthorization. At a high level, the following were top priorities:

- Transit safety and security
- Establishing standards and modernizing regulations for autonomous vehicles (AVs)
- Passing the Railway Safety Act
- Completing and expanding the interstate system in addition to mitigating freight congestion
- Dissolving the Mass Transit Account to ensure the Highway Trust Fund's solvency

In addition to these top priorities, USDOT included recommendations that would impact each transportation mode and many of the competitive grant programs administered by USDOT. Many of the recommendations are consistent with either previous USDOT priorities or actions, as well as changes in priorities among Members of Congress. Specifically, USDOT prioritized **automobile infrastructure over pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure that reduces roadway capacity;** greater commercial motor vehicle (CMV) enforcement and safety standards through both the passage of Dalilah's Law and FMCSA enforcement practices; and the general consolidation of competitive grant programs.

USDOT included specific policy recommendations that build upon the above priorities:

- **Transit Safety and Security:** Would give FTA the authority to **withhold up to 100 percent of federal formula funds** for agencies that do not demonstrate progress in reducing crime and fare evasion. They also recommend the creation of a new set-aside to address safety and crime prevention projects.
- **AV Innovation:** Loosens exemption caps and safety rules to enhance deployment, requires NHTSA to set minimum automated driving system (ADS) safety standards, mandates safety management systems for testing/operating/manufacturers, standardizes incident reporting, creates data sharing among states, localities, and the public, and helps creates pathways for faster deployment with new federal safety and transparency guardrails.
- **Consumer Choice:** Bars any government from requiring ADS equipment or wireless data transmission in vehicles.
- **Infrastructure:** Creates competitive grants for interchange bottlenecks (50% reserved for nationally significant sites); competitive grants to finish Interstate gaps and widen highways to 3 lanes/direction; and competitive grants for ITS, AI applications, and vehicle-to-everything tech.
- **Highway Trust Fund:** Eliminate the Mass Transit Account and consolidate fuel tax revenue into the Highway Account for a direct user-pay model.
    - *Note:* In November 2025, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen on the House T&I Committee **publicly opposed** eliminating the Mass Transit Account, underscoring a bipartisan preference to maintain the longstanding structure of the HTF.

## Competitive Grant Recommendations

USDOT also included specific recommendations for competitive grant programs and programs funded under the IIJA. In general, the recommendations support the consolidation of duplicative grant programs to either streamline project delivery and improve administrative workload, and to better align programs with current USDOT priorities:

- **BRIDGE Program:** Consolidates the Bridge Investment Program (BIP) and Competitive Highway Bridge Program to enhance project delivery.
- **Intercity Passenger Rail (IPR) Investment Program:** Merge four FRA rail grant programs (FSP, CID, R&E, IRC) into one competitive IPR program to enhance competitive in rail project development.
- **Bus Grants:** Combines the Bus and Bus Facilities and Low/No Emission bus grants into one program, dropping the low/zero-emission set-aside.

- **Ferry Programs:** Merges the Passenger Ferry Program, Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Program, and the Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program into a single FTA ferry program, dropping the low/zero-emission set-aside.
- **The Building Beautiful Infrastructure is Great (BBIG) Program:** Combines the Rural Surface Transportation Program, INFRA, and Mega grant programs into one BBIG program for large-scale projects, shifting large rail or port projects from the CRISI and PIDP programs and into BBIG.
- **America's Beautiful Community Transportation Projects (ABC) Program:** Combines Reconnecting Communities, small Rural Surface Transportation Projects, small INFRA projects, and BUILD into one ABC program for smaller-scale projects.
- **Hazmat Training Grants:** Merges three PHMSA non-profit training grants into one, funding Community Safety activities through the Hazmat Emergency Preparedness Fund instead of a set-aside.

The recommendations for IIJA funded projects fall into two categories: IIJA programs to not extend and IIJA programs to modify:

**Not Extend:**

- **Prioritization Process Pilot Program:** Program funding of $10 million annually would not be extended and instead achieved through alternative programs.
- **Complete Streets Set-Aside:** The current 2.5% set-aside of PL funding for Complete Streets planning or active transportation activities may be opted out of if Complete Street policies are adopted.
- **Programs to not extend or to repeal:**
    - EV Charging and Fueling Infrastructure programs
    - Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)
    - Healthy Streets Program
    - Reconnecting Communities
    - Invasive Plant Elimination Program
    - Pollinator-Friendly Practices on Roadsides and Highway Rights-of-Way
    - Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)
    - National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program
    - SMART Program
    - Electric Vehicle Working Group

**Modify:**

- **Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities:** The scope of the program would change to remove references to port electrification.
- **Congestion Relief Program:** Program goals would remove references to "optimizing transit systems" and remove eligible projects that include cordon pricing as well as transit commuter buses. The program would also be renamed to the "Highway Congestion Relief Program."
- **Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A):** The program would change from a competitive grant program to a formula grant program to improve implementation and ease administrative burden.

### What this means for MPOs

Of most concern to MPOs is the administration's **shift away from roadway safety strategies typically associated with Complete Streets planning**, notably road diets and dedicated pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure that comes at the cost of reduced roadway capacity. USDOT and Congress have already signaled a move away from these projects, but formal USDOT recommendations carry weight: they could shape the negotiations of key Senate Committee members working on surface transportation reauthorization or influence later House-Senate negotiations. The consolidation of competitive programs, the proposed repeal of formula programs like CRP, and the broader pivot away from emissions-reduction goals could also have implications on an MPOs' LRTP strategies and goals.

That said, some recommendations could benefit MPOs. Many IIJA programs would continue, whether through extensions, modifications, or new consolidated programs, and the proposed consolidation of discretionary programs could preserve existing eligibility, meaning MPOs could still qualify under the new programs. SS4A's shift to a formula program could be beneficial, since MPOs are eligible recipients under the existing program's eligibilities. This resembles a priority from the LOT Coalition's BASICS Act, which proposed making SS4A an HSIP-suballocated funding pool for localities. Though the recommendation did not include specific program details, a formula-based approach could streamline project delivery to local governments.

---

# Federal Roundup

***Congress:** Reauthorization and Legislative Activity*
***Administration:** USDOT & FTA*

---

## Congress

### Congressional "Vibe" Check

**Reauthorization.** Reauthorization activity continues to accelerate as committees refine draft language that shapes the next surface transportation bill.

**Where things stand:**

- **House T&I. The BUILD America 250 Act was passed out of committee on May 21 with a 62-2** vote following a nearly 15-hour markup that considered nearly 300 amendments. The **bill authorizes approximately $580 billion**, with 90% available through formula funding, a significant shift from the IIJA's heavier reliance on competitive grants.
    - Currently, the legislation is awaiting consideration by the House Ways & Means Committee, and a markup has yet to be set. House T&I Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) announced that full House consideration of **the bill will likely have to wait until after August recess** once Members of Congress return in September, of which he said that an extension is probable.
- **Senate.** Among Senate committees, EPW is furthest along. Chair Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) indicated that top line funding levels have yet to be decided and that the Senate

Commerce Committee has yet to release legislative text. Sen. Capito said that if there were an extension, the committee would target a December 2026 deadline. She did not express interest in a full-year extension.

- Sen. Capito did express interest in completing negotiations prior to the August recess and then holding a markup once Congress returns.

***A general note on timing:*** Given the remaining FY 2026 work, midterm elections on the horizon, and the long history of surface transportation bills missing deadlines, **an extension appears to be very likely**. 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 the bill is significantly harder via amendment.

---

**The Buzz on Reauthorization**

- 🔗 **House Budget Resolution Creates New Hurdle for Surface Transportation Reauthorization:** House leaders are advancing another budget reconciliation package ahead of the fall elections, but the accompanying FY2027 budget resolution does not include provisions to support a surface transportation reauthorization bill. Unlike the traditional budget process, which used budget resolutions to establish fiscal priorities and guide committee action, reconciliation has increasingly become a vehicle for advancing specific legislation while avoiding a Senate filibuster. The draft resolution provides new reconciliation instructions for defense, agriculture, and election-related spending but does not include a reserve fund or budget adjustment mechanism for a surface transportation bill. As a result, the resolution could create an additional procedural hurdle for the BUILD America 250 Act, which would require increased Highway Trust Fund contract authority beyond current law levels. While Congress could ultimately waive or overcome these restrictions, the absence of a transportation provision raises questions about House leadership's commitment to advancing a reauthorization bill this year.

---

## Introduced Legislation Related to Reauthorization

Whether you want to see what marker bills could be included in the next surface transportation reauthorization or are curious about what Congress is working on, AMPO is tracking all relevant legislation that has been introduced since December 2025. Please refer to our legislation tracker to see what bills have been introduced, who introduced them, and what they would do.

➡️ **119th Weekly Congress Legislation Tracker**

**Legislative Spotlight:** Sen. John Curtis (R-UT) and Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ) introduced the **Promoting Access to Transit in High-Growth Communities (PATH) Act.** The bipartisan PATH Act would update the FTA's Capital Investment Grants (CIG) evaluation process by allowing future population growth, transit-oriented development, and projected ridership, not just current density and ridership, to be considered when awarding transit funding. Supporters argue the bill would give rapidly growing communities a fairer opportunity to compete for federal transit investments by better aligning funding decisions with future transportation needs.

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

- 🔗 **Congressional Budget Office (CBO) Releases Highway Trust Fund Analysis of BA250:** CBO estimates that the **BUILD America 250 Act would require roughly $150 billion in additional Highway Trust Fund deposits** to maintain solvency through FY2031, even with new electric vehicle and plug-in hybrid registration fees included. The shortfall reflects both the Trust Fund's existing imbalance and the bill's increased transportation spending, with CBO projecting the Highway Trust Fund would end the reauthorization period nearly $144 billion in the red without additional revenue or transfers.
- 🔗 **House Passes $1.15 trillion Defense Bill:** The House narrowly passed the FY2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) by a 216-212 vote, **authorizing nearly $1.15 trillion for defense priorities** including military pay raises, weapons procurement, housing, and a missile defense initiative. The bill now heads to the Senate, attached to the **SAVE America Act**, where it is expected to face significant debate after Senate Democrats previously blocked their version of the legislation.

## Administration & Agencies

### USDOT

- 🔗 **USDOT Removes Certain Proven Safety Measure Guidance from Website:** The article reports that **FHWA removed protected bike lanes, road diets, and speed cameras from its list of "Proven Safety Countermeasures,"** reflecting USDOT's shift away from these measures despite longstanding federal evidence supporting their effectiveness. Transportation advocates argue the change is driven by politics rather than new safety data, warning it could discourage communities from implementing infrastructure and enforcement strategies that have been shown to reduce crashes and traffic fatalities.
- 🔗 **USDOT to Investigate CDL Non-Compliance Among Training Schools:** USDOT and the Department of Homeland Security have launched a joint investigation into 75 commercial driver training schools suspected of fraudulent practices, including falsifying training records and improperly certifying commercial driver's license (CDL) applicants. The partnership expands USDOT's enforcement efforts aimed at improving commercial vehicle safety by targeting CDL fraud, unqualified training providers, and the issuance of non-domiciled CDLs.
- 🔗 **FMCSA Outlines New Unified Agenda:** FMCSA's 2026 Unified Agenda outlines an ambitious regulatory agenda, including initiatives on commercial driver's license security, autonomous truck regulations, English-language proficiency enforcement, and broker transparency, though experts caution that many of the proposals will be difficult to complete

on the agency's proposed timeline. The agenda signals USDOTs continued focus on commercial vehicle safety and enforcement, with priorities aimed at reducing fraud, strengthening oversight, and modernizing regulations for emerging technologies.

- 🔗 **Review of USDOT Deregulatory Actions:** The article finds that the current administration has pursued an unprecedented pace of transportation deregulation, with a majority of USDOT rulemaking actions focused on rescinding, streamlining, or withdrawing existing regulations across nearly every operating administration. While many actions remove outdated or administrative requirements, the report highlights significant policy changes affecting vehicle safety, environmental review, labor protections, commercial trucking, transit oversight, and energy infrastructure, reflecting the administration's broader goal of reducing federal regulatory burdens.
- 🔗 **USDOT to Hold Webinar on Addressing Asset Condition Performance through Planning Processes:** **The webinar will highlight research on how State DOTs and MPOs prioritize National Highway System pavement and bridge condition when developing STIPs and TIPs, including how asset management plans inform investment decisions to maintain a state of good repair.** It will also examine funding strategies, project prioritization, stakeholder engagement, and coordination practices that agencies use to meet bridge and pavement condition targets.

## FTA

- 🔗 **FTA Releases "Transit Moves America" Dashboard:** The FTA has launched **Transit Moves America**, a new online dashboard that makes National Transit Database information more accessible by providing regularly updated data on transit safety, security, accessibility, reliability, and operating costs. The tool supports greater transparency with monthly safety and security updates, annual accessibility and efficiency data, agency-level and national metrics, and complements FTA's ongoing effort to develop new transit performance measures through a recent Request for Information.

---

## National News

- 🔗 **Roadway Fatalities Remain at Heightened Levels:** Despite a slight nationwide decline in pedestrian deaths, Smart Growth America's 2026 *Dangerous by Design* report finds fatalities remain near 40-year highs, with pedestrian deaths up 72% since 2009, largely due to unsafe street design, larger vehicles, and insufficient investment in safety improvements. The report highlights communities such as Los Angeles and Memphis where traffic deaths continue to rise despite Vision Zero commitments, while pointing to cities like Orlando and El Paso as evidence that sustained investments in Complete Streets, safer road design, and targeted safety programs can reduce fatalities.

- 🔗 **Amtrak Releases Five-Year Financial Plan:** Amtrak's updated five-year financial plan assumes Congress will maintain current annual appropriations of roughly $2.43 billion through 2031, rejecting the White House's proposed funding cuts while projecting that the railroad will significantly reduce its operating deficit. However, the plan relies on ambitious revenue and ridership forecasts, particularly a doubling of Acela ridership by 2028, that current performance trends suggest may be difficult to achieve.
- 🔗 **Eno Center Releases Report on Autonomous Vehicles (AVs):** The Eno Center for Transportation's report, "Shared Roadways, Platforms, and Benefits: Integrating Autonomous Travel Choices," examines how autonomous vehicles (AVs) are likely to be integrated into transportation systems and argues that robotaxis, personal AVs, and human-driven vehicles will coexist rather than immediately replace one another. The report finds that AV deployment will be shaped by market conditions, costs, technology, consumer preferences, and policy decisions, and recommends that cities establish strong partnerships with AV operators, require data sharing and responsible roadway behavior, address accessibility and equity concerns, and ensure AV networks complement existing transportation options rather than undermine them.
- 🔗 **The Brookings Institute Examines Sweden's Integration of Housing and Transportation for US Comparison:** This Brookings report examines Sweden's National Negotiation on Housing and Infrastructure, highlighting how the country ties national transportation funding to local housing production targets through a co-financing model that rewards communities for meeting measurable housing goals. It suggests the US could adapt this outcome-based approach by linking large-scale transportation investments to housing production, reducing administrative burdens, and encouraging coordinated land use and infrastructure planning.
- 🔗 **Property Tax is on the Ballot this November:** Voters in 13 states will decide 26 tax-related ballot measures this November, with many proposals focused on reducing property taxes that supporters argue will ease homeowners' financial burdens but opponents warn could significantly reduce local government funding for infrastructure and public services. The article highlights the growing debate between tax relief and maintaining local revenues, noting that voter support often declines when the potential impacts on schools, roads, public safety, and other services are made clear.

---

## $ Notice of Funding Opportunities

- 🔗 **Public Transportation on Indian Reservations (Tribal Transit) Competitive Program:** Provides funds for planning, public transportation capital projects, operating costs, job access reverse commute projects, and the acquisition of public transportation service to tribes located in rural areas (those with a population under 50,000).

    - **Deadline:** Aug. 25, 2026
- 🔗 **Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM) Pilot Program:** Provides competitive funding to support innovative projects for transportation disadvantaged populations that will improve the coordination of transportation services and non-emergency medical transportation services.
    - **Deadline:** Sept. 9, 2026

➡️ Access **AMPO's NOFO Tracker** here.

---

## Recent Editions

- **July 17** (2026)
- **July 10** (2026)
- **June 26** (2026)
- **June 18** (2026)
- **May 29** (2026)
- **May 15** (2026)
- **May 7** (2026)
- **May 1** (2026)

➡️ View all past editions of the **National Beat** Policy Newsletter here

Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) | 777 North Capitol Street N.E., Suite 404 Washington, D.C. 20002 | (202) 449-1993 *Contact: Ryan Coady, Legislative Associate, at rcoady@ampo.org*