

Priorities in Motion

POLICY ROADMAP IV



 **Sacramento 2026**

 **AMPO Annual Conference**

 **September 14–18, 2026**



WELCOME TO SACRAMENTO

Dear AMPO Members and Partners,

Welcome to Sacramento and the 2026 AMPO Annual Conference. Each year, this conference brings together people who understand something essential: transportation planning is about more than lines on a map. It is about helping people get to work, connecting families to schools and services, supporting local businesses, strengthening freight movement, and making communities safer.

This year, we gather at an especially important moment. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) expires on September 30, 2026, just sixteen days after we convene here. The decisions Congress makes in the weeks ahead will shape how communities across the country plan, fund, and build transportation infrastructure for years to come.

This is not a moment to simply watch. It is a moment to lead.

Over the past year, AMPO and its members have moved from building a policy platform to shaping real legislation. Through the Local Officials in Transportation (LOT) Coalition, we helped advance the bipartisan ***Bridges And Safety Infrastructure for Community Success Act (BASICS Act)***, bringing the priorities of local officials and regional planning organizations directly into the reauthorization conversation. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's ***Building Unrivaled Infrastructure and Long-term Development for America's 250th Act (BUILD America 250 Act)*** reflects meaningful progress on issues AMPO members and





local partners have elevated throughout the reauthorization cycle, including stronger support for metropolitan planning, improved local access to federal funding, and practical tools to streamline project delivery.

The process continues to evolve. The House and Senate are each working through their approaches, and Congress may need additional time beyond September 30 to reach final agreement. But the trajectory is clear: years of sustained engagement, coalition-building, and policy development are making a real difference in how reauthorization is taking shape.

As we gather in Sacramento, we also reflect on the broader transformation underway in what transportation planning means. Planning is no longer just about roads, bridges, and buses. There is increasing awareness that it is central to how communities improve access to essential destinations, strengthen regional competitiveness, enhance safety, and support long-term growth. MPOs are at the center of that conversation, helping regions plan not only for how people and goods move today, but for how communities will grow, connect, and thrive in the years ahead.

Thank you to our members for the leadership, expertise, and energy you bring to your communities every day. The work of MPOs is essential to keeping America moving forward. Together, we are building on the progress we have made, carrying member priorities forward, and helping shape a transportation system that works better for communities in every part of the country.

With deep appreciation,



Pragati Srivastava

President, Association
of Metropolitan Planning
Organizations

Administrator, Memphis MPO
(Memphis, TN)



Bill Keyrouze

Executive Director,
Association of Metropolitan
Planning Organizations



AMPO's Reauthorization Priorities

The Road Ahead Starts with a Clear Agenda

AMPO's reauthorization agenda reflects member input, regional examples, and Policy Committee direction. Policy Roadmap IV tracks how these priorities are advancing through Congress and where work remains.

AMPO's Bottom Line: The next surface transportation law should give MPOs the resources, authority, flexibility, and access to turn regional priorities into projects that improve mobility, safety, economic competitiveness, and quality of life — supporting the full path from planning through delivery.

AMPO's Four Reauthorization Priorities

1



Modernize Metropolitan Planning Funding

Increase Metropolitan Planning funds, eliminate the local match for federally required planning, expand eligible uses, and provide a voluntary direct-recipient option for MPOs.

2



Empower Regional Decision-Making

Clarify and strengthen MPO project-selection roles, improve state-MPO coordination, expand transparency, and ensure locally and regionally selected projects are respected through programming and delivery.

3



Right-size, Align, and Streamline Federal Programs

Lower local match requirements, clarify carryover policies for planning and capital funds, streamline permitting and review, and improve the balance between formula and discretionary funding.

4



Drive Safety Improvements Through Regional Action

Strengthen MPO eligibility and decision-making authority for safety programs, preserve locally driven safety planning, improve local and regional access to safety funding, and support a stronger regional role in bridge investment.



These priorities require a sustainable Highway Trust Fund and reliable federal investment to give regions long-term certainty.



Learn more in
AMPO's Policy
Roadmap III

From Member Priorities to Legislative Progress

A YEAR OF PROGRESS

Since **Providence in 2025**, AMPO and its members have helped move reauthorization from shared priorities to legislative action. Three years of member engagement, policy development, coalition-building, and federal outreach are now shaping the debate in Congress.

- Strengthened Our Priorities.** Building on member surveys, issue papers, and regional examples, AMPO refined a clear reauthorization platform reflecting the realities MPOs face. Many of these priorities are now represented in active legislative proposals.
- Kept Members Informed and Prepared.** Through the National Beat, webinars, briefings, toolkits, and legislative analysis, AMPO translated fast-moving policy developments into actionable guidance and helped members identify opportunities to engage.
- Advanced the BASICS Act.** Through the LOT Coalition, AMPO helped turn shared priorities into legislative action. The bipartisan BASICS Act, H.R. 7437, brought key local and regional priorities directly into the reauthorization process.
- Shaped the House Reauthorization Bill.** AMPO's engagement with the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee helped advance MPO priorities in the BUILD America 250 Act (H.R. 8870), including planning funding, local access, safety, bridges, and project delivery.
- Brought MPO Voices to Capitol Hill.** AMPO organized fly-ins, briefings, and meetings with congressional and White House leaders, giving MPOs opportunities to share regional priorities and real-world examples directly with policymakers.
- Expanded Federal Engagement.** AMPO strengthened relationships with USDOT, the White House, congressional committees, and other federal partners while tracking policy and administrative developments affecting MPOs.



The Road Ahead.

Each milestone reflects the strength of a collective voice and the value of sustained, coordinated engagement. As reauthorization moves forward, AMPO will continue working to strengthen the final bill, engage Congress, and support members through passage and implementation.

Where Reauthorization Stands

The Road to the Next Surface Transportation Bill



The next surface transportation bill is taking shape right now. The IIJA expires on September 30, 2026, just over two weeks after we gather in Sacramento. Congress has made important progress, but the path ahead is still unfolding.



In May 2026, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved the bipartisan BUILD America 250 Act by a vote of 62-2, advancing a five-year surface transportation reauthorization proposal. The bill represents a major step in the House process and includes multiple provisions that reflect priorities raised by AMPO members and the LOT Coalition.



The Senate process continues to develop across multiple committees including the Environment and Public Works Committee for highway programs; the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee for transit programs; the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee for rail, freight, and safety-related policy; and the Finance Committee for revenue and funding issues.



Because reauthorization is still moving, some details may change quickly. AMPO will continue tracking House and Senate action, extension scenarios, funding issues, and implementation questions through our National Beat Policy Newsletter.

What This Means for MPOs

The decisions made in the weeks and months ahead will define the federal transportation program for years to come. MPOs have an essential role to play, including sharing regional examples with their congressional delegations, demonstrating how strong planning supports better project outcomes, and staying engaged as the bill moves toward the finish line.



Stay Current on Reauthorization with AMPO's National Beat

One Agenda, Different Legislative Vehicles

How Local and Regional Priorities Move Through Reauthorization

The LOT Coalition, the BASICS Act, and the BUILD America 250 Act are connected, but they are not interchangeable. Each represents a different stage in moving member priorities toward law.



The LOT Coalition Built the Shared Agenda

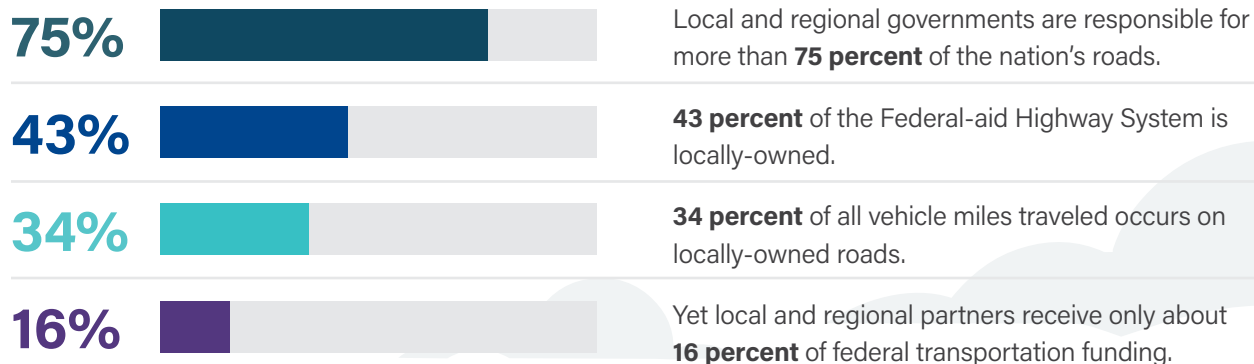
Transportation works best when local and regional partners help shape the investments serving their communities. That principle drives AMPO's partnership with the LOT Coalition.

The Coalition brings together the National League of Cities (NLC), National Association of Counties (NACo), National Association of Regional Councils

(NARC), National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), and AMPO around a shared agenda to strengthen planning, improve access to federal resources, streamline project delivery, advance safety, address bridge needs, and maximize every transportation dollar.

Why Local and Regional Voices Matter

Transportation is experienced locally and regionally, but it is nationally significant.



The LOT Coalition is working to close the gap.

The BASICS Act

Put the Agenda into Legislative Text

The Bridges And Safety Infrastructure for Community Success Act, or BASICS Act (H.R. 7437), is the LOT Coalition's bipartisan marker bill for reauthorization. It translates shared local and regional priorities into legislative language and provides a benchmark for the final surface transportation bill.

A marker bill puts policy ideas on the table to help shape a larger legislative package.

Introduced in the House on February 9, 2026, by Representatives Kristen McDonald Rivet and Rob Bresnahan, the bill has bipartisan support for reforms that strengthen local and regional transportation delivery.

The BASICS Act Would



Deliver Local and Regional Priority Projects

Help ensure suballocated federal funds reach locally and regionally selected projects, reinforce MPO, RTPO, and local government roles in project selection, and improve STBG consultation in small and rural areas.



Fix Bridges Based on Condition and Ownership

Continue bridge formula funding through a new Strengthening Bridges Formula Program, with 25 percent suballocated by population, helping more federal dollars reach locally owned bridges in need. It would also maintain a 100 percent federal share for eligible off-system bridges owned by local governments or Tribes.



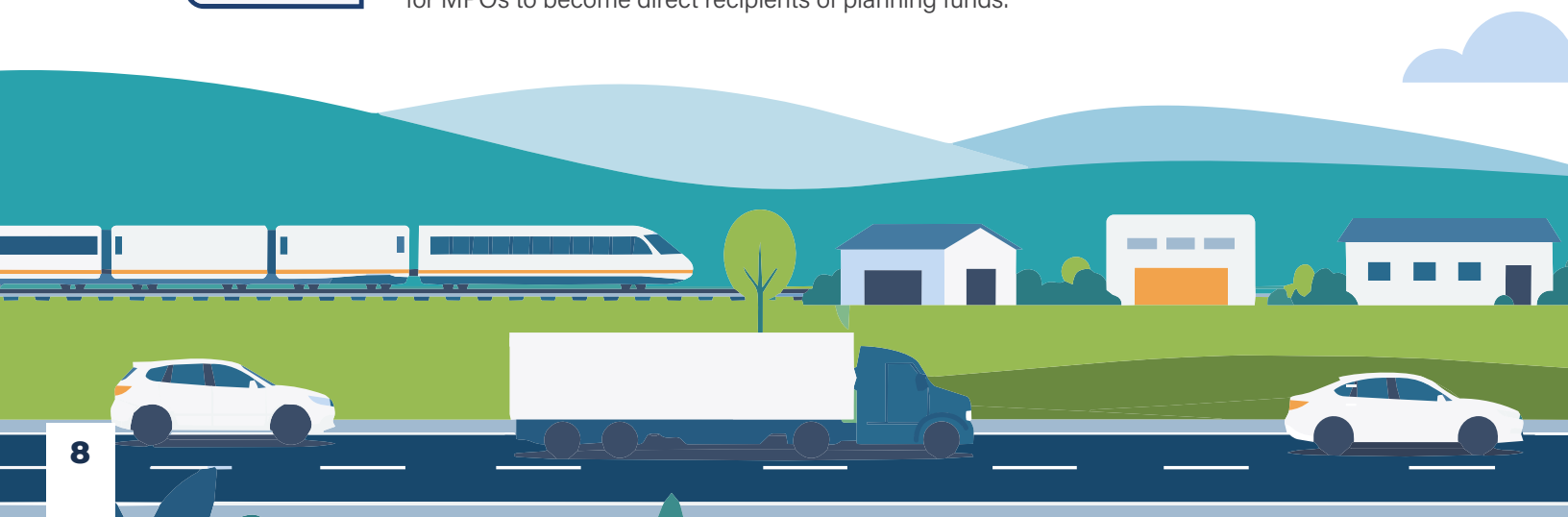
Target Safety Dollars to High-Risk Roads

Require 25 percent of HSIP funds to be suballocated by population and clarify that locally led safety projects are eligible, helping communities direct investments where they are most needed.



Modernize Metropolitan Planning

Increase Metropolitan Planning Funding to 2.5 percent of Federal-aid Highway Program funds, eliminate the local match, and expand eligible uses to reflect MPOs' project-delivery role. It would also create a voluntary pathway for MPOs to become direct recipients of planning funds.





Protect Local and Regional Dollars

Limit transfers out of suballocated programs, including STBG, HSIP, the Carbon Reduction Program, and the proposed Strengthening Bridges Formula Program. States would also have to make HSIP funds available through an open competitive process before transferring them elsewhere.



Improve Transparency and Collaboration

Reaffirm that suballocated funds should support locally and regionally selected projects and give MPOs access to USDOT's Fiscal Management Information System (FMIS) to better track federal investments.



Build Rural Planning Capacity

Create a dedicated rural and nonmetropolitan planning program to help RTPOs and other regional entities build capacity, strengthen partnerships, and advance priority projects.

Why the BASICS Act Matters

Transportation works as a network. Strengthening local and regional access makes the federal-state partnership more effective by giving every level of government the resources, flexibility, and coordination needed to deliver. The BASICS Act offers a path toward a federal transportation program that better reflects how America's transportation system actually works.



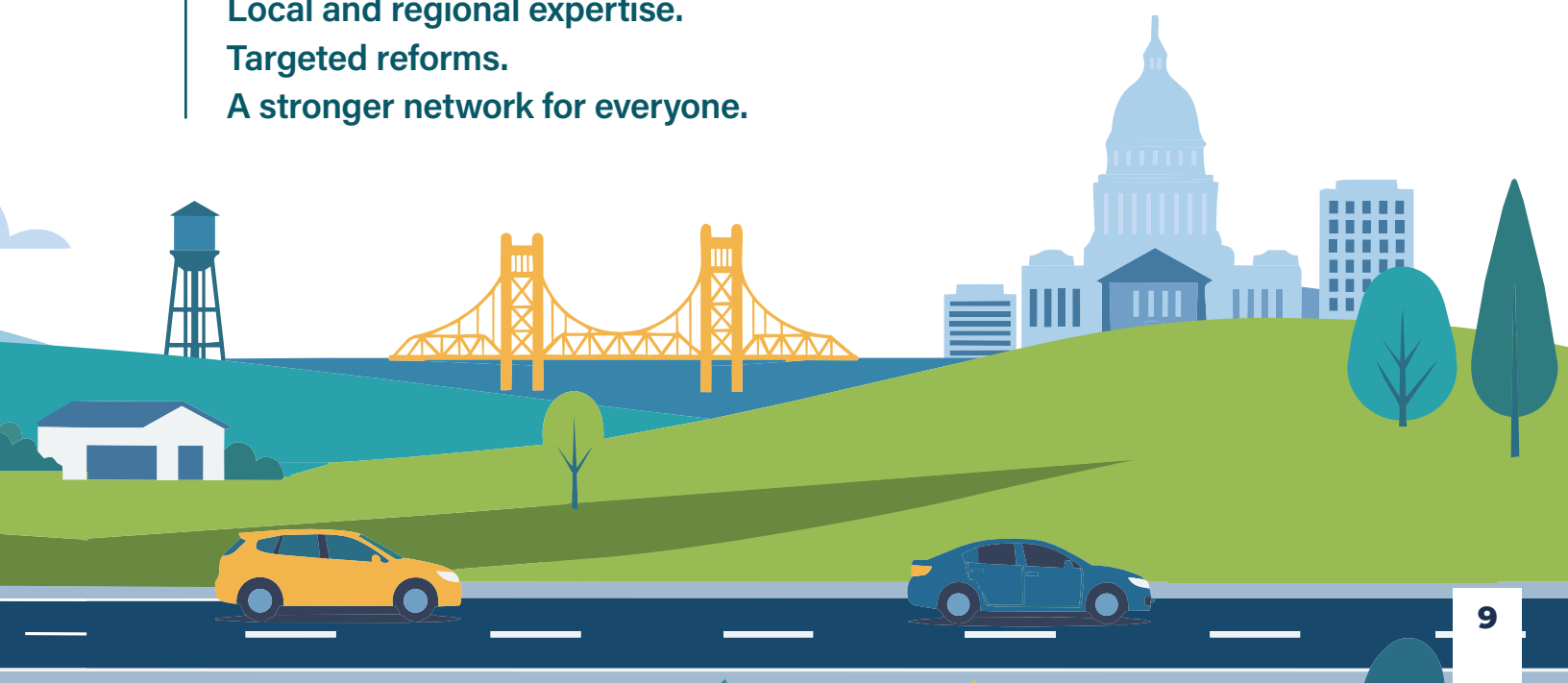
Access the
BASICS Act
Toolkit



The BUILD America 250 Act is the House Vehicle

The BASICS Act helped put local and regional priorities into legislative text. The next step is seeing which of those priorities are reflected in the larger reauthorization bills moving through Congress. In the House, that vehicle is the BUILD America 250 Act.

Local and regional expertise.
Targeted reforms.
A stronger network for everyone.



BUILD America 250

Important Progress in the House Reauthorization Bill

The BUILD America 250 Act marks an important milestone in surface transportation reauthorization. Approved by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on a bipartisan 62–2 vote, the five-year bill advances several issues AMPO and the LOT Coalition have elevated throughout the reauthorization cycle.

The bill does not include every reform AMPO and the LOT Coalition have advocated for, and the legislative process is not finished. Still, it represents progress toward a federal transportation program that better recognizes the role of MPOs, strengthens local and regional access, and supports more efficient project delivery.

What the House Bill Includes



Metropolitan Planning funds

The bill increases Metropolitan Planning funds over five years, raises the federal share for metropolitan planning activities to 90 percent, expands eligible uses, and creates a voluntary direct-recipient option for qualifying MPOs.



Surface Transportation Block Grant Program

The bill authorizes \$74.7 billion over five years and continues suballocation to urbanized areas, preserving a primary way federal transportation dollars reach local and regional priorities. It also folds the Carbon Reduction Program into the broader Surface Transportation Block Grant Program.



Safety

The bill authorizes \$3.75 billion for the Safe Streets and Roads for All program over five years, preserving an important pathway for locally driven safety planning and implementation. Continued investment helps communities turn data and safety action plans into projects that reduce fatalities and serious injuries.



Bridges

The bill authorizes \$9 billion annually for bridge infrastructure projects, including dedicated funding for off-system and locally owned bridges. These bridges are critical to daily travel, emergency response, freight movement, school access, and regional connectivity.



Project Delivery Tools

The bill creates the Surface Transportation Accelerator Grant (STAG) program and includes other provisions intended to help locally and regionally significant projects move forward.

Progress and More Work Ahead

The BUILD America 250 Act is an important step, not the final word. It advances several AMPO and LOT Coalition priorities, including stronger Metropolitan Planning funds, expanded eligible planning activities, a higher federal share, continued local safety investment, bridge funding, and new project-delivery tools.

Important needs remain. The bill does not include dedicated support for rural and nonmetropolitan transportation planning, a key LOT Coalition priority advanced through the BASICS Act. It also does not fully address project-selection authority or ensure that local and regional project selections are respected throughout programming and delivery.

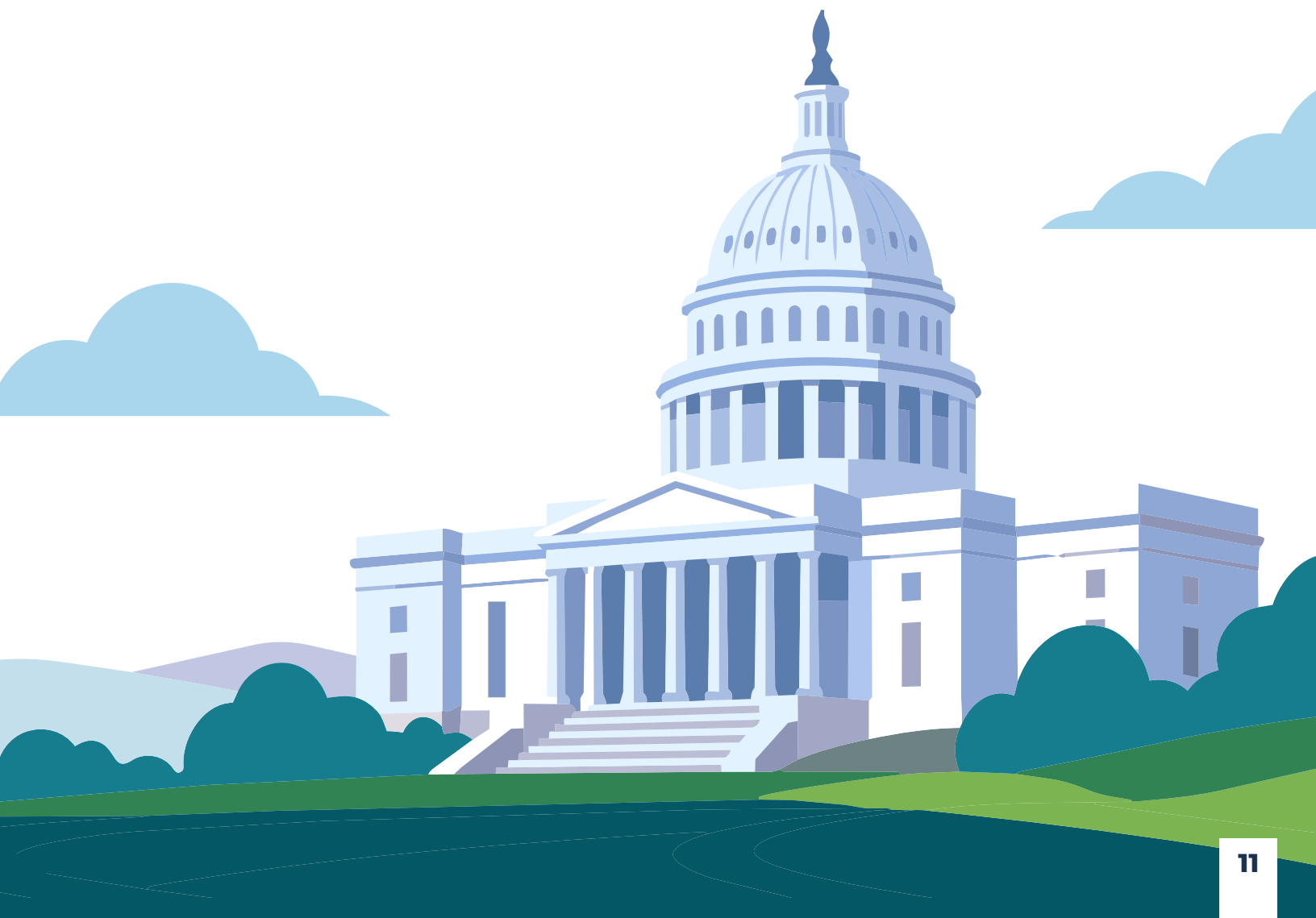
Reauthorization is about more than highways and roads. MPOs plan complete regional transportation systems that connect people, goods, and communities across multiple modes. As the Senate develops its proposal and negotiations continue, AMPO will work to address unmet needs across transit, passenger rail, freight movement, and safety; strengthen planning funds and regional access; improve project delivery; and ensure MPOs have the tools and resources to serve their communities.

The House bill reflects strong progress, but the route to final reauthorization is still unfolding.



BA250 RESOURCES

Scan to view policy documents.



1 Modernize Metropolitan Planning Funding

Each of AMPO's priorities begins with the same premise: better projects start with better planning.

Just as a house needs a blueprint, transportation networks need strong planning to connect communities, support the economy, move freight, and help people reach their destinations.

MPO planning is data-driven, community-supported, and locally informed. MPOs bring together local governments, transit agencies, state partners, freight stakeholders, businesses, and the public to identify needs, evaluate options, set priorities, and align investments with local and national goals. This ensures projects are selected as part of a transparent regional strategy—not in isolation.



STRONG PLANNING
Builds stronger projects

What Planning Delivers



MPO planning connects data, public input, and local decision-making.

Through the metropolitan planning process, regions assess safety, congestion, freight movement, infrastructure conditions, growth, housing access, travel patterns, and environmental considerations to determine where investments are needed most.



Planning also improves project delivery by identifying safety,

design, right-of-way, community, freight, growth, and environmental issues early—helping reduce delays, avoid costly redesigns, and move projects from vision to implementation more efficiently.



Through transparent public processes, MPOs connect

investments to clear needs, measurable outcomes, and federal performance goals. This helps ensure federal dollars deliver the greatest value for communities, regions, and the national transportation system.



Our Goal

AMPO has consistently advocated for modernizing Metropolitan Planning funds by increasing funding, eliminating the local match for federally required planning, expanding eligible uses, and providing MPOs with a voluntary direct-recipient option.

The goal remains clear: dedicate 2.5 percent of Federal-aid Highway Program funds to Metropolitan Planning, provide a 100 percent federal share, and give MPOs the tools to build stronger project pipelines, improve transparency, and deliver better community outcomes.

Progress Made

The BUILD America 250 Act includes meaningful progress on several of these priorities:



Increased Planning Investment — The House bill increases Metropolitan Planning funds over five years, recognizing that federal resources have not kept pace with the expanding scope of MPO work.



Higher Federal Share — The bill raises the federal share for Metropolitan Planning funds to 90 percent, easing the local burden—particularly for smaller MPOs with limited revenue.



Expanded Eligible Uses — The bill expands eligible uses to include fiscal administration, preliminary design, local technical assistance, transportation studies, and data procurement, better reflecting the work MPOs do today.



Direct-Recipient Option — The bill allows qualifying MPOs to receive planning funds directly, streamlining access to federal resources while preserving the existing structure for those that prefer it.

Looking Ahead

The House bill represents real progress, but the work is not finished. As the Senate develops its proposal and Congress moves toward a final agreement, AMPO will continue advocating for the BASICS Act approach: planning funding equal to 2.5 percent of Federal-aid Highway Program funds, a 100 percent federal share, broader eligible uses across the project lifecycle, and an accessible, voluntary direct-recipient pathway.

Modernizing Metropolitan Planning funds is one of the most direct ways Congress can improve project delivery. Greater planning capacity helps communities identify needs earlier, coordinate activities, prepare projects effectively, and invest federal dollars in projects ready to deliver.

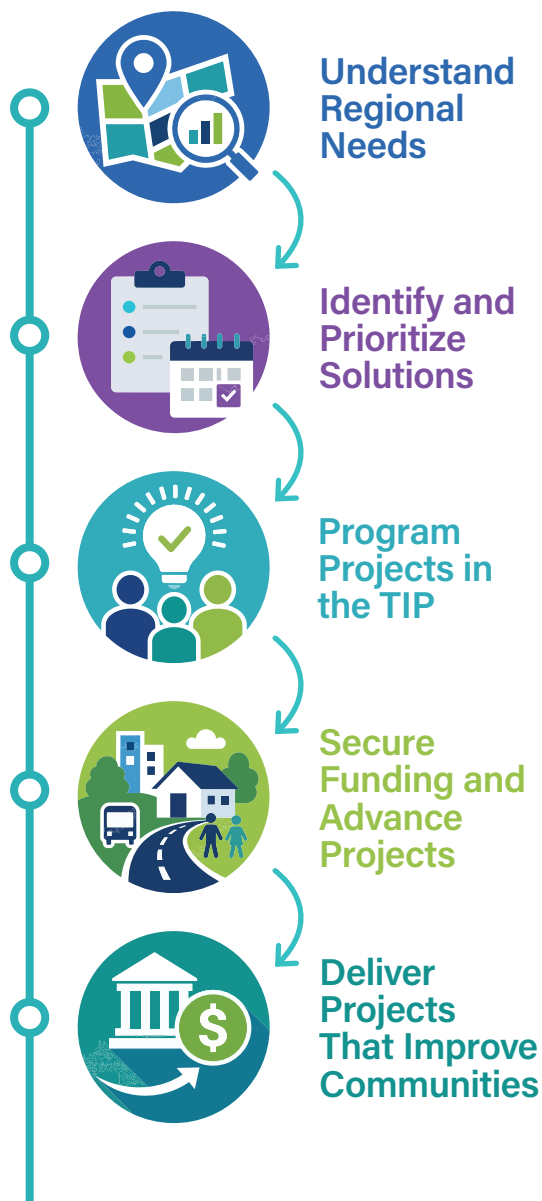


Why It Matters

Modern, adequately funded planning is the foundation for every project that follows. When MPOs have the resources and flexibility to plan for the full project lifecycle, communities identify problems earlier, avoid costly redesigns, and move investments from vision to construction more efficiently.

Better planning. Fewer delays. Stronger projects for every community.

2. Empower Regional Decision-Making



One of AMPO's most consistent reauthorization priorities has been ensuring that MPOs have a meaningful, clearly defined role in transportation decision-making. Not just on paper, but in practice.

MPOs and state DOTs are partners in delivering the federal transportation program. State DOTs provide statewide perspective and delivery expertise, while MPOs bring regional coordination, local decision-making, public engagement, and knowledge of community priorities. The program works best when these roles are aligned and transparent.

Federal law established MPOs to bring local, regional, and state partners together to identify priorities, program projects, and connect federal investments to regional and national goals. Decisions made through this public, data-driven process should be respected as projects move toward delivery.

Yet projects that have been regionally prioritized and programmed in the TIP can still face delays, administrative bottlenecks, obligation timing issues, and limited visibility into project status.



Our Goal

AMPO has advocated for clearer and stronger MPO project-selection authority for suballocated programs; better coordination among states, MPOs, and local partners; greater transparency in how transportation funds are programmed and tracked; access to the federal Fiscal

Management Information System (FMIS) to allow MPOs to monitor project status; and targeted reforms to reduce administrative delays that slow project delivery.

Progress Made

The BUILD America 250 Act includes provisions that move the needle on several of these priorities:



Project Selection and Local Access

The House bill preserves existing MPO project-selection roles and creates opportunities for consultation in certain programs, but it does not make the broader project-selection reforms AMPO has advocated for.



Transparency Provisions

The bill includes measures to strengthen documentation and transparency around project programming and fund flows, helping the public and regional partners understand where federal transportation dollars are being invested and how projects are prioritized.



Streamlined Administrative Processes

Several provisions in the House bill are designed to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens and improve the efficiency of the project delivery pipeline, helping projects move from programming to obligation and construction more quickly.

Looking Ahead

AMPO will continue working to strengthen regional decision-making provisions as the legislative process moves forward. Key priorities for continued engagement include:



Stronger project-selection authority

AMPO will push to ensure that MPO project selections are respected in state programming processes, with clear expectations and accountability mechanisms.



Reducing administrative delays

AMPO will work to identify and address specific bottlenecks in the project delivery process that fall between MPO programming and project obligation.



FMIS access

AMPO continues to advocate for direct FMIS access for all MPOs, which would improve their ability to monitor and report on the status of regionally programmed projects.



Clearer state-MPO coordination

AMPO will advocate for stronger coordination requirements so state and MPO programming processes are aligned, transparent, and accountable — reducing bottlenecks and helping ready projects move forward more efficiently.

Why It Matters

Regional decision-making is good policy for MPOs, but it is also good policy for the federal transportation program. When federal funds follow projects that have been planned, prioritized, and publicly vetted through the MPO process, communities get better projects, stronger accountability, and more efficient delivery.

A transparent regional process, supported by strong state-MPO partnership, helps ensure that federal transportation dollars are invested where they can deliver the greatest value for local communities, regional economies, statewide systems, and the national transportation network.

3 ■ Right-size, Align, and Streamline Federal Programs

Federal transportation investments are most effective when communities can move projects from planning to construction without unnecessary delay. For MPOs and their local partners, that means predictable access to suballocated funding, lower match requirements, flexibility to manage resources strategically, and a consistent project delivery process that reflects how projects actually move from concept to construction.

Too often, the gap between what is planned and what gets built is not a question of need, readiness, or local support. It is a question of process. Projects may be identified through the regional planning process, vetted with the public, programmed in the Transportation Improvement Program, and ready to advance — only to be slowed by match challenges, obligation timing, unclear procedures, or administrative steps that add time without improving outcomes.

Progress Made

The BUILD America 250 Act includes a number of provisions relevant to local access and project delivery:



Continued STBG Suballocation — The House bill continues the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program with suballocation to urbanized areas, preserving the primary mechanism through which federal transportation dollars reach locally identified priorities.



New Project Delivery Tools — The bill includes the new Surface Transportation Accelerator Grant (STAG) program and other pathways for advancing locally and regionally significant projects, giving communities additional options for priority investments.



Streamlined Permitting and Review — The bill includes provisions intended to streamline permitting and environmental review, helping reduce unnecessary delay and move well-prepared projects more efficiently through the delivery process.



Our Goal

AMPO's priorities aim to give MPOs and local partners a clearer path from programming to delivery through stronger suballocated funding, carryover flexibility, right-sized match requirements, streamlined review, and more predictable access to federal resources.

The goal is not to reduce accountability, but to help regionally prioritized, community-supported projects move forward more efficiently.

Looking Ahead

As the Senate develops its proposal and negotiations move forward, AMPO will continue working to advance priorities that were not fully addressed in the House bill:



Carryover flexibility

Allow planning and capital funds to carry over into future years, reducing rushed decisions and better reflecting project timelines.



Stronger suballocation protections

Increase and protect the local and regional share of STBG and other suballocated funds so resources are not redirected before ready projects can advance.



Right-sized match requirements

Lower local match requirements for suballocated capital programs, particularly for smaller, rural, and resource-limited communities.

Why It Matters

Local access and project delivery are where federal transportation policy becomes real for communities. When funding is predictable, match requirements are workable, and delivery processes are clear, communities can advance the projects they have planned, prioritized, and are ready to build.

Better access.

Fewer bottlenecks.

Stronger results for communities.



4. Drive Safety Improvements Through Regional Action

Safety starts close to home, but solutions require regional coordination. The roads people use to reach work, school, health care, transit, and businesses often cross jurisdictional boundaries. That is why safety is not just a local issue — it is a regional one.

In 2025, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimated that 36,640 people died in motor vehicle crashes, affecting families and communities nationwide.

Addressing this crisis requires more than isolated fixes. It requires targeted, data-driven, locally informed, and coordinated solutions across the transportation network.

Progress Made

The BUILD America 250 Act includes a number of provisions relevant to safety:



Continued Safe Streets and Roads for All Funding — Continued investment in the Safe Streets and Roads for All program preserves an important pathway for locally driven safety planning and implementation across the transportation network.



Bridge Investment — The bill continues robust bridge investment and includes new opportunities for local and regional partners to address bridge needs — with particular attention to off-system and locally owned bridges.



Looking Ahead

Important work remains on regional safety. AMPO will continue advocating for:



Incorporating Safe Streets and Roads for All into the Highway Safety Improvement Program with Local Access — AMPO will continue advocating for a more predictable formula-based safety program that preserves the core strengths of Safe Streets and Roads for All while ensuring local and regional access.



A Stronger MPO Role in Safety Planning and Project Selection — MPOs use crash data, regional travel patterns, public input, and local knowledge to identify high-injury corridors, dangerous intersections, and systemic safety risks that may be difficult to see through jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction analysis. AMPO will continue advocating for federal safety programs to recognize and support that regional role.



Suballocated Bridge Funding and a Stronger Local Role — AMPO will continue advocating to preserve the Bridge Formula Program and convert it to a suballocated program, giving local and regional partners a stronger role in prioritizing funds based on condition, safety, and asset-management needs. This would help ensure federal funding reaches locally owned and off-system bridges that may be overlooked in statewide priorities.



Our Goal

AMPO's safety priorities focus on strengthening the role of MPOs in identifying safety needs, coordinating partners, and advancing investments that protect people across the full transportation network.

This includes ensuring that locally led safety projects are eligible for federal safety funding, strengthening the Highway Safety Improvement Program, preserving the core strengths of the Safe Streets and Roads for All program, and providing guaranteed local and regional access to safety resources. AMPO also supports a stronger regional and local role in bridge programs, recognizing that infrastructure condition is a critical part of transportation safety.

Why It Matters

Safety does not stop at a jurisdictional boundary. MPOs help communities understand how safety challenges connect across local roads, state routes, transit corridors, freight routes, bridges, and main streets. They also convene cities, counties, transit agencies, state DOTs, public safety partners, freight stakeholders, schools, and community organizations around shared safety priorities.

MPOs are also strong partners in safety education and outreach. Through public engagement, data analysis, and coordination with local and regional partners, MPOs help communities understand safety risks and communicate solutions in ways that are locally relevant and community-supported.

A regional approach helps ensure safety investments are targeted, coordinated, and connected to the project delivery process.

**Safety is regional.
Solutions should be too.**

What AMPO is Watching Next

The Expanding Role of Regional Transportation Planning

A road is never just a road. A transit line is never just a transit line. Every transportation decision helps shape something larger: where people live, how they reach jobs and schools, whether businesses can receive goods and attract customers, how communities prepare for flooding and natural disasters, and how a region grows over time.

MPOs work at the center of these connections. Through the regional planning process, they help communities look across jurisdictions, infrastructure systems, and policy areas so transportation investments are coordinated with housing, economic development, freight movement, emergency access, stormwater, utilities, and long-term growth.

Federal policy conversations are increasingly recognizing these connections. Across Congress, there is growing interest in how transportation investments can support housing supply, job access, economic competitiveness, infrastructure coordination, and stronger local communities. For example, the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act (H.R. 6644), points to the growing role regions can play in connecting housing, infrastructure, and transportation decisions. As reauthorization moves forward, AMPO is also watching related federal policy and appropriations decisions that could shape the planning tools, eligible activities, and resources available to MPOs.

The Connection That Matters

For many years, land use, housing, transportation, and economic development have been treated as separate policy areas, with separate funding streams, separate planning processes, and separate conversations. Today, it is clear they are closely connected.

Where housing gets built affects transportation demand. Where transportation investments are made affects access to jobs, services, and opportunity. Freight reliability affects business growth and regional competitiveness. Flooding and natural disasters can disrupt mobility, damage infrastructure, and expose the importance of better coordination across transportation and other public systems. MPOs are uniquely positioned to help communities see these connections and make better decisions through a data-driven, regionally coordinated, and community-supported process.

By bringing together cities, counties, transit agencies, state partners, economic development organizations, housing stakeholders, businesses, and the public, MPOs help ensure transportation investments are aligned with the places and people they are meant to serve.



Why This Connection Matters for Federal Policy



Access to Jobs and Opportunity:

Transportation connects people to jobs, education, health care, and essential services, expanding access to opportunity.



Safer, More Connected Main Streets:

Investments in crossings, sidewalks, transit, traffic operations, and roadway design can create safer, more vibrant local streets.



Housing and Transportation

Coordination: MPOs help regions align housing, growth, mobility, and infrastructure decisions over the long term.



Infrastructure Coordination and

Community Readiness: Coordinating transportation with stormwater, utilities, and other infrastructure can improve project delivery, emergency access, and resilience to extreme weather.



Stronger Local Economies: Reliable transportation supports businesses, freight, tourism, workforce access, and regional competitiveness.



Better Regional Planning: MPOs help communities plan across jurisdictions so transportation investments advance shared regional goals.

The MPO Role in Connecting These Threads

MPOs help communities look beyond an individual project and understand how transportation decisions fit into the larger regional picture. A roadway improvement, transit expansion, sidewalk connection, or bridge repair can affect access to jobs, schools, housing, health care, freight movement, and local businesses far beyond the project footprint.

Federal law already recognizes this broader connection. The metropolitan planning process is required to consider factors such as economic vitality, safety, accessibility and mobility, environmental protection, connectivity across modes, system management and operation, preservation, resiliency and reliability, and travel and tourism. These factors reflect a basic reality: transportation investments do not happen in isolation.

MPOs also come to this work from different starting points. Some are housed within councils of government or regional councils that already work across housing, land use, economic development, environmental planning, and community development. Many MPOs are also Economic Development Districts or work closely with economic development partners. Others coordinate with housing agencies, local governments, transit providers, freight stakeholders, and community organizations through their planning processes.

While the structure is different from region to region, the transportation nexus remains clear. MPOs provide a regional table where communities can connect infrastructure decisions to growth, access, safety, mobility, and economic opportunity in a targeted and locally informed way.

Looking Ahead

As reauthorization moves forward, AMPO will continue highlighting how MPOs connect these issues at the regional level. Surface transportation reauthorization and related federal policy decisions should strengthen the planning tools, data resources, and flexible eligibilities regions need to turn those connections into better investments and stronger communities.



How AMPO Members Can Help

Reauthorization is not shaped in Washington alone. It is guided by the stories, examples, and expertise that MPOs bring from communities across the country. As the legislative process moves toward the finish

line, member engagement matters more than ever.

MPOs are uniquely positioned to show policymakers how federal transportation policy works on the ground. You can explain how planning funds support project readiness, how suballocated dollars move local priorities forward, how safety and bridge programs address real needs, and how regional coordination helps communities deliver better results.

Put Engagement Into Action



Tell Your Regional Story

Share projects, partnerships, and planning efforts that show how your MPO turns regional needs into real-world solutions.



Connect With Your Congressional Delegation

Brief congressional offices on your MPO's role, regional priorities, and the federal tools that help projects move forward.



Host Site Visits and Project Tours

Invite members of Congress and staff to see transportation projects firsthand and better understand how federal programs work locally.



Show the Impact of Federal Programs

Use local examples to show how federal funding supports planning, safety, infrastructure, and project delivery in your region.



Engage Your Policy Board and Local Partners

Bring local officials, agencies, and regional partners into the reauthorization conversation to reinforce shared priorities and messages.



Stay Connected With AMPO

Share regional examples, challenges, and successes so AMPO can continue bringing MPO perspectives into federal policy discussions.



AMPO Resources



National Beat

Timely federal policy updates and analysis delivered through AMPO's policy-focused newsletter. Stay current on reauthorization developments, federal court

decisions, and implementation guidance affecting MPOs.



BUILD America 250 Resources

AMPO analysis, summaries, member updates, and briefing materials on the House reauthorization bill, including key

MPO provisions, areas of progress, remaining gaps, and opportunities for continued engagement.



BASICS Act Toolkit

Messaging, background materials, and engagement resources to help MPOs and local partners understand the BASICS Act and communicate its priorities.



MPO Engagement Toolkit

Messaging frameworks, talking points, templates, and practical guides and 101 materials to help your MPO communicate effectively with congressional offices, boards, and the public.



Congressional Compass

An interactive resource to help MPOs identify their congressional representatives, understand committee assignments, and map federal connections across their planning area.



NOFO Tracker

A regularly updated resource that helps MPOs identify federal funding opportunities, track active notices of funding opportunities, and understand which programs may be relevant for MPOs.



Policy Tools

Member-facing updates on reauthorization, federal policy developments, implementation issues, and advocacy resources.

Committee and Coalition Engagement

Opportunities to inform AMPO's policy work through AMPO committees, member working groups, Hill fly-ins, and the LOT Coalition. For more information or to get involved, reach out to our Legislative Director:



Katie Economou
keconomou@ampo.org

The Road Ahead

Your engagement strengthens AMPO's national voice. The more Congress hears from MPOs, policy boards, local governments, and regional partners, the stronger the case becomes for federal transportation policy that works in practice.

Tell your story.

Engage your partners.

Help keep MPOs moving forward.

Keep Communities Moving

The path to reauthorization is still unfolding. But AMPO's direction and our members' commitment remain steady.

Across the country, MPOs are doing the essential work of regional transportation planning: bringing partners together, connecting transportation investments to community needs, and helping turn federal dollars into projects that improve safety, expand access, support economic growth, and strengthen quality of life.

That work has never mattered more. As Congress makes decisions that will shape federal transportation policy for years to come, AMPO will continue advocating for provisions that help communities plan, prioritize, and deliver better projects, while supporting members through every step of the process ahead.



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 communications@ampo.org

