

REAUTHORIZATION — WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR TRANSIT?

Transit Advisory Council

May 15, 2026

ACTION REQUESTED

No action is requested. This item is for information and discussion.

PREVIOUS ACTION

No previous action.

REAUTHORIZATION



Process by which transportation funding and policy are authorized



Occurs Every 5-6 years (current bill – IIJA – expires end of FY 26)



Federal Transportation funding is guaranteed through reauthorization
(funding comes from the Highway Trust Fund)



Committees:

House: T&I – Policy; Ways & Means – Funding; Science – Research**

Senate: EPW – Highway; Banking – Transit; Commerce – General*/Research*/Safety

Via AMPO

NOACA'S 2026 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Four priorities for reauthorization:

- Strengthen local control of core transportation programs
- Promote asset management as a funding priority
- Incorporate safety, sustainability, and multi-modalism in planning & funding...with focus on expanding transportation choice for all residents through public transit...
- Stabilize the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), inclusive of transit



REAUTHORIZATION: ISSUES AT STAKE

- HTF solvency
- Reducing time from project award to construction
- Multimodalism vs. focus on roads
- Discretionary grants or formula funds?



ADMINISTRATION PERSPECTIVE

- US DOT's "Freedom to Drive" initiative signals intent to focus on highways and bridges
- USDOT floated ending Mass Transit Account in 2025; idea rejected on both sides of the aisle



CURRENT STATUS IN CONGRESS

- House & Senate committee leadership: “Back to Basics”
 - Fewer grant programs, return to emphasis on highways & bridges
- Bill text expected any day from House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee
- Senate moving at slower pace
- Congressional schedule impacted by competing priorities and fall elections
- IIJA will be extended if no new bill by September 30

DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

- IIJA created many new discretionary grant programs, including several that fund public transportation projects, including
 - All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP)
 - Rail Vehicle Replacement Program
 - Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development
 - Reconnecting Communities
- Congress likely to move away from discretionary grants in next bill
- LOT Coalition proposes BASICS Act to maintain local access to highway funds if discretionary programs are reduced

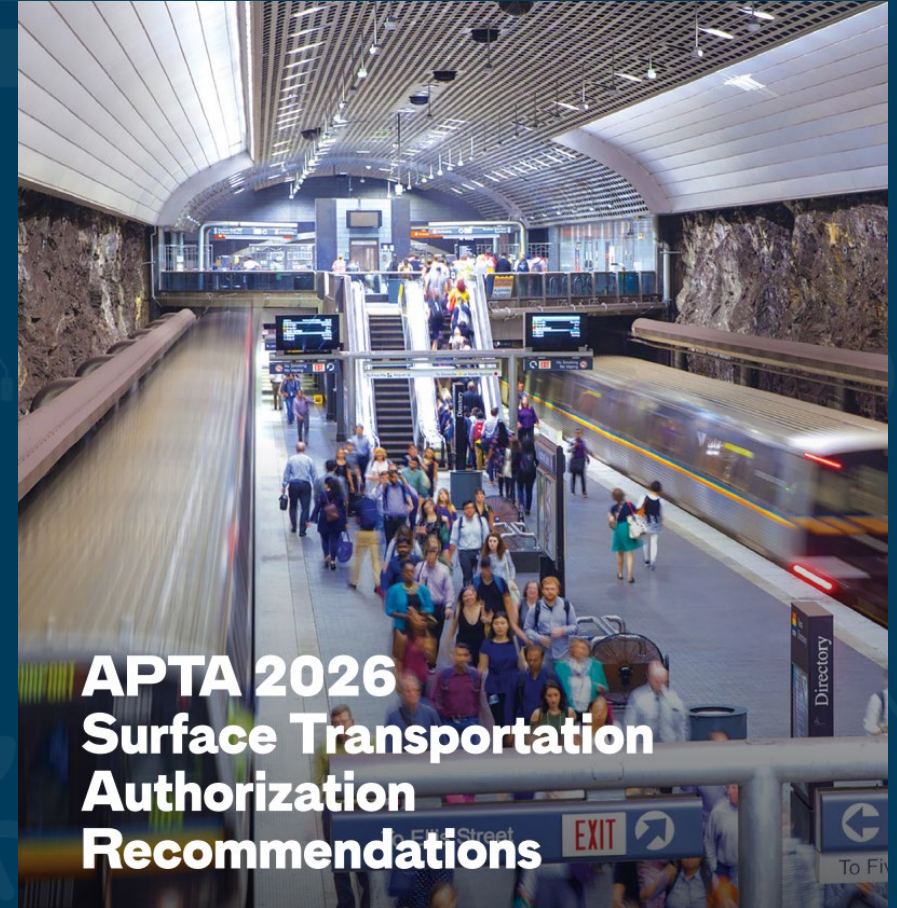
APTA RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increasing federal transit funding from \$108 billion to \$138 billion
- Maintaining Mass Transit Account of HTF with 80-20 split between highways and transit
- National EV fee with all revenues going to HTF
- Ability to use Federal loans like TIFIA as local match



APTA RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consolidate grant programs for increased flexibility
- Reduce bureaucratic requirements for CIG program
- Restore 40-40-20 funding ratio between CIG, State of Good Repair, and Bus and Bus Facilities



NOACA TRANSPORTATION DAY

- NOACA hosted April 1 event for local elected officials; focus on the BASICS Act
- LOT Coalition representatives explained the BASICS Act
- Congresswoman Shontel Brown urged local officials to speak up for their interests
- NOACA Board to vote on resolution of support at June meeting



NEXT STEPS

NOACA will continue to share updates on the legislative progress of the surface transportation reauthorization bill and its potential impacts to public transportation.



NOACA

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency

NOACA will **strengthen** regional cohesion, **preserve** existing infrastructure, and **build** a sustainable multimodal transportation system to **support** economic development and **enhance** quality of life in Northeast Ohio.