

Memorandum

From: Capitol Transportation Consulting and Pavluchuk & Associates
To: James Corless, Executive Director
Date: October 26, 2022
Subject: Federal Policy Monthly Report

Appropriations Update

Congress agreed to a continuing resolution until December 16, 2022. This bill is the main funding mechanism for the majority of federal programs, including the Department of Transportation and many transportation grants. The results of the election will impact how quickly the details of the bill are resolved.

USDOT Recent and Upcoming Grant Announcements

[DOT announced \\$25M for the new Thriving Communities Program \(TCP\)](#), which aims to ensure that disadvantaged communities adversely or disproportionately affected by environmental, climate, and human health policy outcomes have the technical tools and organizational capacity to compete for federal aid and deliver quality infrastructure projects that enable their communities and neighborhoods to thrive. There are two opportunities for funding: 1) for communities interested in receiving technical assistance (deadline: Dec 6th) and 2) for state, local and non-profit entities seeking to provide technical assistance (deadline: Nov 22nd).

In the next few weeks, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is expected to announce the FY2022 grant notice for the [Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail](#). The Federal-State Partnership grant is the single largest rail grant opportunity with approximately \$7.2B being awarded each year for the next five years. The purpose of the program is to fund capital projects that reduce the state of good repair backlog, improve performance, or expand or establish new intercity passenger rail service, including high speed rail projects.

USEPA Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund – Comment Period

[USEPA announced the creation of a new Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund](#). This program will provide competitive grants to mobilize financing and leverage private capital for clean energy and climate projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions – with an emphasis on projects that benefit low-income and disadvantaged communities. The fund includes \$7B for grants to help enable low-income communities to deploy or benefit from zero-emission technologies, \$12B for grants to provide financial and technical assistance to projects that reduce or avoid GHG emissions; \$8B for grants to provide financial and technical assistance to projects that reduce or avoid GHS emissions in low-income and disadvantaged communities. The agency is seeking feedback on the program and its structure with comments due by Dec 5th.

USDOT Funding Deadlines Approaching for SMART Cities, ATTAIN and CRISI Grant Programs

On September 18, 2022, the [US DOT made available \\$100 million for the FY 2022 SMART cities program](#). The SMART cities program, which was authorized by IIJA, will provide funding for local governments to leverage technology to address transportation issues. USDOT is making the funding available and has emphasized its desire to fund projects that solve problems rather than fund technologies in search of a problem. US DOT also made available \$60M for [ATTAIN grants](#) to promote advanced technologies to improve safety and reduce travel times for drivers and transit riders and that can serve as national examples. MPOs are eligible applicants for both grants. **Applications for both programs are due by November 18th.**

US DOT also made available [\\$1.4B for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements \(CRISI\) grant](#) program, which funds projects that improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of intercity passenger and freight rail. **The deadline for applications is December 1st.**

USDOT Guidance on Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessments

As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, all states are required to develop a Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment as part of their Highway Safety Improvement Program and the first plans are due by November 15, 2023. [FHWA released guidance to states on how to develop these plans](#). Vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists, and people who use wheelchairs, accounted for approximately 20% of the 42,915 people who were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2021, according to the National Highway Safety Administration, an increase of 13% over 2020. Once completed, FHWA encourages states to use their Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment findings to adjust project selection and investment strategies. FHWA's guidance on the assessment will help states follow that legal requirement as they work to reduce roadway fatalities and improve the safety of road users who walk, bike, roll and rely on access to transportation systems.