

Memorandum

From: Capitol Transportation Consulting and Pavluchuk & Associates
To: James Corless, Executive Director
Date: July 20, 2023
Subject: Federal Policy Monthly Report

Green Means Go

In response to meetings with various federal agencies, working with SACOG staff, we developed a series of options for the federal government to consider to support programs like Green Means Go. These options include establishing a new program focused on innovative approaches to GHG reduction, combining existing federal funding streams, and carving out portions of existing federal programs. Over the coming weeks, we will be meeting with federal agencies to advance these potential options and support additional funding for Green Means Go (GMG).

Brookings released a study this month that highlights some of the benefits that could be achieved through increased density and proximity. According to Brookings, helping people live closer to the centers of economic activity—from downtown hubs to local Main Streets—should reduce the distances people need to travel for many of their essential trips. Shorter trip distances, in turn, make walking, bicycling, and transit more attractive and can improve quality of life. In other words, greater proximity could lower environmental emissions, create safer streets, and unlock financial savings. Their findings point toward a more universal solution than just electrifying vehicles: shifting development to promote proximity within and around established activity centers. This national report echoes many of the activities envisioned in Green Means Go.

Appropriations

Congress is working on their annual appropriations bill, which provides funding highway, transit, rail and competitive grant programs. It also includes congressionally directed spending projects, known as earmarks. This year the House drastically cut funding by more than \$8 billion resulting in reduced levels for most transportation programs with the majority of the transportation cuts targeted at Amtrak and transit programs. The Senate held funding approximately the same as last year with small increases for rail and Amtrak programs. It will be challenging for the House and Senate to reach agreement on how to move forward and will be the subject of significant discussion as the September 30th fiscal year deadline approaches.

NHTSA Report on Speed-Related Crashes

Reducing speeding related crashes and fatalities continues to be a large safety focus at the Department of Transportation. NHTSA released new data on speeding, showing that speeding-related fatalities increased 8 percent from 2020 to 2021, with 12,330 people killed in 2021 in speeding-related crashes – 29 percent of all traffic fatalities in 2021. The estimated number of people injured in speeding-related crashes also increased by 7 percent. 33 percent of motorcycle

riders in fatal crashes were speeding, more than drivers of any other vehicle type. Many drivers in speeding-related crashes also engaged in other risky driving behaviors, such as not wearing a seat belt and driving while impaired by alcohol.

Grant Update

Current Grant Announcements:

- On June 27, DOT announced that the Department is now taking applications for up to \$5.575 billion in funding from the BIL for projects of regional or national significance. This funding supports three major discretionary grant programs (the Mega, INFRA and Rural programs) that involve surface transportation projects designed to strengthen supply chains, spur economic development, and improve safety and daily life. Applications for funding are being solicited together under a single opportunity titled the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant program (MPDG). The deadline is August 21, 2023.
- DOT's Build America Bureau (BAB) announced that the Notice of Funding Opportunity is now available for the Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program, which makes \$10 million available over five years to provide states, local governments, and tribal governments with grants to support project development leading to future applications to DOT credit or grant programs. The grants, included in the BIL, can support legal, technical, and financial advisors to help advance infrastructure projects. The first notice of funding opportunity includes two fiscal years and makes \$3.4 million available to eligible applicants on a first-come, first-served basis.
- On July 5, DOT announced that it is now taking applications for the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program, an unprecedented effort to build transportation infrastructure to reconnect communities to economic opportunities. In Fiscal Year 2023, the RCN Program will provide up to \$3.16 billion for planning activities and capital construction projects. The streamlined program will increase opportunities for communities that are seeking funding for projects that address harm from past infrastructure planning decisions, accelerate equitable community revitalization, and improve access to everyday destinations. The grants will help fund community-led projects that mitigate physical barriers to mobility and access, such as train tracks or highways, as well as projects to improve walkability, safety, and affordable transportation access, particularly in low-income and disadvantaged communities. The application submission deadline is Thursday, September 28, 2023.

Upcoming USDOT Grant Announcements:

- FTA's NOFO for the [Transit-Oriented Development Pilot Program](#)
- FHWA's NOFO for the [Bridge Investment Program](#)
- FRA's NOFO for the [Railroad Crossing Elimination Program](#)