



AMPO

Priorities for Federal Surface Transportation Authorization and Initiatives



The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organization's (AMPO) is proud to lend its support to the national focus on infrastructures role as the backbone of our world-class economy. The passage of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act reaffirmed the strong federal interest in improving the Nation's surface transportation infrastructure and provided the certainty needed to advance solid transportation planning and programming decision. AMPO supports the Administration and Congress's view that more can and needs to be done to increase National productivity and economic growth. AMPO would like to offer its priorities to the national conversation.

Continue to fully fund FAST Act programs.

In December 2015, by a wide bipartisan margin, the U.S. House and Senate passed the FAST Act. This historic piece of legislation made a commitment to fund major transportation projects through 2020. We urge the Administration and Congress to continue to support this historic commitment by fully funding the FAST Act.

Address the solvency of the HTF before the FAST Act expires in 2020. Grow Federal Highway and Transit programs with sustainable dedicated funding source.

It has now been close to a quarter century since funding for the Federal Highway Trust Fund was last increased. For the last decade, general fund revenues and other financing techniques have been used to patch the widening shortfall. This National Priority requires a solution before economic growth further suffers due to inadequate infrastructure.

Maintain structure of the current funding formula program and run any additional funding through these programs

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) restructured and consolidated the core highway formula programs. Since its passage in 2012, the Metropolitan Planning Process continues to streamline and adapt its short and long range planning programs to ensure that National and local priorities are addressed within the current funding framework. Any new funding outside of these existing funding formula programs will strain the successful continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive ("3-C") planning process.

✓ **MPO Plans have publically (and agency) vetted projects that can be quickly accelerated through project delivery with additional funds. These projects should be given priority consideration for any new funding program.**

There has been much discussion on how new infrastructure funds can have an immediate impact on improving our economy. Metropolitan Transportation Plans have a ready-made list of projects already identified, supported and adopted in the “out-years” that can be quickly accelerated with new funding. These projects have already been publically vetted, have regional and local support and can move quickly into implementation. AMPO urges the Administration and Congress to use projects already adopted in MPO plans to produce immediate economic impact.

✓ **Allow more flexibility in the use of federal transit funds for operations beyond current law.**

While MAP-21 consolidated and provided more flexibility in highway programs, the current Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding formula program remains siloed and inflexible. AMPO supports a fresh look at the transit funding formula program with a special emphasis on potential expansion of use of funds for operations beyond the current law.

✓ **Directly allocate Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds to all MPOs, regardless of population.**

For decades, MPOs have played a vital role in developing current and future transportation plans and in determining transportation investments in urbanized areas. With the new Federal Performance Based Planning and Programming requirements enacted as part of MAP-21, MPOs are now responsible for ensuring that the National Priorities identified by Congress are addressed in their Metropolitan region. MPOs need project selection authority, including direct allocation of STBG funding to carry out this Congressional mandate.

✓ **Support continued development of the multi-modal National Freight Network funded by a dedicated revenue stream.**

Freight planning is an important component of statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes. Input from a variety of public and private stakeholders—State DOTs, MPOs, freight modes, general public—must be considered to successfully integrate freight planning into these existing transportation planning processes. AMPO asks that all partners, including MPOs, to the maximum extent practicable, be in the decision-making process designating freight corridors and in investment decisions. The needs highlighted in this planning process also need to be supported by a dedicated revenue stream.

✓ **PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: Establish One Common Effective Date for Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning.**

A key feature of MAP-21 was the establishment of a performance and outcome based program. The objective of this performance and outcome based program is for States and MPOs to invest resources in projects that collectively will make progress toward the achievement of the national goals. MPOs have been working diligently in the development and implementation of this new approach. The staggered rulemaking process has created a varying series of implementation dates that has led to great confusion that threatens the continuity of the Metropolitan 3-C process. AMPO strongly suggests that Congress establish a single common effective date for all MAP-21 Performance Based Planning and Programming regulations.



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