



The National Beat

May 16th, 2024

Federal Updates

On May 15th, The House passed the largest aviation bill in five years, H.R. 3935, with a 387-26 vote, allocating \$105 billion to the FAA over five years ([read here](#)) Despite some objections and the lack of significant Boeing oversight measures, the bill aims to address air traffic control staffing shortages and improve runway safety technologies, and is expected to be signed by the President this week.

On May 14th, during a US Commerce and United for infrastructure event, House T&I Ranking Member Rick Larsen and T&I Subcommittee on Aviation Chair Garret Graves urged states to expedite spending IIJA funds allocated to address the shortage of skilled workers needed for these projects ([watch here](#)). Despite the IIJA being well into its lifespan, only a small portion (20%) of the allocated funds have been spent, prompting calls for states to mobilize their budgets and invest in workforce development programs.

May 13th, marks day one of "Infrastructure Week," which highlights the importance of infrastructure investment and actions to address the country's infrastructure needs ([read here](#)). The White House focus has been on spotlighting the commencement of infrastructure projects nationwide that enhance roads, bridges, high-speed internet, and clean energy, emphasizing a transformative "Infrastructure Decade." Learn more about infrastructure week events [here](#).

On May 9th, Sam Graves and Rick Crawford, leading members of the House T&I Committee, inquired with the FTA about measures being taken to combat the recent rise in violent crime across U.S. transit systems ([read here](#)). They highlighted alarming public safety incidents, and are seeking clarity on FTA's data collection methods, funding distributions, and potential programmatic changes to enhance transit.

On May 7th, the House T&I Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials held a hearing to discuss the reauthorization needs of the PHMSA focusing on pipeline safety and the agency's rule-making efforts ([read here](#)). The hearing focused on reauthorizing PHMSA to provide necessary funding, improve safety measures, and address issues such as aging infrastructure and emergency response.

On May 2nd, the Senate Appropriations THUD Subcommittee held a hearing on the FY 2025 USDOT budget request ([watch here](#)). During the hearing, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg discussed the Biden Administration's FY 2025 Budget request for the USDOT which totals \$146.2 billion, reflecting ongoing improvements in transportation safety, supply chain efficiency, and infrastructure renewal across the US.

The USDA recently announced it will hold a webinar to prepare applicants (MPOs eligible) to apply for the Broadband Technical Assistance (BTA) Program ([read here](#)). The BTA funds to projects aimed at promoting broadband expansion into rural communities. There is no cost share or matching requirement for eligibility. The deadline for the application has not been determined yet, but there is an upcoming webinar scheduled for May 22nd at 1:00 PM (ET) ([register here](#)).



Congressional Hearings, Meetings, & Markups

- On May 16th, the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Management and Technology held a hearing on the use of drones in emergency response ([watch here](#)).
- On May 15th, the House T&I Committee held a hearing on the federal response to the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse ([watch here](#)).
- On May 15th, the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security held a hearing on the FY 2025 TSA budget request ([watch here](#)).
- On May 8th, the House Appropriations THUD Subcommittee held a hearing to allow House members to testify on their priorities for FY 2023 spending ([watch here](#)).
- On May 7th, the House T&I Committee held a markup to approve an updated Committee roster ([watch here](#)).
- On May 7th, the House T&I Committee held a hearing to examine the reauthorization needs of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration ([watch here](#)).
- On May 2nd, the Senate Appropriations THUD Subcommittee held a hearing on the FY 2025 USDOT budget request ([watch here](#)).

USDOT

On May 14th, the FRA announced over \$2 billion in Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program funding for the Northeast Corridor to enhance and modernize rail infrastructure ([read here](#)).

On May 13th, USDOT announced the FY 2024 NOFO for the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grants Program ([read here](#)). The SMART Grants are designed to support demonstration projects that enhance transportation safety and efficiency through smart community technologies and systems. Applications are due July 12th at 5:00 PM; MPOs are eligible to apply.

On May 13th, USDOT announced it allocated \$1.7 million to establish the Center for Emissions Reduction, Resiliency, and Climate Equity in Transportation at the University of California, Davis, which will support research aimed at decarbonizing transportation and enhancing infrastructure resilience ([read here](#)).

On May 3rd, USDOT announced the first update in nearly two decades to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 to enhance protections and assistance for individuals affected by federally-funded projects, including increased benefit levels to match inflation and new measures to improve equity ([read here](#)).

On May 1st, USDOT announced that the Build America Bureau approved its first Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) loan to provide \$26.8 million at ultra-low interest rates to support the Mt. Vernon Library Commons Project in Washington ([read here](#)).

On April 25th, the FTA released a final Programmatic Assessment of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from Transit Projects ([read here](#)). This Programmatic Assessment updates and supersedes previous versions, aligning with the latest guidance from the Council on Environmental Quality on considering GHG emissions in NEPA reviews. It serves as a NEPA streamlining tool, assessing GHG emissions for various transit projects and providing a data source for future environmental documents ([view the assessment here](#)).



On April 23rd, USDOT released a case study report on State Carbon Reduction strategies to reduce CO2 emissions from on-road sources ([read here](#)). The report highlights notable practices from the Carbon Reduction Program.

Recently, MARAD released a NOFO for the United States Marine Highway Program (USMHP), which offers discretionary grants to enhance the effectiveness of transportation in the marine highway sector ([read here](#)). The USMHP aims to expand the use of navigable waters, relieving landside congestion, reducing air emissions, and providing new transportation options. This funding opportunity seeks to support projects that integrate marine highways into the nation's transportation system effectively and sustainably ([learn more here](#)). Applications close July 12, 2024; MPOs are eligible to apply.

National Transportation News

On May 15th, AMPO, Brookings Metro, NACo, NARC, and NLC co-hosted an event featuring local and regional leaders across the country who will share insights from the ground level on the progress of transportation projects funded by new IIJA funding ([read here](#)). Speakers, including Andrew Fremier, the Executive Director of MTC, and William Murdock, the Executive Director OF MORPC, discussed real-life projects that improve the lives of their residents and the country's transportation network.

On May 6th, the Urban Institute published a report which detailed findings that Local governments with more staff and larger budgets are significantly more likely to secure federal infrastructure grants ([read here](#)).

NOFOs

Learn about federal grants available to MPOs and key NOFO information in AMPO's NOFO Tracker ([access here](#)). The Tracker is available on [ampo.org](#) under the "Resources" drop down.

New (MPO Eligible)

- USDOT's [Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation \(SMART\) Grants](#)
 - **Description:** applications for Stage 1 Planning and Prototyping grants, which focus on deploying technology demonstrations and prototypes to address real-world transportation challenges, while also building data and technological capacity for state, local, and tribal governments.
 - **Deadline:** July 12th, 2024 ([NOFO here](#))
 - USDOT will hold a 'How to Apply' webinar on May 28th at 1:00 PM (ET), ([register here](#))
- MARAD's [United States Marine Highway Program](#)
 - **Description:** Grants to enhance the effectiveness of transportation in the marine highway sector. USMHP aims to expand the use of navigable waters, relieving landside congestion, reducing air emissions, and providing new transportation options.
 - **Deadline:** July 12th, 2024 ([NOFO here](#))
- Joint Office of Energy and Transportation's [Communities Taking Charge Program](#)
 - **Description:** Funding will address critical topic areas to expanding EV charging access to all drivers and riders.
 - **Deadline:** July 16, 2024 ([FOA here](#))



- FHWA's [Transportation Access Pilot Program \(TAPP\)](#)
 - **Description:** Pilot program to enhance the development of transportation access across different transportation modes and facilitate better connectivity to key destinations such as jobs, education, health care, and recreation
 - **Deadline:** June 7th, 2024 ([apply here](#))
- HUD's [Preservation and Reinvestment Initiative for Community Enhancement \(PRICE\) Competition](#)
 - **Description:** This funding supports MPOs in planning and implementing projects that enhance manufactured housing communities and align with HUD's comprehensive urban and regional planning objectives.
 - **Deadline:** June 5th, 2024; possible deadline extension to June 24th ([apply here](#))

Coming Soon (MPO Eligible)

- USDA's [Broadband Technical Assistance Program](#)
 - **Description:** For a project to be eligible to receive federal funds from the BTA program, it must promote broadband expansion into a rural community. BTA does not have a cost share or matching requirement.
 - **Deadline:** TBD—Upcoming Webinar on May 22nd at 1:00 PM (ET) ([Register here](#))