

ITEM 10 – INFORMATION
April 15, 2026

Transportation Reauthorization: Status of the Federal Process and
Overview of the “BASICS Act”

Background: The current transportation funding bill (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act – IIJA) is set to expire on September 30, 2026. Through the transportation reauthorization process, Congress updates federal policies to address the nation’s evolving infrastructure needs and challenges, and shapes how federal transportation funds are allocated. Staff will provide an overview of the federal reauthorization process, details on the newly introduced “BASICS Act”, and information on the impacts to MPOs.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Lyn Erickson, TPB Plan Development and Coordination Program Director
SUBJECT: Transportation Reauthorization 2026
DATE: April 9, 2026

Federal surface transportation reauthorization is the process Congress uses to renew, fund, and update the programs that build and maintain the nation's roads, bridges, transit, and multimodal networks. Reauthorization is one of the most important tools Congress has to shape national transportation policy. Typically passed every five to six years, these bills establish funding levels, define federal priorities, and guide how transportation investments are made. These decisions influence which types of projects are eligible, what outcomes are prioritized (such as safety, mobility, economic development, etc.), and how regions access and manage federal dollars.

For MPOs, reauthorization is a key opportunity to improve the funding and policy frameworks that impact day-to-day operations and long-term regional planning. It directly affects how MPOs are funded, how flexibly they can use resources, and how much authority they have in shaping transportation decisions for their communities.

With the current Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) set to expire on **September 30, 2026**, the decisions made in the next 5 months will define the future of transportation planning for years to come. The National Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) closely follows the federal process on behalf of the MPOs it represents, including TPB. TPB staff has invited AMPO staff to provide TPB members with information on the current reauthorization status, and a recent marker bill that was introduced called the BASICS Act.

On February 9, 2026, Representatives Rob Bresnahan (R-PA) and Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-MI) introduced the **BASICS Act (Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success Act)**. This bipartisan House bill closely aligns with AMPO's long-standing legislative priorities and the work of MPOs nationwide, including the TPB's work. AMPO has expressed strong support for the bill, noting that local and regional governments plan for, own, and operate the majority of the nation's transportation infrastructure, yet often lack reliable and direct access to the federal funding needed to deliver solutions. The BASICS Act responds to this mismatch by strengthening formula programs, investing in planning capacity, and helping regions move priority projects from plan to pavement.

As a "marker bill," part or all of the BASICS Act could be inserted into the Reauthorization bill, especially since it has a lot of support from many associations and transportation agency and industry leaders. Here is some additional information on Reauthorization and the BASICS Act ([H.R. 7437](#)):

- [AMPO's Reauthorization 101 guide](#)
- [BASICS one pager](#)
- [BASICS section-by-section summary](#)
- [BASICS bill text](#)
- [BASICS Act Toolkit](#)
- [One pager on PL funds](#)

Last April 2025, as reauthorization was ramping up, the TPB approved and submitted its Reauthorization Principles to members of Congress, as they submitted their own priorities to the committees that are currently working on the bill (attached). While the TPB, as the region's MPO, cannot lobby in the federal process, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) can submit letters of support. COG submitted the attached BASICS Act support letter in April 2026.

NEXT STEPS

TPB staff will closely follow the federal development of the new reauthorization bill as a whole. In particular, any changes that come out of either the BASICS marker bill or in any other parts of reauthorization, will have direct impacts on the responsibilities of the TPB. TPB staff are active members in AMPO activities, and AMPO staff will continue to serve as a great resource for TPB throughout this process.

ATTACHMENTS

- April 2025 - National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board Policy Principles for the Reauthorization of Federal Surface Transportation Programs
- March 30, 2026 - Letter from COG to the National Capital Region Congressional Delegation supporting the BASICS Act



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
Policy Principles for the Reauthorization of
Federal Surface Transportation Programs
April 30, 2025

Our nation's success and prosperity are the result of generations of innovators, leaders, and workers collaborating to facilitate commerce and grow our economy. One of the underpinnings supporting our growth and competitiveness is world-class transportation infrastructure that promotes commerce and provides essential connections for all people to safely and efficiently access economic opportunities and contribute fully to the nation's success.

The federal government has played a key role in supporting transportation investments throughout our history. The benefits of federal investment in a balanced, multi-modal transportation system have long been recognized as critical to our national interest, promoting economic competitiveness and providing access to opportunity for all. In addition, the federal government has a unique obligation to support interstate commerce and to meet critical emergency and security requirements and thus should make a significant financial investment in maintaining, operating, and building our transportation infrastructure.

As part of its interest and obligation to build, operate, and maintain a strong national, multi-modal surface transportation infrastructure, the federal government, through its Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, established Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and required them to perform a continuing, comprehensive, transportation planning process undertaken cooperatively by the states and local governments (called the 3C process). The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the federally mandated MPO for the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and it epitomizes a successful 3C process, stretching across two states and 21 local governments (including the District of Columbia), and it strives for an excellent surface transportation system in the National Capital Region.

The federal government's commitment to the nation's surface transportation infrastructure and its partnership with the state and local governments have manifested in various multi-year, multi-modal federal transportation bills, including the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), scheduled to expire October 1, 2026. As the current Congress begins work on reauthorizing the Federal Surface Transportation Act, the TPB respectfully submits the following consensus-based policy principles to guide reauthorization of the Federal Surface Transportation Programs. These principles are based on approaches to transportation infrastructure investment decisions that provide the National Capital Region with a robust transportation system to improve mobility, provide all people with safe and efficient access to economic opportunities, and reduce vehicle emissions that contribute to air pollution and climate change.

2025 TPB Principles on Federal Reauthorization

1. ADDRESS THE FISCAL IMBALANCE IN THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND (HTF):

The HTF established in 1956 to fund transportation projects, relies primarily on gasoline and diesel taxes, whose growth has been insufficient to pay for the program's outlays.¹ Due to this structural imbalance between revenue and expenditure, the federal government has relied on general fund revenue transfers, creating uncertainty and underinvestment in the transportation system. Given the critical role of the surface transportation system to the nation's security and prosperity:

- a. the HTF revenues must be reset to ensure they fully meet the current and future needs of the HTF outlays,
- b. the baseline of HTF revenue must be at the current IJJA levels and keep up with inflation to support a world class transportation system, and
- c. all reasonable strategies for increased revenue that provide long-term stability and predictability should be pursued.

2. STRENGTHEN FEDERAL COMMITMENT TO MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS:

To ensure the country has a world-class transportation system -- one that improves mobility, increases economic competitiveness, and reduces air pollution -- the transportation system should offer choices for people and business to access jobs and other opportunities that are needed to succeed in our economy. Such choices should include safe and reliable travel on our highways, on our public transportation systems, and via bicycle and pedestrian travel. Additionally, metropolitan areas with their large population and constraints on land use, face unique challenges in addressing the mobility and accessibility needs to support its substantial economic activity. Multi-modal transportation systems are especially effective in such areas and are also a proven approach to addressing the mobility needs of lower-income households, and those with unmet mobility needs, who are less likely to own an automobile. As such:

- a. federal funding programs must cover all modes of travel with funding available for planning, design, construction, operations, and maintenance of the system/service
- b. continued and additional federal funding for intercity rail, commuter rail service and extension of the federal PRIIA funding are essential for the national capital region's mobility and economic vitality, and
- c. transportation agencies must have maximum flexibility to transfer federal funds among the different modes to maximize safety, reliability, mobility, and accessibility outcomes.

3. PROMOTE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT:

Efficiency in the project development process is important to address transportation system needs in a timely and cost-effective manner. Additionally, the ability of transportation agencies to use the funding available to implement the best suited strategy to achieve a defined outcome provides for effective project planning and implementation. Also, for transportation projects to be effective, the project's scope should be based on performance outcomes. As such an authorized transportation bill must:

- a. streamline federal planning and environmental review processes, outlined in IJJA, that are aimed at ensuring timely delivery of transportation projects,

¹ See, for example, Congressional Budget Office, "The Status of the Highway Trust Fund: 2023 Update" (Testimony, Subcommittee on Highways and Transit Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., October 18, 2023), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/59634>.

2025 TPB Principles on Federal Reauthorization

- b. consolidate the different funding programs that have similar policy objectives into a block grant formula program allowing states and local governments flexibility to optimize delivery,
- c. while maintaining maximum funding amounts across both formula and discretionary programs, provide most of the funding using non-discretionary formula funding mechanisms with federal discretionary grants used for projects with multi-jurisdictional or national impacts, and
- d. promote a stronger adherence to the current federal principle of performance-based planning and programming by ensuring that performance outcomes of all modes of travel are fully considered.

4. ENSURE SAFETY AND RELIABILITY OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND SERVICES:

Travel on our roadway and transit system is a significant contributor to the nation's economy and society's functioning. The fatalities and serious injury crashes on our highway and transit systems are unacceptable and undermine the reliability of the transportation system. Similarly, severe weather has always been and will continue to pose a threat to the integrity of the infrastructure. Climate change has caused the frequency and severity of such threats to increase in recent decades. Additionally, the emission of pollutants by vehicles also poses public health concerns. Low-income households and those facing unmet mobility needs tend to be most impacted by safety, reliability, and emissions challenges of the surface transportation system. Given the critical nature of the surface transportation system for people's wellbeing and the nation's physical and economic security:

- a. federal policy and financial support for addressing the highway and transit safety outcomes should be retained and enhanced,
- b. it is critical that federal policy and funding priorities support efforts to ensure the resiliency of the transportation system,
- c. federal policy should ensure vehicle technology and operations improve safety outcomes and reduce emissions for the users and non-users of the system, and
- d. prioritize federal funding for projects and investments that maintain and modernize the existing transportation system; invest in assets or technologies that deliver cost efficiencies.

5. SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION ACROSS JURISDICTIONS:

The impacts of transportation systems and services are not limited to one jurisdiction or community. The fact that people and goods constantly move across jurisdictional borders is reflected in the interstate commerce approach the federal government has taken to the design, implementation and operations of surface transportation systems. Collectively, metropolitan areas in the United States account for the majority of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP), driving economic prosperity to both these regions and to the rest of the states where they are located. Inter-jurisdictional cooperation is especially vital for supporting low-income households and those facing unmet mobility needs, as a household's travel patterns often span multiple jurisdictions. MPOs bridge the gap in cross jurisdictional collaboration in planning and prioritizing transportation investments that are needed to ensure the current and future economic vitality of these regions. As such, federal policy and program requirements should:

- a. reaffirm the MPO's role in the planning and programming process, and
- b. provide MPOs with a stronger role in project development and programming processes, including monitoring and reporting outcomes of investments.



March 30, 2026

Re: Support for H.B. 7437 Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act

Dear Members of National Capital Region Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) we are writing to ask for your support of H.B. 7437 Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act, bipartisan legislation sponsored by Representatives Kristen McDonald Rivets (D-MI) and Rob Bresnahan (R-PA).

As the regional association representing the 24 local governments in the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and suburban Maryland, COG supports key federal programs included in the BASICS Act such as planning funds for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs), the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), and the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program. Specifically, many improvements in this Act will directly enable COG to provide better data and coordination opportunities to its members if planning funds are increased, the federal share is changed to 100 percent, and MPOs are enabled to be direct recipients.

The BASICS Act improves transparency by reinforcing collaboration across federal, state, regional, and local partners to ensure that local voices are heard and transportation investments reflect what communities need most. With nearly 100 roadway deaths each day, the BASICS Act increases and protects funding for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). It also ensures that 25 percent of HSIP funds are delivered through MPOs for proven safety projects that build on the success of the Safe Streets and Roads for All program. COG has an impressive record of supporting and implementing safety initiatives and this would further enable the Washington region to continue its efforts.

The BASICS Act ensures bridge funding reflects this reality by directing resources proportionally to locally owned bridges in each state. This legislation is supported by the Local Officials in Transportation (LOT) Coalition, representing more than 25,000 counties, cities, towns, MPOs, regional councils, and economic development organizations. Coalition members include the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National League of Cities (NLC), and the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM). This broad coalition reflects the nationwide recognition that local and regional governments must have a stronger voice and better tools in shaping federal transportation policy.

Again, we urge you to support this legislation, and we thank you for your partnership. If you have any questions please reach out to Monica Beyrouti Nunez at (202)962-3212 or mbeyrouti@mwkog.org.



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

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Reuben Collins
COG Board Chair
Charles County Commissioner
President

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Charles Allen
COG Board Vice Chair
District of Columbia
Councilmember

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Alyia Gaskins
COG Board Vice Chair
City of Alexandria