



# **APTA 2026 Surface Transportation Authorization Recommendations**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

February 2026



# APTA Surface Transportation Authorization Recommendations

## Adopted by the APTA Board of Directors

*February 2026*

On behalf of our more than 1,700 public- and private-sector member organizations, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is pleased to present *APTA Surface Transportation Authorization Recommendations* for the next Federal surface transportation authorization law. These *Recommendations* were approved by APTA's Legislative Committee, Executive Committee, and Board of Directors. These *Recommendations* are a product of a lengthy effort that began in fall 2024, led by APTA's Legislative Steering Committee, which includes representatives from each of APTA's modal and member interests. APTA's Legislative Steering Committee canvassed APTA members to develop both public transit and passenger rail investment and policy recommendations for the surface transportation legislation that will replace the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) when it expires on September 30, 2026.

In 2024 and 2025, APTA's Legislative Committee approved packages of recommendations over the course of five separate meetings, culminating in the adoption of a comprehensive package of final *Recommendations* on September 14, 2025. APTA's Executive Committee and Board of Directors approved the *Recommendations* on January 18, 2026, and February 19, 2026, respectively.

The *APTA Surface Transportation Authorization Recommendations* reflect the consensus views and priorities of APTA's diverse public- and private-sector membership.

# Executive Summary



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The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) urges Congress and the Administration to enact a long-term Surface Transportation Authorization Act that:

- **builds upon current investment** for public transit and passenger rail to drive job creation, innovation, and economic growth;
- **accelerates project delivery** by eliminating statutory and regulatory barriers to building infrastructure; and
- **strengthens collaborative, local decision-making.**

## Build upon Current Investment for Public Transit and Passenger Rail to Drive Job Creation, Innovation, and Economic Growth

**APTA urges Congress and the Administration to provide \$138 billion for public transit and \$130 billion for passenger rail over five years.** These investment levels restore the purchasing power lost to inflation over the past five years and grow total public transit and passenger rail funding (including guaranteed funding) moving forward.

These critical investments will help public transit agencies create an additional \$140 billion in annual impacts on the American economy. They will enable transit agencies to meet growing mobility demands in our communities and drive innovation and new technologies to enhance safety, security, and the rider experience.

### Drive Economic Growth Through Federal Investment

These critical investments will create an additional **\$140 billion** in annual impacts on the American economy. [EBP, \*Economic Impact of Public Transportation Investment\* \(Feb. 2026\)](#)

## Public Transportation is the Spark to America's Economic Strength

It connects employees to employers, customers to commerce, and communities to investment opportunities. Public transportation is a \$93 billion industry that directly employs more than 430,000 people and supports millions of private-sector jobs—including jobs at 3,000 suppliers in more than 1,700 communities across all 50 States. Every \$1 billion invested in public transportation creates or sustains 41,400 jobs—family-wage jobs in manufacturing, technology, and services.

Transit keeps America's communities—rural, suburban, and urban—competitive and growing. In fact, every \$1 invested in public transit generates \$5 in long-term economic benefits and 77 percent of Federal public transportation investments flow to the private sector.

### Public Transportation Delivers:



\$5 in economic benefits for every \$1 invested



77 percent of Federal investments flow to the private sector



41,400 jobs created or sustained per \$1 billion invested



3,000 suppliers in more than 1,700 communities across 50 States

## **Accelerate Project Delivery by Eliminating Statutory and Regulatory Barriers to Building Infrastructure**

APTA proposes to accelerate project delivery by streamlining bus and ferry grant programs, eliminating statutory and regulatory barriers, and implementing commonsense U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) reforms. These changes will increase safety and efficiency, decrease costs, and improve the rider experience.

### **Streamlining Bus and Ferry Grant Programs by—**

Consolidating the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) numerous bus and passenger ferry grant programs into three key initiatives:

- Buses and Bus Facilities Formula Grants
- Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Grants
- Passenger Ferry Competitive Grants

This structure will meet the diverse needs of public transit agencies and streamline the grant application process. APTA also recommends a significant increase in the percentage of bus capital funding that is distributed by formula, compared to current law.

### **Eliminating Statutory and Regulatory Barriers by—**

- Reforming the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program to refocus it on two key objectives: (1) building great projects, and (2) protecting the taxpayer interest—and eliminating the numerous extraneous requirements that do not meet either objective.
- Establishing clear safety decision-making authority by ensuring that Transit CEOs have the necessary authority to make final decisions regarding public transit safety.
- Eliminating unnecessary, burdensome requirements, such as FTA’s Bus Spare Ratio limitation.

### **Implementing Commonsense DOT Reforms by—**

- Authorizing advanced real property acquisition for public transit and passenger rail projects.
- Granting public transit agencies additional authorities to streamline the environmental review process for public transit and passenger rail projects.
- Harmonizing project management oversight requirements among all modes of transportation.
- Establishing a centralized Buy America database of construction materials that meet the requirements of the Build America, Buy America Act.

## Strengthen Collaborative, Local Decision-Making

**To improve transportation outcomes, APTA recommends strengthening collaborative, local decision-making by:**

- Providing direct funding to public transit agencies in small urbanized areas. By providing FTA formula funds directly to end users, small transit agencies will be able to make project decisions more quickly and accelerate project delivery.
- Ensuring effective public transit voting representation on Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). This proposal will ensure that public transit's voice is heard in the MPO decision-making process and lead to better local transportation outcomes.

### Conclusion

**Public transportation drives the American economy. APTA urges Congress and the Administration to provide \$138 billion for public transit and \$130 billion for passenger rail over five years.** These investments—coupled with new financing tools; streamlined statutory and regulatory requirements; and collaborative, local decision-making—will create family-wage American jobs; ensure safe, secure, and accessible transportation for the riding public; and foster innovation by supporting cutting-edge technologies and new service-delivery approaches in the transit marketplace.

## Surface Transportation Authorization: Public Transit Investment Proposal

Program	FY 2026 IIJA Authorized	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031	APTA Recommended Five-Year Total
<b>Public Transit Investment</b>	<b>\$22,292.00</b>	<b>\$26,332.02</b>	<b>\$26,928.54</b>	<b>\$27,533.10</b>	<b>\$28,149.40</b>	<b>\$28,779.02</b>	<b>\$137,722.08</b>
<b>Contract Authority</b>	<b>14,642.00</b>	<b>22,202.60</b>	<b>22,711.11</b>	<b>23,226.47</b>	<b>23,751.84</b>	<b>24,288.57</b>	<b>116,180.60</b>
§ 5305 Planning	202.44	229.54	234.96	240.45	246.05	251.76	1,202.76
§ 5307 and § 5336 Urbanized Area Formula	7,025.84	7,966.39	8,154.39	8,344.93	8,539.16	8,737.60	41,742.48
§ 5310 Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities	407.02	523.67	536.03	548.55	561.32	574.36	2,743.93
§ 5311 Rural Formula	959.64	1,088.11	1,113.79	1,139.81	1,166.34	1,193.44	5,701.48
§ 5312 Public Transportation Innovation	40.39	45.80	46.88	47.97	49.09	50.23	239.97
§ 5312(i) TCRP	7.21	15.00	15.36	15.72	16.08	16.46	78.62
§ 5314 Technical Assistance and Workforce Development	12.98	14.72	15.07	15.42	15.78	16.15	77.13
§ 5314(c) National Transit Institute	7.21	8.18	8.37	8.57	8.77	8.97	42.85
§ 5334 FTA Administration	153.21	169.39	173.39	177.44	181.57	185.79	887.59
§ 5335 National Transit Database	5.77	6.54	6.70	6.85	7.01	7.18	34.28
§ 5337 State of Good Repair	3,850.50	5,718.44	5,853.39	5,990.16	6,129.59	6,272.03	29,963.60
§ 5337(f) Rail Vehicle Replacement	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00	1,500.00
§ 5339 Buses and Bus Facilities	1,158.04	2,859.22	2,926.70	2,995.08	3,064.79	3,136.01	14,981.80
§ 5339(a) Bus Formula	662.20	1,854.45	1,898.22	1,942.57	1,987.79	2,033.98	9,717.00
§ 5339(b&c) Bus Competitive	490.36	998.55	1,022.12	1,046.00	1,070.35	1,095.22	5,232.23
§ 5340 Growing and High Density States	812.46	921.22	942.96	964.99	987.45	1,010.40	4,827.02
§ 3006(b) of FAST Act Coordinated Access and Mobility	5.05	5.72	5.86	6.00	6.14	6.28	30.00
§ 20005(b) of MAP-21 Pilot Program for TOD Planning	14.43	16.36	16.74	17.13	17.53	17.94	85.70
All Stations Accessibility Program	0.00	350.00	350.00	350.00	350.00	350.00	1,750.00
§ 5309 Capital Investment Grants (CIG)	0.00	1,989.02	2,035.96	2,083.53	2,132.03	2,181.57	10,422.12
Passenger Ferry Competitive Grants	0.00	280.00	280.00	280.00	280.00	280.00	1,400.00
Emergency Relief	0.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	125.00
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>3,400.00</b>	<b>4,129.42</b>	<b>4,217.43</b>	<b>4,306.63</b>	<b>4,397.56</b>	<b>4,490.45</b>	<b>21,541.48</b>
§ 5309 Capital Investment Grants (CIG)	3,000.00	3,729.42	3,817.43	3,906.63	3,997.56	4,090.45	19,541.48
Passenger Ferry Competitive Grants	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	1,250.00
§ 5019 of IIJA Act WMATA	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	750.00
Mega Events		such sums	such sums	such sums	such sums	such sums	such sums
<b>Advance Appropriations</b>	<b>4,250.00</b>						
§ 5309 Capital Investment Grants (CIG)	1,600.00						
§ 5310 Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities	50.00						
§ 5337(c&d) State of Good Repair	950.00						
§ 5339(c) Low or No Emission Bus Competitive Grants	1,050.00						
All Stations Accessibility Program	350.00						
Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Competitive Grants	50.00						
Rural Communities Essential Ferry Service	200.00						

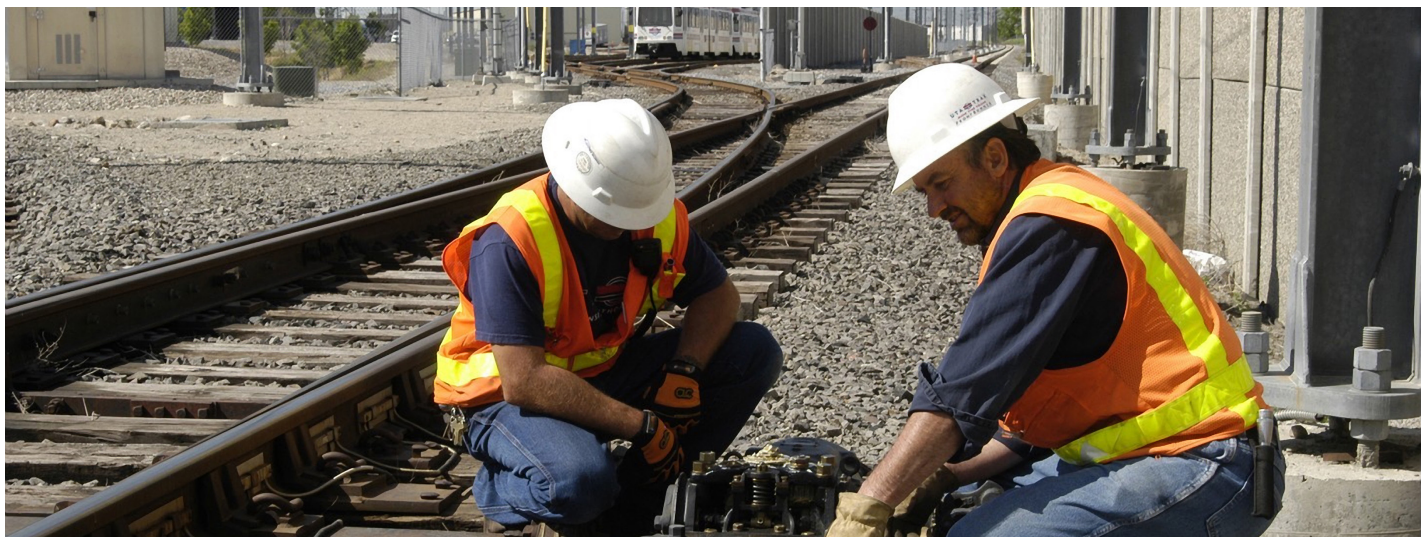
APTA proposes to provide all guaranteed public transit funding through Highway Trust Fund contract authority beginning in FY 2027. However, APTA supports any mechanism, including continued advance appropriations, that guarantees public transit investment.

## Surface Transportation Authorization: Passenger Rail Investment Proposal

	FY 2026 IIJA Authorized	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031	APTA Recommended Five-Year Total
<b>Passenger Rail Investment</b>	<b>\$21,004.50</b>	<b>\$24,811.18</b>	<b>\$25,373.25</b>	<b>\$25,942.89</b>	<b>\$26,523.60</b>	<b>\$27,116.85</b>	<b>\$129,767.78</b>
<b>Guaranteed Funding</b>	<b>13,200.00</b>	<b>16,036.13</b>	<b>16,398.53</b>	<b>16,765.89</b>	<b>17,140.49</b>	<b>17,523.31</b>	<b>83,864.34</b>
§ 22907 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI)	1,000.00	1,214.86	1,242.31	1,270.14	1,298.52	1,327.52	6,353.36
Amtrak Northeast Corridor (NEC)	1,200.00	1,457.83	1,490.78	1,524.17	1,558.23	1,593.03	7,624.03
Amtrak National Network	3,200.00	3,887.55	3,975.40	4,064.46	4,155.27	4,248.07	20,330.75
§ 22908 Restoration and Enhancement Grants	50.00	60.74	62.12	63.51	64.93	66.38	317.67
§ 22909 Railroad Crossing Elimination	600.00	728.91	745.39	762.09	779.11	796.51	3,812.02
§ 24911 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail	7,200.00	8,746.98	8,944.65	9,145.03	9,349.36	9,558.17	45,744.19
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>7,804.50</b>	<b>8,775.06</b>	<b>8,974.72</b>	<b>9,177.01</b>	<b>9,383.11</b>	<b>9,593.55</b>	<b>45,903.44</b>
Amtrak Northeast Corridor (NEC)	1,400.00	1,907.33	1,950.43	1,994.12	2,038.68	2,084.21	9,974.77
Amtrak National Network	3,000.00	2,794.17	2,857.32	2,921.33	2,986.60	3,053.30	14,612.73
FRA Safety and Operations	279.00	287.00	295.00	303.00	311.00	319.00	1,515.00
§ 20108 Railroad R&D	47.00	52.24	53.42	54.62	55.84	57.08	273.19
§ 22907 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI)	1,000.00	1,214.86	1,242.31	1,270.14	1,298.52	1,327.52	6,353.36
§ 22909 Railroad Crossing Elimination	500.00	607.43	621.16	635.07	649.26	663.76	3,176.68
§ 22908 Restoration and Enhancement	50.00	60.74	62.12	63.51	64.93	66.38	317.67
§ 24911 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail	1,500.00	1,822.29	1,863.47	1,905.21	1,947.78	1,991.29	9,530.04
Amtrak Inspector General	28.50	29.00	29.50	30.00	30.50	31.00	150.00

Amounts in millions of dollars.

APTA proposes to provide guaranteed passenger rail funding through continued advance appropriations. However, APTA supports any mechanism that guarantees passenger rail investment.





**For the full *APTA 2026 Surface Transportation  
Authorization Recommendations*, visit  
[www.apta.com/surfacerecs](http://www.apta.com/surfacerecs).**



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