



Smart Growth America

Improving lives by improving communities

Policy and Funding Advancing Public Health in Transportation

Towards Healthier Outcomes in Surface Transportation (10 April 2025)



Presenter



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**Transportation
for America**



National Complete
Streets Coalition



State
**Smart Transportation
Initiative**

LOCUS
Responsible Real Estate
Developers & Investors

FBCI Form-Based
Codes Institute

“We envision a country where no matter where you live, or who you are, you can enjoy living in a place that is healthy, prosperous, and resilient.”



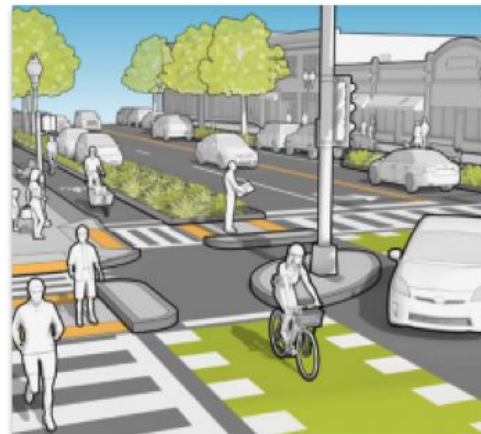
What We Do



Technical
Assistance



Advocacy



Thought
Leadership

Guiding principles for transportation investment

The time has come to elevate the national conversation about transportation beyond the cost—we need a vision for what we expect to accomplish.

America's federal transportation program does not address basic needs, and more money alone poured into this broken federal program will not suffice. Billions of dollars are spent without clear desired outcomes, and there is far too little accountability for accomplishing anything measurable and tangible.

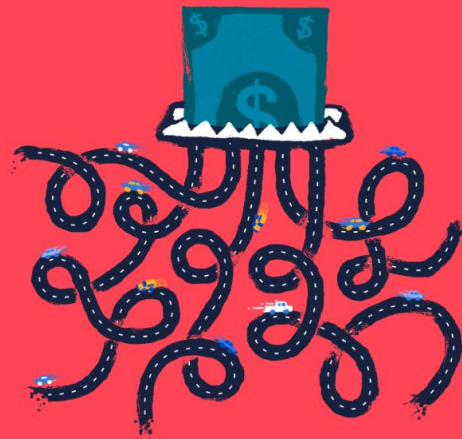
We need to reform the 70-year-old federal program to reflect today's needs and ensure a focus on fixing our existing system first, on improving safety, and on accountability.

Learn more: t4america.org/platform

PRINCIPLE #2

Fix it first

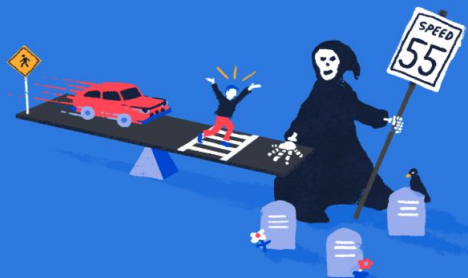
If your house has a leaky roof, you fix that before remodeling your kitchen. The federal transportation program should do the same and prioritize existing maintenance needs ahead of building new things which require decades of additional repair costs.



PRINCIPLE #1

Design for safety over speed

Any serious effort to reduce deaths on our streets and roads requires slower speeds. Federal funding should require approaches and street designs that put safety first.



PRINCIPLE #3

Invest in the rest

For 60 years we've invested hundreds of billions of dollars in highways. Now it's time to **invest in the rest** to create a complete transportation network so more Americans can safely travel by foot, bike, bus, or train.





Who are we designing for?



Vehicles, or People?

No two communities are the same



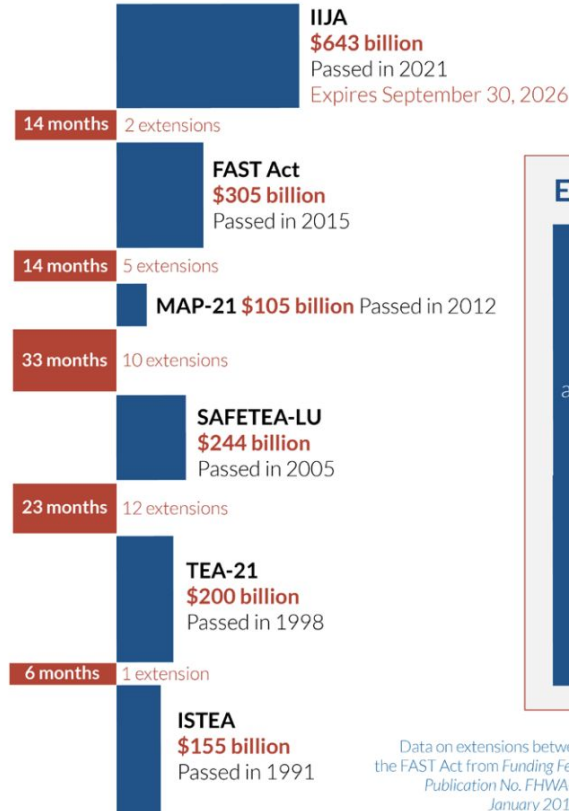
Federal Policy and Funding Reflections



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Past reauthorizations



Expect extensions

23 yrs
of normal
authorizations

The federal transportation program has operated on a **short-term extension a third of the time** since 1997.

7.5 yrs
of extensions

Data on extensions between ISTEA and the FAST Act from *Funding Federal-aid Highways*
Publication No. FHWA-PL-17-011
January 2017





Past reauthorizations





IIJA Reflections





Fueling the Crisis

Fueling the Crisis

Climate consequences of the 2021

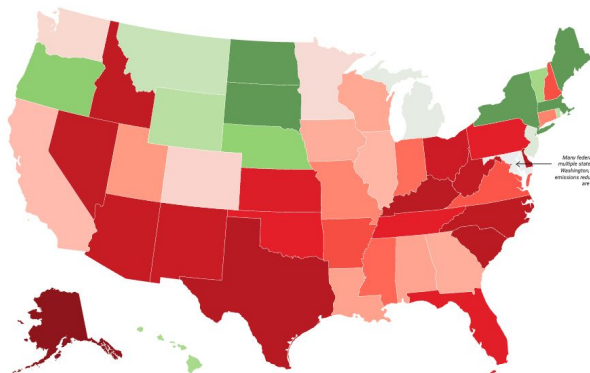


How are IIJA investments affecting carbon emissions shifts in states, per capita?

The IIJA provided states flexibility to spend federal dollars in ways that could either **reduce emissions*** (with investments in electrification, transit, walking, and biking) or **produce emissions*** (investments like highway widening that increase car usage and dependency).

Cumulative, per capita net tonnes CO₂e increase or reduction compared to baseline projections through 2040

-3.00 0.00 1.00



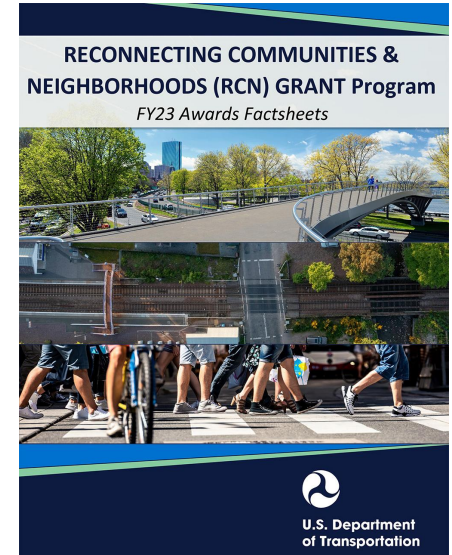
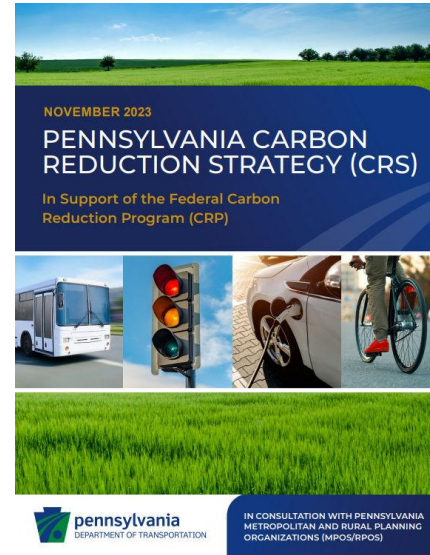
More federal aid investments covering multiple states were logged as increases in Washington, DC. Total emissions and emissions reduction attributable to GCRs are lower than listed.



<https://t4america.org/fueling-the-crisis/>



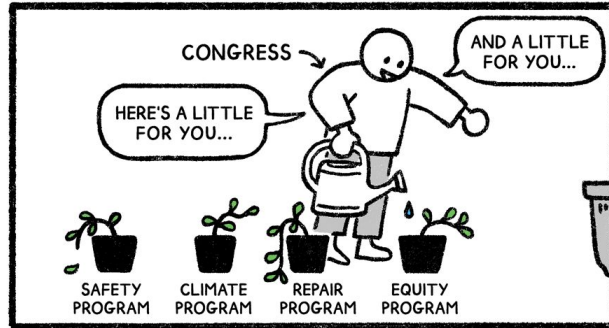
IIJA Policy Changes



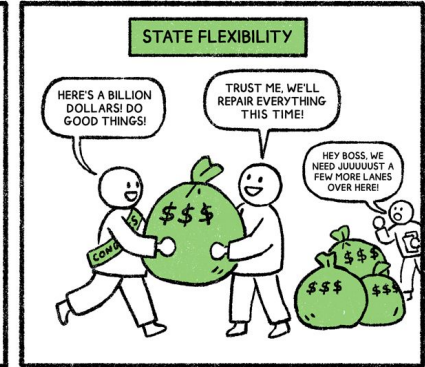
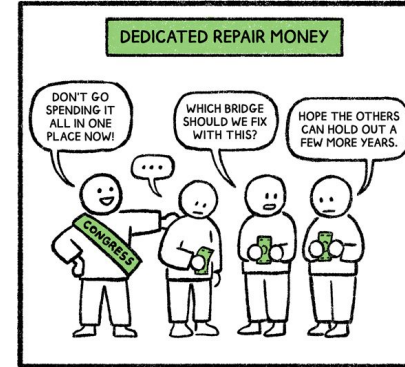


IIJA Policy Changes

WHEN CONGRESS TRIES TO SOLVE BIG TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS

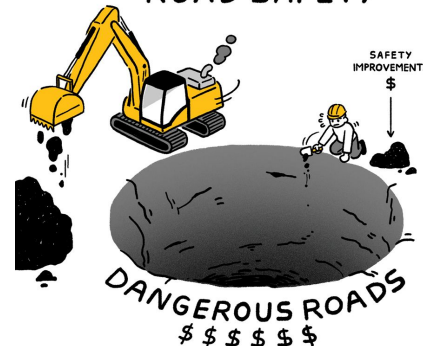


MONEY FOR REPAIRS



BY JEAN WEI FOR Transportation for America

U.S. APPROACH TO ROAD SAFETY





Other Recent Policy Changes



Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways 11th Edition



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

December 2023

Policy and Funding Strategies advancing Health in Transportation



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Rethink Transportation Decision Making



Siloed approach to the built environment perpetuates livability challenges



Invest in the Rest





Streetscape Accessibility





Encouraging Community Physical Activity



State Physical Activity and Nutrition

KEY POINTS

- CDC funds 17 states to carry out the current 5-year State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) program.
- Recipients use proven strategies to reduce health disparities related to nutrition, physical activity, and obesity.
- The SPAN program (CDC-RFA-DP-23-0012) runs from 2023 to 2028.





Policy Opportunities in Reauthorization

WORLD DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

An Open Letter to the New U.S. Congress and the New Administration: It's Time to Unite to Solve America's Roadway Crisis

"Just as we know the top factors causing roadway deaths, we also have the solutions to stem the traffic safety crisis. The key now is leadership – to act on this knowledge and put proven, life-saving tools in place."

1:00 PM EST on November 15, 2024



Photo: Brian Rimm

- Community Driven and People oriented speed limits and road design.
- Require automatic emergency braking for bikes and pedestrians.
- Driver education reform to regularly cover bikes and pedestrians.
- Supportive funding and technical assistance for small community projects promoting safety and physical activity.
- Repeal “value of time” or significantly reform it to account for all roadway users.
- Disallow negative safety performance targets.

Resources



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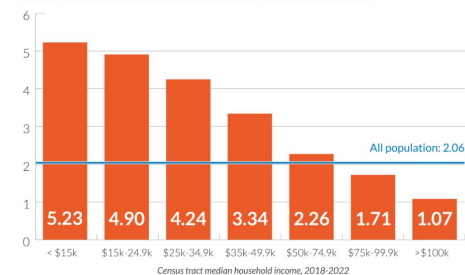
Dangerous by Design



- Drastic rise in roadway injuries and fatalities from walking and biking since 2010.
 - Design that prioritizes speed over safety
- Income, race, and age are significant predictors of current exposure to roadway safety risk, with low-income, people of color, especially above 50 years being the most vulnerable.
- Significant omission in roadway design and data is accounting for all people, regardless of physical, visual, hearing, or cognitive ability.

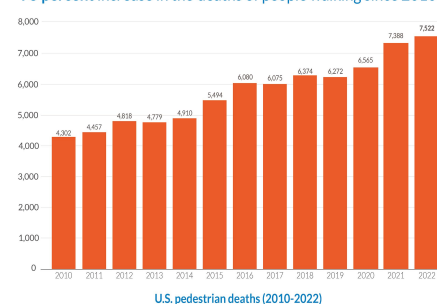
Lower-income areas have far higher rates of pedestrian deaths

Pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 people by census tract income



Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
(2024). Fatality Analysis Reporting System.

75 percent increase in the deaths of people walking since 2010



U.S. pedestrian deaths (2010-2022)

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AMERICA



Active Roadmap

An Active Roadmap: Best Practices in Rural Mobility

JULY 2023



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National Complete
Streets Coalition

- Defines the variety of rural typologies, their demographics, and mobility patterns.
- Nearly a third of rural residents do not have access to and/or can't operate a vehicle
- The importance of scaled relationship between landuse and multimodal transportation (i.e. rural transit, active transportation networks)



Community Connectors



This Community Connectors portal is our evolving tool for explaining:

- 1) Who is involved,
- 2) How the process unfolds, and
- 3) What DOTs really mean when they say, and then sharing
- 4) Real world stories from advocates—both successes and looming challenges.

Ever growing resource, both in T4A content and connecting to partner content.

<https://t4america.org/community-connectors/>



Explaining the actors

Who has control over the hundreds of billions in federal and state transportation dollars for transportation projects? Who are the entities involved in spending this money? Who are the agencies involved in making the decisions? Start here to find out more about the people you need to know: **who is involved**.

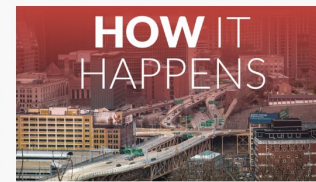
- State DOTs
- USDOT
- Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs)



Decoding common terms

Transportation engineers, planners, and decision makers often bury advocates in a sea of jargon and acronyms, accompanied by an explicit message that you *can't* possibly understand things well enough to suggest a different path. Start here to learn about the obscure, complex measures and models that have incredible influence over what gets built and where: **things DOTs say**.

- "We have to preserve level of service (LOS)"
- "Widening this road is guaranteed to improve traffic"
- "Sorry, our street design standards don't allow that"
- "The transportation models tell us that we have to..."
- "This project will definitely save people time"
- "We can't do that, we'd get sued!"



Demystifying the process

How does transportation money get spent? Where does the money come from? What things *can* federal transportation money be spent on? Start here to find out more about the process: **how it happens**.

- How are projects chosen for funding? (Programming)
- A plethora of plans: what do they all mean? (Planning)
- The limits of environmental laws (like NEPA) to protect communities



Advocate stories

"Community Connectors" all across the country are **fighting divisive, destructive, and unaffordable freeway expansions**, advancing projects to remove old highways, making wide, dangerous arterial roads a little safer for people to cross, or just improving basic infrastructure people depend on each day. These battles are won and lost—often on the same project. **Read a growing list of profiles** our team is producing about these stories.

Stories of success

- Greenville, SC: Out with the cars, in with the people
- Gretna, LA: Tracking a downtown divide
- Milwaukee, WI: The long fight for connectivity



Additional Resources



Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation

Support for this research was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.

More than One in Five Adults with Limited Public Transit Access Forgo Health Care Because of Transportation Barriers

Laura Barrie Smith, Michael Karpman, Dulce Gonzalez, and Sarah Morriss

April 2023



Preventing Chronic Disease

Search



PREVENTING CHRONIC DISEASE
PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND POLICY

Prevalence of Municipal-Level Policies Dedicated to Transportation That Consider Food Access

ORIGINAL RESEARCH — Volume 18 — November 18, 2021 33

Brianna L. Dumas, MPH, RD¹; Diane M. Harris, PhD, MPH, CHES¹; Jean M. McMahon, PhD, MS²; Thomas J. Daymude, MPA³; Amy Lowry Warnock, MPA¹; Latetia V. Moore, PhD, MSPH¹; Stephen J. Onufrak, PhD, MPH¹ (VIEW AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS)

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The Association between Public Transportation and Social Isolation in Older Adults: A Scoping Review of the Literature

Madeline Lamanna ¹, Christopher A Klinger ^{2 3}, Anna Liu ³, Raza M Mirza ^{2 3}



► Innov Aging. 2020 Dec 16;4(Suppl 1):299–300. doi: [10.1093/geroni/igaa057.959](https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igaa057.959)

Influence of Driving and Transportation Access on Social Isolation Risk Among Older Adults

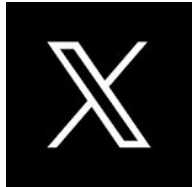
Matthew Smith ¹, Caroline Bergeron ², Matthew Barrett ¹, Leigh Ann Eagle ³, Sue Lachenmayr ³



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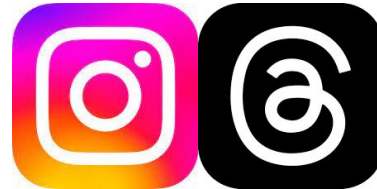
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QUESTIONS

