



# 118th U.S. Congress Policy Priorities:

## TRANSPORTATION

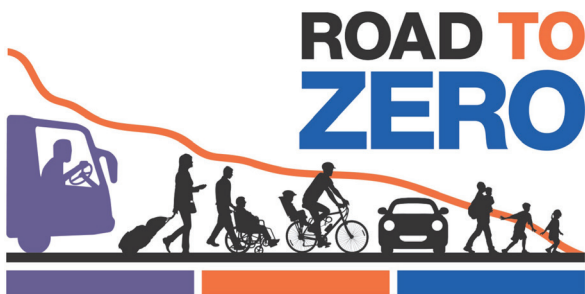


The American Public Works Association (APWA), representing over 30,000 public works professionals in North America, is committed to making transportation infrastructure safer, more resilient, and best able to meet the changing needs of the 21st century.

APWA applauds the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law November 15, 2021. The \$1.2 trillion federal investment over 5-years demonstrates an important commitment and partnership between the federal, state, and local levels of government. This increased funding must be distributed in a timeframe that government agencies can accommodate, while controlling project costs. We must work together to build on the opportunities IIJA is creating through successful implementation, and to enhance this goal, APWA supports the following:

### SAFETY

A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) [September 2022 Traffic Safety Facts report](#) states for seven consecutive quarters, beginning with the third quarter of 2020, there has been a year-to-year increase in traffic related fatalities. NHTSA's projection for the first half of 2022 indicated 20,175 people died in motor vehicle crashes (almost 112 fatalities/day). This trend is moving in the wrong direction, and according to the same report, the highest number of fatalities during the first half of a year since 2006. We must work together to reverse this terrible trend.



APWA strongly supports funding increases IIJA authorizes for existing transportation safety programs and its establishment of new programs with a significant safety component. Specifically, APWA is focused on ensuring these programs are fully funded and the information is disseminated to our membership for maximum impact on improving the safety of all those utilizing our transportation network. These programs include, though are not limited to:

- Highway Safety Improvement Program
- Rail-Highway Grade Crossing Formula Program
- Safe Routes to School
- Safe Streets and Roads for All
- Transportation Alternatives Program
- Wildlife Crossing Safety

Additionally, APWA backs transportation programs supporting safety improvements for rural roads, work zones, public transit, railroads, trails, and for achieving road to zero goals, and improving traffic incident management. Due to the importance of safety, APWA strongly encourages the greatest possible amount of flexibility and accommodations to support safety projects, and to include streamlining for permitting, reporting, and other project requirements.

### CONTINUE STREAMLINING SUCCESS

APWA is pleased with the enactment of "One Federal Decision" processes in IIJA, and the law takes important steps to continue responsible streamlining of regulatory requirements and permitting processes to protect the environment while effectively distributing funds.

Ensuring all communities – especially small, rural, tribal, or historically disadvantaged – can access the funding opportunities of IIJA. Making certain these communities can connect to technical experts and leverage resources to assist in streamlining infrastructure processes and permitting is essential to the law's success and improving and protecting quality of life. It is important that local governments have a seat at the table and are fully engaged in the permitting process as they know their communities best.

In addition to the steps already taken, APWA strongly suggests the following:

- Continue to enact major streamlining improvements to processes for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental clearances and permit approvals, including expanding categorical exclusions (especially projects aligning with safety and sustainability goals). Exempt environmentally beneficial active transportation and public transit projects from federal regulations (especially NEPA), such as projects funded under the Transportation Alternatives Program.

- Exempt small projects – those receiving \$5M, or less than 25% of total project cost from federal sources – from federal regulatory requirements.
- State and local projects should not be subject to federal laws and regulations until federal funding has been approved for a project, and these laws and regulations should not be retroactive to past project phases.
- Authorize a portion of federal funding to go directly to the local end-user governments (instead of the current pass-through agency processing), or at a minimum direct the federal agencies processing the funding allocations to do so in a ministerial fashion.
- Strongly encourage all states to allow Federal Fund Exchange (swap of federal funds for state or local funds) between a state and its local agencies and among local agencies.

## INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCE



Investing in America's transportation infrastructure strengthens our communities, protects public safety and health, and creates economic opportunity. It is vital that our transportation network be built, replaced, and retrofitted for increased resiliency. APWA supports an approach that incentivizes resiliency measures in infrastructure planning and design, prioritizes projects that strengthen a community's ability to withstand future impacts, and supports the

development of tools to build more resilient systems. Additionally, APWA supports restoring the ability for state and local governments to issue tax-exempt advance refunding bonds to assist in lowering the total costs of bond funded infrastructure. Furthermore, APWA supports a broad approach to sustainable infrastructure including active transportation options such as bicycles, pedestrian, and mass transit.

The nation's transportation network and system users are negatively impacted when severe weather, system failures, lack of proper maintenance, cyber breaches, and other disruptions occur. Public works has a key role in safeguarding our communities and welcomes the establishment of new funding streams to increase infrastructure

resiliency and help address these challenges, including the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative Efficient Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) and the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) programs. These new programs, in addition to the largest ever increase in funding for transit, and regional opportunities, like those available through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grants, can go a long way to assisting communities of all sizes and diverse needs in improving resiliency, safety, and economic opportunity.

For all infrastructure law programs to be most effective, application processes must not be too complex or onerous so small, rural, and historically disadvantaged communities can reasonably access funding.

Finally, transportation infrastructure needs to be built in a holistic manner that efficiently moves people and goods while also supporting a community's natural environment and character to serve the needs of its residents.

## WORKFORCE

APWA supports dedicated and full federal funding for workforce programs authorized by Congress in IIJA. A skilled and educated workforce is critical to the successful implementation of the law and to support America's vast infrastructure network. With our nation facing unprecedented workforce shortages, our workforce must be a priority. As the leader in public works education and credentialing programs, APWA encourages and values continual education and professional growth opportunities for those who build, operate, and maintain our nation's infrastructure. Fully funding and standing up IIJA authorized workforce development programs will allow our workforce to remain well-trained and on the cutting edge of their career fields, to best support our country's infrastructure needs, economy, and quality of life.



Successful implementation must be the primary goal for the 5-year infrastructure law. It is important for Congress to exercise its oversight responsibility to assist federal agencies and the public in ensuring the law and its funding opportunities are best leveraged and to the benefit of all communities. Over the coming years, Congress and the Administration must ensure dedicated and reliable transportation funding to maintain and improve our transportation systems' ability to meet our nation's economic, safety, and resiliency needs into the future. Public works entities are key partners in these efforts serving all and being at the forefront in planning, designing, building, operating and maintaining, and emergency response for all facets of our infrastructure network.

**APWA Government Affairs  
118th United States Congress**

## TRANSPORTATION

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