



Federal Transportation Authorization Principles

Overarching Principles

The California Transit Association....

1. Supports maintaining a strong federal leadership role in providing a national surface transportation system and opposes efforts to significantly reduce or eliminate the federal role in funding surface transportation.
2. Supports the retention of key elements already a part of the surface transportation program, including flexible funding of surface transportation projects, an appropriate balance between highway and transit investments, administrative and environmental process streamlining, community enhancements and public participation in the funding process.
3. Supports the continuation of guaranteed funding levels for the transit and highway programs.
4. Supports maintaining the federal and local match for transportation projects in such a manner that the required local match for projects does not increase, but that a higher local match is permitted at the discretion of state or local grantees.
5. Supports the continuation of the mass transit account as a separate and distinct account within the highway trust fund, and opposes any efforts to transfer or loan funds from the mass transit account for any other purpose within or outside of the highway trust fund.
6. Supports authorizing individual programs under the transit title at increasing funding levels which are sufficient to address current and future transit needs, including increased federal investment to modernize and expand the capacity of our nation's aging rail infrastructure.
7. Supports authorizing appropriate transit-eligible programs under the highway title at increasing funding levels to address identified needs.
8. Supports retention of a central formula program supplemented by discretionary programs.
9. Supports the need to address the transportation impact of the movement of goods by rail and truck, using infrastructure shared with transit or causing transportation congestion on adjacent infrastructure, in such a way as to benefit all uses.

10. Supports an authorization bill of 6 years in duration which will provide a predictable and stable source of long term capital and operating funding.
11. Supports initiatives to develop the workforce necessary to successfully deliver transit services including flexibility of federal funds for training purposes as well as continued and expanded funding of regional training consortium programs which provide advanced transit specific training through local community colleges and similar educational institutions.
12. Supports the need to provide additional federal transportation funding for strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to financially assist local transportation systems implementing these strategies.

Program/Regulatory Issues

The California Transit Association calls for changes in certain program structure and regulatory processes, and continuation of others, as specified below:

1. For transit agencies in urbanized areas (UZA's) moving from less than 200,000 to more than 200,000 (i.e. into the UZA classification where formula dollars can no longer be used for operations) we support permitting the continuation of allowing the use of formula dollars for operations for some limited transition period.
2. Support continuation and expansion of the Small Transit Intensive Cities Program (STIC), which provides supplemental formula funds to smaller transit systems on the basis of performance in six qualifying performance areas, and provide that the value of qualifying in each of the six areas shall be increased by the same percentage as the increase in the overall formula program each year of the authorization.
3. In the 5311 program, we support a transfer of the Intercity Bus Program set aside to the more flexible discretionary program, as was done prior to ISTEA, where it can be used for paratransit, local or commuter bus capital projects.
4. We support further streamlining of federal audit requirements and the triennial review process, including allowing concurrent state and federal audits.
5. We support development of guidelines specifying that representatives of labor (associated unions) can only comment on issues and lodge objections related to the specific impacts of a transit project contained within a grant application and must explain and justify such objections. All other unrelated objections should be deemed ineligible by the Department of Labor and cause no schedule impact to the approval of the grant request. The Federal Transit Administration must ensure that there is a timely review period for 13c comments but a maximum review time (to be determined) must be approved after which it is assumed that there are no comments against the applicable project and or grant application. This is not meant to diminish the importance of labor review of federally funded projects and grant applications but to streamline the review process and ensure timely approval of funds to transit agencies.

6. We support reforms to FTA's evaluation/rating process for New Starts projects as follows: (a) utilizing a multi-measure approach to determine whether a project is recommended for funding; (b) ensuring that transit-supportive land use and economic benefits are treated as separate and distinct criteria on par with financial and project justification criteria; (c) rewarding those communities that step forward with significant local and non-federal resources for their projects; (d) basing the cost-effectiveness measure on the federal contribution to the project, rather than on total project costs; and (e) keeping the New Starts evaluation/rating process separate and distinct from the issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD) under NEPA.
7. We support a program which will provide funds to transit systems to compensate them for their efforts to reduce greenhouse gases either on their own initiative or in response to state and/or federal requirements.
8. We support the continuation of the ability to transfer CMAQ and RSTP funding from FHWA to FTA for transit projects, the streamlining of the transfer process, the ability to use these funds in any percentage combination with other federal or non federal funding and the continued use of CMAQ funds for the first three years of operation of new start projects.
9. We support continuing the concept of allowing section 5307 funds to be used to pay for capitalized preventive maintenance costs.
10. We support development of a mechanism or procedures for all regional transportation planning agencies, which do not otherwise have proscribed procedures, to consider the needs of all eligible public transit operators in the region in the allocation of all transit-eligible federal formula funds.
11. We support continuing the concept of allowing section 5310 funds to be used to pay for contracted transit operations costs.
12. We support a strong federal commitment, separate from traditional transportation funding sources, for transit security. These funds should be provided with a minimum of mandates and restrictions, so long as they meet the long term federal goals for system security.