



**NARC**

*Building Regional Communities*

*National Association of Regional Councils*



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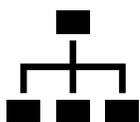
# TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE



Transportation infrastructure is the nation's economic backbone and essential to a high quality of life. Maintaining and expanding the nation's system of highways and roads, bridges, transit systems, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities is essential for the well-being of all Americans.

## **The Role of Regional Planning:**

Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and Regional or Rural Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) convene local officials and empower them to prioritize the distribution of limited federal funds based on the interplay between mobility, access to opportunities, and economic performance, to develop transportation solutions that reflect local needs and maximize benefits and minimize costs. MPOs and RTPOs ensure projects are carefully considered and appropriately prioritized within an entire region.



The decades-long partnership between federal, state, tribal, and local governments and regional planning organizations, established in federal law, ensures that federal funds are spent by local officials in a manner that reflects local prioritization and decision-making while also contributing to federal goals. Going forward, federal legislation should continue to evolve to better reflect the increased role MPOs and RTPOs can play in a transportation environment where rapid shifts in technology, data, demographics, and climate are all cross-jurisdictional challenges that require regional approaches.



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## SUPPORT AND FUND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Congress should support regional planning and local prioritization in an infrastructure package and in the upcoming transportation reauthorization:



**Dedicate additional revenue to ensure Highway Trust Fund solvency.**

Congress must close the existing funding gap and grow the program over the coming decade. Increasing and indexing existing federal fuel taxes can achieve near-term solvency. This will provide a window to identify, study, and implement a long-term solution such as a mile-based user fee.



**Increase funding for transportation planning.** Effective planning crafts solutions that address a variety of transportation needs. Additional funding can support the increasingly complex array of activities and analyses regional planners face.

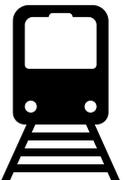


**Increase the portion of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) provided to local areas through their MPO.** STBGP is the most direct way to provide federal funding for local transportation priorities. Increasing the portion of the program provided for this purpose will enhance local authority.



**Increase authority of and funding for non-metropolitan planning organizations to incentivize rural planning and urban-rural collaboration.**

Encouraging more states to create and support RTPOs would help rural communities compete economically.



**Support multimodal investments and provide flexibility in the types of projects federal funding supports.** Transit, rail, bike and pedestrian, safety, and other similar projects should remain federal priorities. Flexible funding allows communities to prioritize their federal funding in a manner that reflects local needs.

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