



April 29, 2022

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development & Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development & Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Schatz, Ranking Member Collins,

AMPO is a nonprofit, membership organization established in 1994 to serve the needs and interests of “metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs)” nationwide. Federal highway and transit statutes require, as a condition for spending federal highway or transit funds in urbanized areas, the designation of MPOs, which have responsibility for planning, programming, and coordination of federal highway and transit investments. The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) represents regional and metropolitan planning organizations, which plan for and prioritize funding across a variety of policy areas including transportation, economic development, and environmental initiatives.

Our organizations are writing to request the fiscal year (FY) 2023 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations bill provide \$100,000,000 for the Healthy Streets Program and \$200,000,000 for the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program. Both programs were authorized by Congress at these funding levels under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Congress did not fund either of these programs in FY22, but we believe these are particularly important programs and address key policy priorities.

Healthy Streets Program - This program was authorized in Section 11406 of the IIJA. Specifically, the law establishes a discretionary grant program to provide grants to eligible entities, including Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), to carry out projects that would contribute to improving safety, the health of communities, the natural environment, and quality of life in low-income communities and disadvantaged communities. Most of the funds (80%) are directed towards urban areas where MPOs play a critical role when it comes to planning how federal dollars are invested. Expanding tree cover in roadside locations and replacing traditional pavement with innovative permeable and reflective pavement would defend communities against both extreme heat and air pollution as well as water pollution. We strongly support the goals of the program including the mitigation of urban heat islands, improving air quality, and addressing the impacts of climate change. Fully funding this program will create safer roadways for the members of the communities we serve, and who need it most, while expanding the urban forest in low-canopy areas.

Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program – This program was authorized in Section 11529 of the IIJA. This is a competitive grant program that would support the strategic investments in projects that connect active transportation networks and accelerate local and regional plans to create safe and convenient routes to everyday destinations such as schools, businesses, and public transportation. Both MPOs and regional planning organizations are eligible entities. Grants would support both planning and construction. Fully funding this program at the authorized levels combined with this requirement to reduce regulatory burdens on small projects would help meet the overwhelming nationwide demand for active transportation networks that provide opportunities for safe walking and bicycling to daily destinations. It would also help enable the communities we work with to address climate change by shifting transportation to carbon-free transportation options.

Thank you for considering these requests. We are happy to answer any questions you may have or to discuss this matter further. Please contact Bill Keyrouze, Executive Director at AMPO, at bkeyrouze@ampo.org or Erich Zimmermann, Deputy Director at NARC, at erich@narc.org.

Sincerely,



Leslie Wollack
Executive Director
National Association
of Regional Councils



William Keyrouze
Executive Director
Association of Metropolitan
Planning Organizations