



Surface Transportation Reauthorization

Utah's Background & Principles 2025

Provided by Utah's Transportation Partners

Background

The current federal multi-year surface transportation authorization legislation — the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) — expires on September 30, 2026. Utah's transportation agencies and partners have jointly developed key *principles* for a multi-year reauthorization to keep Utah moving. These shared principles aim to advance the collaborative work between all partners, as embodied in [Utah's Unified Transportation Plan](#).

Considerations as Utah stakeholders engage in transportation reauthorization deliberations:

- **Utah is one of the fastest-growing states in the nation**, with its population projected to nearly double to five million people by 2050. Mobility, economy, and quality of life in Utah depend on providing transportation choices to keep Utah moving.
- **Utah is nationally recognized for its data-driven collaborative planning processes** through Utah's Unified Transportation Plan. All of Utah's transportation agencies collaborate to develop the Unified Plan, with engagement and support from the private sector, public sector, and community stakeholders. Through the Unified Plan partnership, Utah identifies and advances national, state, and local transportation priorities. Utah's collaborative approach increases efficiency and effectiveness by building consensus, prioritizing the most impactful policies and investments, and streamlining project development – making Utah a prudent steward of federal and other funding.
- **Federal funds are an essential component of transportation funding in Utah.** They are used for new capacity projects, basic maintenance and preservation of state highways, expansion of the transit system, and improvements to city and county roadways.
- **Investing in transportation infrastructure is a national priority and core federal role.** The IIJA contained myriad new discretionary grant programs, and Utah has been making the most of these opportunities, competitively seeking these funding opportunities for Utah's needs. However, given the need to prioritize and efficiently deploy limited federal resources, Utah urges a primary focus on the core formula programs that are part of the standard surface transportation reauthorization. Formula funds provide the stability and predictability that is essential to infrastructure planning, programming, and construction. These formula programs have existed across numerous transportation authorizations, have bipartisan support, and have demonstrated value for Utah and the nation over many years.



Principles

1. ***Provide Long-Term and Timely Reauthorization***

Stability and predictability in transportation funding are essential for greater mobility, air quality, safety, and quality of life. A reauthorization bill should be adopted on time and should be a multi-year authorization to avoid uncertainty and disruptions in critical infrastructure investments and to provide stability and predictability. And as Utah prepares to host another Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2034, federal reauthorization of key transportation infrastructure programs will be essential for ensuring the State of Utah is ready to host the world.

2. ***Authorize Robust Investment Levels***

The IIJA authorized and appropriated significant investments in transportation programs over a five-year period. Maintaining — if not enhancing — this level of investment gives Utah's transportation partners the resources needed to plan, construct, and operate our transportation system in our fast-growing state.

3. ***Enhance Formula Funding and Evaluate Discretionary Programs***

The IIJA authorized numerous new competitive discretionary funding programs that Utah has benefited from. However, the proliferation of discretionary grant programs creates administrative inefficiencies at the federal and state/local levels. In contrast, formula funding provides administrative efficiency as well as the predictability that is essential for infrastructure planning and investment. Discretionary grant programs should be evaluated to consolidate similar programs, reduce ineffective programs, and enhance highly utilized and well-performing programs. Enhancing formula programs would make federal funding go further and represent an effective federal-state-local partnership.

4. ***Establish Reliable Funding Mechanisms***

User fees, including the federal motor fuel tax, should continue to provide the core funding for the federal transportation program. Sustainable funding strategies that meet long-term funding needs, including road usage charges, should continue to be explored.

5. ***Streamline Processes and Improve Project Delivery***

Reducing delays and increasing accountability in project approval is critical to ensure that transportation projects can move forward without unnecessary regulatory burdens. Federal review and approval processes should be streamlined to reduce time and eliminate unnecessary duplication and cost. State and local transportation entities should be given adequate flexibility and greater authority to assume responsibilities traditionally handled by federal agencies, enabling them to take action more quickly and efficiently as long as they can demonstrate that they are effectively advancing shared goals.



Utah's Transportation Partners

- Wasatch Front Regional Council
- Mountainland Association of Governments
- Utah Department of Transportation
- Utah Transit Authority
- Cache MPO
- Dixie MPO
- Connect Transit (Cache Valley)
- Cedar Area Transportation - CATS (Cedar City)
- Suntran (St. George)
- Utah League of Cities and Towns
- Utah Association of Counties
- Salt Lake and Other Chambers of Commerce
- Utah's Urban & Rural Specialized Transportation Association (URSTA)
- American Council of Engineering Companies of Utah
- Associated General Contractors



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