2024 Legislative and Federal Policy Priorities

1. Maintain full funding for FTA formula grant programs as authorized in IIJA.

2. Provide 80 percent federal share for all FTA formula grants, regardless of whether these grants are providing operating or capital assistance to public transit providers.

3. Create a tier of supplemental Section 5311 funding to be awarded on a STIC-like basis to states in which rural transit providers exceed selected performance benchmarks.

4. Assure that FTA recipients and subrecipients can retain all of the proceeds from the sale or disposition of vehicles acquired with FTA financial assistance when they commit to using these proceeds for capital replacement.

5. Set aside a percentage of Section 5339 bus and bus facility grants, including Section 5339(c) low- and no-emission bus and bus facility grants, for award to tribal nations’ bus, bus facilities, and “low/no” projects.

6. Make the Internal Revenue Code’s charitable mileage rate for volunteer drivers the same as the mileage rate for non-taxed reimbursable business travel, and adjust the charitable mileage rate annually, just like the business rate.

7. Have FTA establish a public interest waiver from Buy America for standard production vans and minivans, including vans and minivans modified solely to become accessible to wheelchair-using passengers, provided that the final assembly of these vans and minivans takes place in the US, Canada or Mexico.

8. Develop criteria for identifying particular states and urban areas with exceptionally low numbers of CDL-holding drivers as “transportation professional shortage areas,” and give FTA authority to consider waiving any or all provisions at 49 USC Section 5323 as requested by FTA recipients in those areas.

9. Require FTA to identify the scope of data collection and reporting requirements currently placed upon its rural, tribal and smaller urban transit recipients, and mandate that no additional data collection or reporting requirements be placed on these transit providers until or unless existing requirements are streamlined, simplified or reduced.

10. Have DOT and HHS take steps to accelerate the implementation of saliva-based testing for marijuana among employers and employees covered by federally required transportation workforce drug and alcohol testing regulations.

11. Call upon FTA to allow (and provide guidance concerning) advance and progress-based payments for vehicle procurements likely to take 13 months or more to fulfill, and establish mechanisms by which FTA can allow the use of performance bonds to assure timely, cost-compliant production and delivery of transit vehicles.

12. Change DOT NEPA guidelines to allow FTA recipients to acquire the real estate for bus-related facilities prior to beginning the environmental assessment process.

13. Provide technical assistance and financial incentives to advance the deployment of charging infrastructure for electric medium- and heavy-duty buses, trucks and heavy equipment where appropriate in smaller communities and rural areas, particularly to enable coordination and partnerships between local utilities, transit agencies, local public works agencies and other fleet operators.

14. Establish a program of FTA formula grants specifically for tribal nations’ transit projects on reservations and tribal lands in urban areas with populations greater than 50,000.