

It's All About the **BASICS** in the **Transportation Bill Ahead**

Pennsylvania Municipal League
February 25, 2026



Who We Are

The Local Officials in Transportation (LOT) Coalition amplifies the voices of thousands of organizations and individuals across the nation with a vested interest in the long-term success of our transportation system. Together, our members own, maintain, plan for, and support about half of the federal-aid highway system and the bridges nationwide.

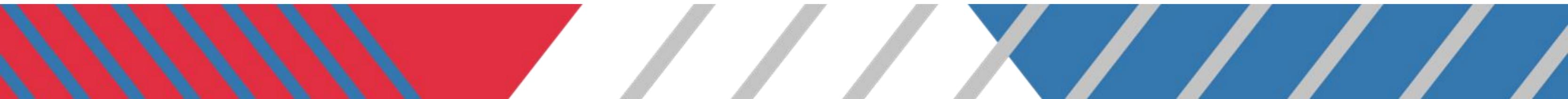


What Does Your Community and Region Need in the Next Transportation Bill?



What's Possible in a Transportation Bill

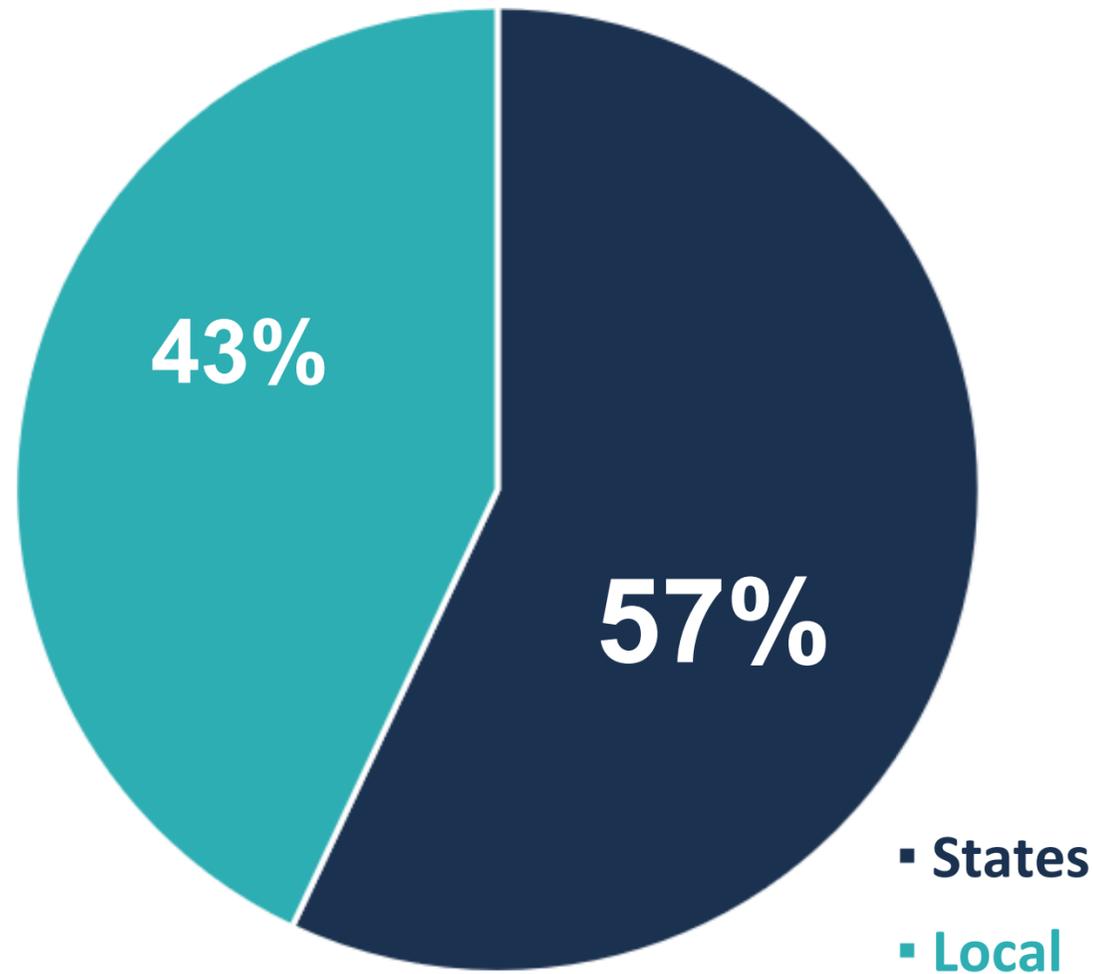
- Do you wish your region had more funding for **priority projects**?
- Do you need to fix a **bridge** that's in bad shape before something happens?
- Do you need to make improvements on dangerous **roads and intersections**?
- What if you never had to apply for a **grant** again? Or if you apply that your community had a **better chance of winning**?
- Do you wish your region could **plan for new projects** for the future whether your community is in a rural or urban area?



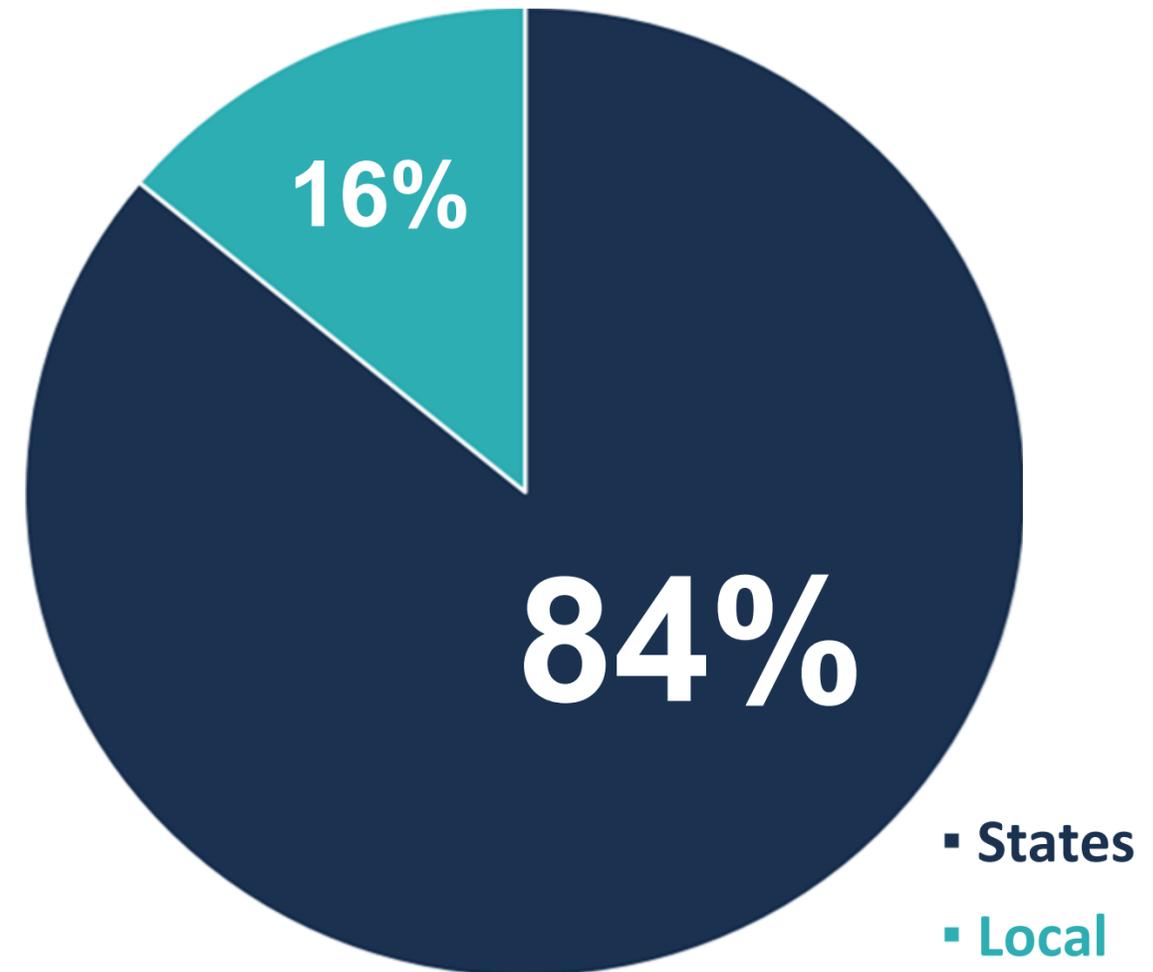
Why Isn't the Federal Transportation Process Meeting Your Goals?



Local Governments Own **43%** of the Federal-Aid Highway System and **75%** of all U.S. road miles

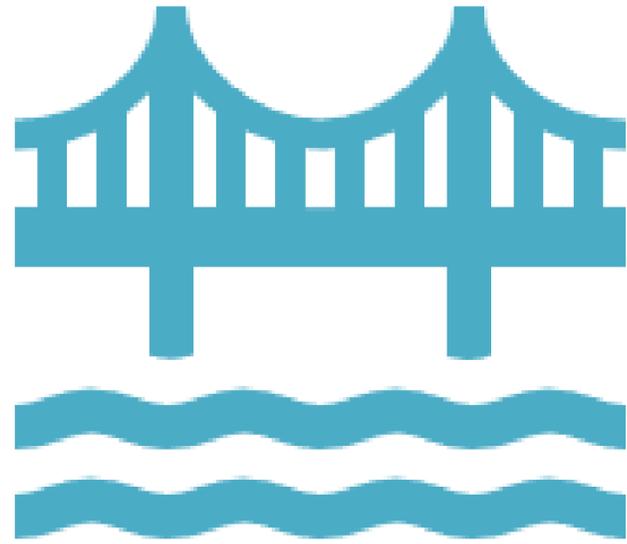


Yet Communities Only See **16%** of the Federal-Aid Highway Funding

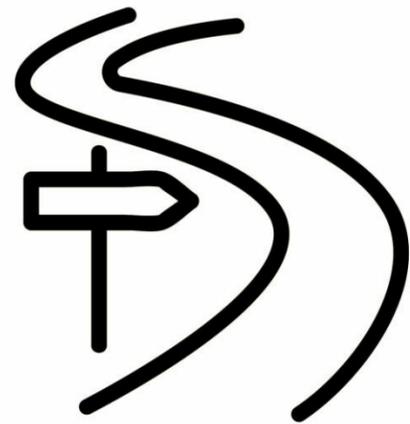


Responsibility \neq Resources

*The distribution is out of **balance***



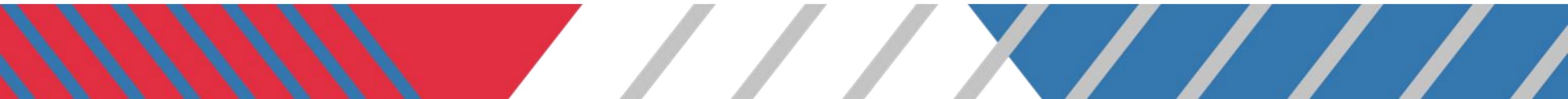
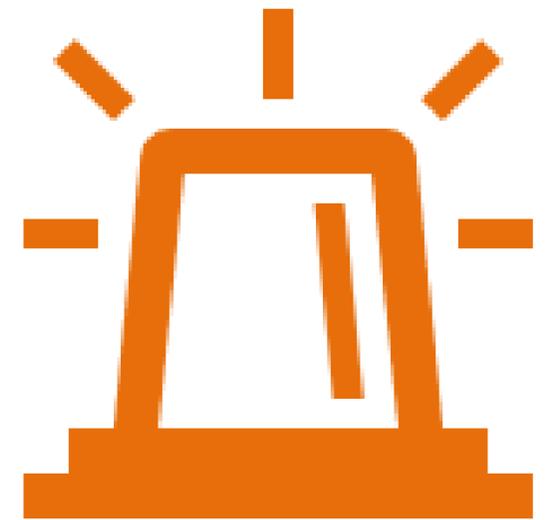
Locally-owned bridges are **2X** more likely to be in "poor" condition than state-owned bridges often because the cost of the bridge exceeds local budget capacity.



Nearly **half** of locally owned principal arterials are in poor condition, compared with just 7 percent of similar state-owned roads.



America lost **39,345 lives** on our roads in 2024, but road deaths are finally trending down after dedicated safety programs like **Safe Streets** that invested in putting immediate and proven counter safety measures into place could respond to common-sense needs locally without years of waiting for prioritization and funding. We **can** double down on what's working.



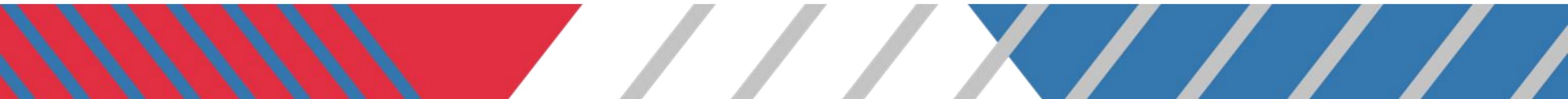
What Can We Do To Fix This and How Could H.R. 7437, the BASICS Act Help?



1. Put every level of government to work - local, regional, state and federal - and expect results.

1. Connect ownership of the federal-aid system to the formula programs which delivers the majority of funding.

1. Balance systematic formula funding - including planning - with strategic infusions from competitive grants.



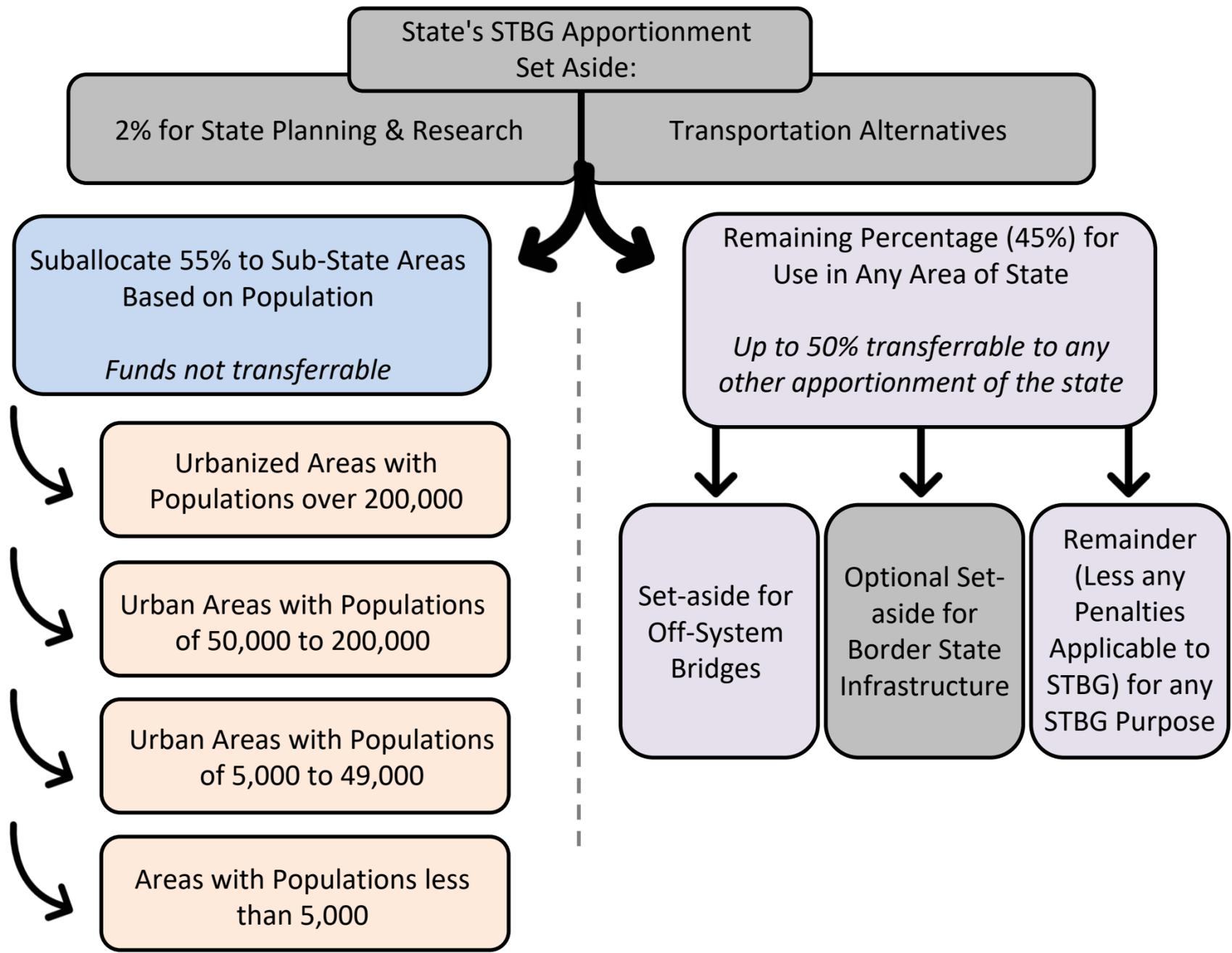
Investing in the BASICS

The **BASICS** (Bridges And Safety Infrastructure for Community Success) Act ([H.R. 7437](#)) makes targeted updates to existing federal transportation programs to strengthen safety, fix poor condition bridges, improve accountability, and speed delivery of local and regional projects.

What the Bill Does:

- **Delivers local and regional priority projects faster**
- **Fixes bridges based on condition and ownership**
- **Targets safety dollars to high-risk roads**
- **Strengthens accountability and local project selection**
- **Builds planning capacity to deliver better projects faster**
- **Provides support for rural transportation planning organizations**
- **Protects local and regional dollars from being transferred away**

Surface Transportation Block Grant Formula Flow



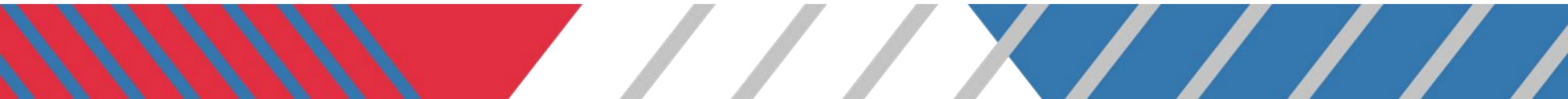
How Does the BASICS Act Help Your Community?



Who Benefits from the BASICS Act?

Communities who own and maintain bridges benefit.

- The bill updates the Bridge Formula Program by dividing funding among states based on poor bridge condition.
- Guarantees that 25% of funding is spent on projects that appear in an MPO's regional Transportation Improvement Plan, or for areas under a 50,000 population, by consultation with local governments and state municipal/county associations.
 - Does not allow this 25% of funding to be transferred away.



Who Benefits from the BASICS Act?

Communities with high rates of fatalities, injuries, or other safety issues benefit.

- The bill increases the percentage of funding for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP).
- Allows projects that meet Safe Streets and Roads for All standards to qualify for HSIP funding.
- Guarantees that 25% of HSIP funding is spent on projects that appear in an MPO's regional Transportation Improvement Plan, or for areas under a 50,000 population, by consultation with local governments and state municipal/county associations.
 - Does not allow this 25% of funding to be transferred away.
- Of the remaining 75%, before transferring funding to non-safety projects as allowed by law, states must run a competitive grant program for local governments.

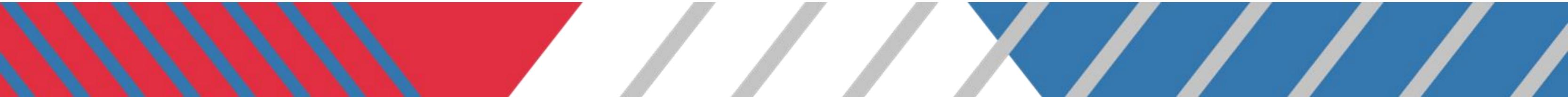
Who Benefits from the BASICS Act?

Communities who want to direct more transportation dollars to their communities benefit from the BASICS Act.

- **Increases the percentage of funds for the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program**, the most flexible funding source for projects.
- This **benefits states and benefits MPOs, counties, and cities** by giving them the dollars to fund basic projects and maintain infrastructure.

Said another way...

MPOs and RTPOs who program transportation project dollars, or would like to program more dollars benefit from the BASICS Act.

- They benefit by the increase in percentage of funds to the STBG Program.
 - **MPOs and RTPOs are required to be consulted** when states obligate the 25% of HSIP and 25% of Bridge funding, because the funding is required to be spent on projects in MPO TIPs, or in rural areas, consultation with RTPOs or local governments.
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Who Benefits from the BASICS Act?

Metropolitan Planning Organizations benefit from increased planning funding.

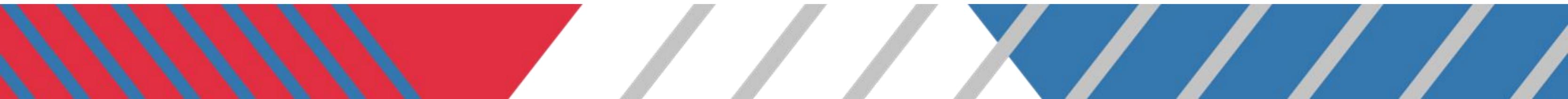
- Increases Metropolitan Planning (PL) funding to 2.5% of federal-aid highway programs (currently sits at around 0.8%).

Metropolitan Planning (PL) Policy Changes:

- Provides a 100% federal share for PL funding, eliminating a 20% local match.
- Allows MPOs to become direct recipients of PL funding.
- Updates and modernizes eligible uses of planning funds to reflect the full lifecycle of project development, including activities such as early scoping, data and modeling improvements, and multimodal systems planning.

Requires that MPOs be given access to FMIS (Fiscal Management Information System).

Project Selection: Reaffirms Congress' long-standing intent that suballocated capital funding (STBG, etc.) is programmed by MPOs and directs states to follow the intent of Congress.



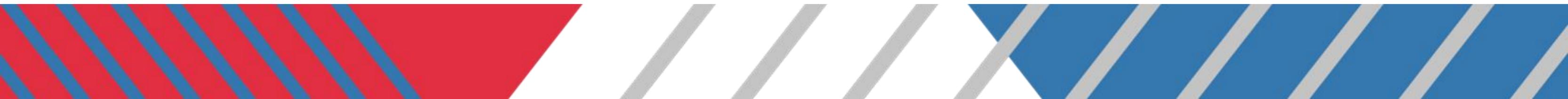
Who Benefits from the BASICS Act?

Rural communities benefit from the BASICS Act.

- In areas less than 50,000 people with an RTPO (regional transportation planning organization), the RTPO must be consulted by the state before spending STBG, safety, or bridge dollars.
- If there is no RTPO, local and regional governments, such as through state municipal or county leagues, must be consulted by the state.

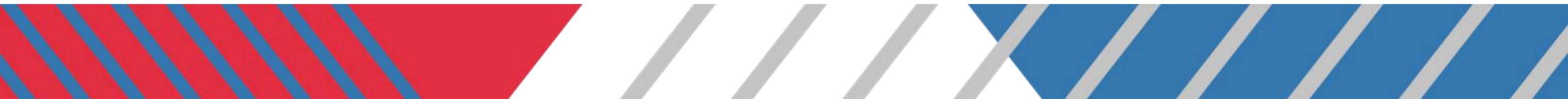
RTPOs who plan transportation projects for their region benefit from the BASICS Act.

- The bill creates a new program for RTPOs, with a minimum of \$300,000 for each RTPO. This enables RTPOs to plan projects that can be submitted to the state's transportation improvement program for construction.



FAQs

- Is this a major change in federal policy? **No.**
- Does this proposal collectively benefit state DOTs, regions, and local governments? **Yes!**
- Will this slow down project delivery? **Absolutely not.**
- Does the bill strengthen collaboration among state DOTs, MPOs, counties, and cities? **Yes!**



How Local Leaders Can Support H.R. 7437

At Home	With Congress
<p>Pass a resolution or draft a letter of support and share it with your congressional delegation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Access the template here: shorturl.at/rDsvU</i>	<p>Meet with your congressional delegation and request support or co-sponsorship.</p>
<p>Invite your Members of Congress to the district and host a roundtable on local transportation infrastructure needs.</p>	<p>Participate in Washington, DC fly-ins to elevate your community's voice.</p>
<p>Talk about the bill at public meetings to build local awareness.</p>	<p>Follow up with staff and provide additional information as the bill progresses.</p>
<p>Submit an op-ed in a local newspaper explaining why the BASICS Act matters for your community. <i>(**Members of Congress often have news alerts on themselves if you mention them by name in your local op-ed!)</i></p>	<p>Meet with your congressional district office staff to discuss the BASICS Act</p>
<p>Engage local business, chambers of commerce, freight leaders, and other key community stakeholders.</p>	<p>Share real world examples with your delegation (e.g., projects that are ready but waiting, safety challenges you are working to address).</p>

Supporting the BASICS Act (H.R. 7437)

BASICS Act Toolkit: shorturl.at/rDsvU

- *Briefing materials, outreach templates, talking points, and more!*





Q&A

Learn More: shorturl.at/rDsvU

Contact Us

Brittney Kohler

kohler@nlc.org