



PUBLIC POLICY NEWSLETTER

Join ACT in DC!



ACT IN DC

Help bring TDM to Washington! ACT will be holding a [DC Fly-In on September 15 and 16](#) prioritizing Congressional meetings to further our surface transportation reauthorization goals – including codifying the definition of TDM into U.S. Code, establishing a rural TDM pilot program, and more.

Participating in the Fly-In is a powerful opportunity to showcase the real-world impact of your TDM programs and engage directly with your Congressional delegation. ACT staff and our government relations team will support you every step of the way, from scheduling meetings to providing talking points. Experienced members and trained staff will accompany participants to help ensure every meeting is a success.

Register now

Please reach out to Emma (ewasserman@actweb.org) with any questions. After registering, please fill out [this survey](#) to help us best schedule meetings.

Attending the Fly-In qualifies for [10 TDM-CP credits](#).

Deadline Extended - USDOT Proposals for Surface Transportation Reauthorization



REAUTHORIZATION

The U.S. Department of Transportation is seeking public input on priorities for the next surface transportation reauthorization bill, a once-every-five-years law that shapes federal transportation funding nationwide. ACT is advocating for the following priorities:

- Codifying TDM in the U.S. Code
- Ensuring TDM is eligible across various federal programs
- Requesting a GAO study on TDM's economic impacts
- Creating a Rural TDM Pilot Program
- Lowering the Congestion Relief Program grant minimum and population requirement

We strongly encourage all ACT members to submit a letter to USDOT in support of these priorities. A template letter is provided below, and submissions are due by **September 8** via [this portal](#). Please let Emma (ewasserman@actweb.org) know once you've submitted or with any questions.

Learn more and submit a letter

USDOT Opens “Ideas Challenge” to Transform U.S. Infrastructure



The U.S. Department of Transportation has opened submissions for the Advanced Research Projects Agency–Infrastructure (ARPA-I) *Ideas Challenge*, a national competition seeking bold concepts to improve the future of American infrastructure.

The challenge invites proposals that deliver innovative solutions in four key areas: enhancing the safety, security, and efficiency of moving people and goods; reducing the long-term costs of planning, construction, and maintenance; strengthening infrastructure resilience; and positioning the U.S. as a global leader in advanced transportation technologies and materials.

Winning submissions could receive awards of up to \$320,000. Learn more and apply [here!](#)

Learn more and apply

Transportation Secretary Urges Governors to Embrace NEPA Authority



In late July, U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy sent a letter to all 50 governors urging them to take advantage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Assignment programs. Participation would allow states to assume federal environmental review responsibilities, giving state transportation departments the authority to serve as the lead federal agency for reviews of highway, rail, public transit, and multimodal projects.

Secretary Duffy argued that states are better positioned than federal agencies to accelerate project delivery, lower costs, and improve stakeholder engagement, citing their local expertise and direct administrative control.

Participation in the program requires states to fully comply with federal NEPA standards and accept legal responsibility for environmental reviews conducted under their authority.

SEPTA Faces \$213 Million Budget Shortfall, Service Cuts Loom



The Philadelphia region's transit agency is preparing for sweeping service cuts after the Pennsylvania legislature failed to approve funding to close a \$213 million budget shortfall. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) entered the new fiscal year on July 1 with a \$240 million deficit. Administrative cuts and a hiring freeze reduced that gap to \$213 million, but officials say no further savings can be made without cutting service.

The first round of reductions is scheduled for August 24, when SEPTA will eliminate 32 bus routes, shorten 16 others, and discontinue special services such as the Sports Express. Overall, about 20% of service will be cut. Riders will also face a 21.5% fare increase in September. Additional reductions are planned for January 2026, including the elimination of five regional rail routes, 18 more bus lines, and a 9 p.m. curfew on metro and regional rail service.

The timing comes as Pennsylvania prepares for a high-profile year of travel in 2026, with the FIFA World Cup, the United States' 250th anniversary celebrations, and the MLB All-Star Game all expected to draw large crowds to the state.

TDM Week is Almost Here!



[TDM Week](#) is fast approaching! This year's observance, taking place the week of September 15, will spotlight the important role of public policy in advancing TDM. Attending events and taking part in activities are great ways to explore how policy connects with TDM and why it is such a critical tool for supporting programs nationwide. Be sure to check out what chapters have planned [here](#).

Chapter leaders, if you have questions, need support, or would like guidance as you plan your TDM Week activities, join Emma and Allison for office hours on **Thursday, August 28, from 1–2 p.m. ET**. [You can sign up here](#).

**Learn more about TDM
Week**

Additional Policy Resources



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