2027 COMPASS Federal Transportation Positions

Approved October 26, 2026

COMPASS encourages long-term reauthorization of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The IIJA expires on September 30, 2026. Consistent, predictable federal investments through a new long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill will allow state and local governments to address much-needed infrastructure improvements. Starting discussions on the reauthorization of IIJA early will allow for the identification of the nation's most pressing issues and the vetting of possible and appropriate solutions.

Congress must solve the perennial Highway Trust Fund funding shortfall in a permanent, meaningful way, eliminating the need for short-term infusions of general fund dollars.

- **Support a federal fuel excise tax increase.** The federal fuel tax has not been increased since 1993 (32 years) and remains the most readily available user-pay solution to stabilizing the Highway Trust Fund.

- **Add additional road user charge concepts**. Improvements in fuel efficiency and the development of alternative fuel vehicles have negatively affected the Highway Trust Fund. Additional user fee concepts are necessary to capture evolving trends and changes in relation to transportation infrastructure funding.

Provide more direct funding to local governments and increase local decision-making authority. COMPASS encourages more flexibility in funding and direct allocation to regions, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), counties, cities, and public transportation authorities with transportation infrastructure responsibilities. The IIJA made some progress in this regard while placing greater responsibility on those entities to develop and meet system performance goals. MPOs should be direct recipients of federal transportation funding for all transportation planning and program efforts in metropolitan areas.

Provide local flexibility. COMPASS supports local flexibility in building, operating, and maintaining local and regional transportation projects. Federal policy should allow MPOs and local governments to plan projects that use alternative design standards while meeting environmental objectives when rigid federal design standards are inconsistent with local needs.

Simplify federal transportation grants. COMPASS supports simplifying the process for applying for, receiving, and managing discretionary federal transportation grants. Federal policy should reduce administrative burdens imposed on local governments by streamlining the federal grants process.

Increase federal funding for public transportation. Public transportation providers in both urban and rural areas of Idaho operate on very limited funding. Congress should provide more robust growth in federal public transportation programs to help these

systems meet the needs of their communities. Local match requirements for Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration funding should be the same within each state.

Increase federal support for non-motorized transportation options. COMPASS supports increasing federal funding and incentives to provide safe bicycle and pedestrian mobility options designed to move toward zero deaths.

Increase set-aside for off-system bridges. Nearly 80% of the nation's bridges are the responsibility of local entities (not on the federal-aid highway system). Funding for off-system bridges is crucial for local entities to safely operate and maintain these bridge structures.

Oppose federal aid turnback proposals. COMPASS opposes any proposals to dismantle the federal transportation funding system by turning back all or a portion of the federal aid to the states.

Interstate Passenger Rail Service. COMPASS encourages the Federal Rail Administration and Amtrak to study the feasibility of resuming Amtrak's "Pioneer Route" passenger rail service through the Treasure Valley. The Pioneer Route provided service from Seattle to Denver through Portland, Boise, and Salt Lake City for 20 years until it was discontinued in 1997. Given the recent economic and population growth in these areas of the Northwest, it is reasonable to study the feasibility of resuming Pioneer Route passenger rail service.