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President's Column



We had a great time going “hog wild” at the Bus Rodeo in Austin! A huge Thank You to everyone who made the event such a big success including our host system

SMART Transit and everyone on the Rodeo planning committee. We had a great turnout of drivers and volunteers who enjoyed a lovely morning of competition and training. We also want to thank the Rodeo sponsors including the Office of Transit and Active Transportation (OTAT) at MnDOT for their financial support and participation – we couldn't do it without you!

Check out the Rodeo winners and photos from the event in this issue of In Transit. We're already looking forward to next year's Rodeo in Duluth!

As federal funding and federal policies become more important, MPTA is busy working at the federal level to stay in touch with congressional members and to push for legislation that will help our volunteer drivers. We've shared the problems with the current federal mileage reimbursement for volunteer drivers with members of the Minnesota Congressional delegation and they have responded by introducing bills that will change the law to amend the current 14-cent per mile rate.

MPTA members will be attending the Washington, D.C. Fly-In in September to continue to push for this change as well as advocating for continued increases in federal transit funding.

The planning committee for the 2022 Minnesota Public Transit Conference continues to work to create a great learning experience for everyone. This year's conference is scheduled for **October 24-26th at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud.** You can sign up today: <https://www.mpta-transit.org/events>

The conference will provide important training sessions on communication and working with your board of directors as well as numerous breakout sessions on everything from hiring and retaining staff to attracting more riders to new technology improvements and the latest on state and federal funding for your system. We're also excited that First Transit will host the entertainment this year! The conference promises to be a great opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and friends while getting the latest updates and information you need to know.

As we all know, 2022 is an important election year. The results will have a direct impact on transit funding and policies so it's important for candidates to understand how transit serves their constituents and how transit systems are operating today. MPTA will be teaming up with the Minnesota Transportation Alliance to provide more information about transit in Minnesota at a number of regional transportation meetings in September and October. Your participation will be critical so please plan to attend a meeting near you.

We're building back better this year thanks to the support and participation of all the transit systems in Minnesota. Thanks for your partnership and membership in your transit association!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Ryan I Daniel". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Ryan Daniel, MPTA President

Legislative Report

RAISE Grants

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg announced that the Biden-Harris Administration has awarded more than \$2.2 billion from the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program to help urban and rural communities move forward on projects that modernize roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports, and intermodal transportation and make our transportation systems safer, more accessible, more affordable, and more sustainable. This year's allocations include more than \$2.2 billion thanks to the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provides an additional \$7.5 billion over five years for the program to help meet the strong demand to help projects get moving across the country.



Projects were evaluated on several criteria, including safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness and opportunity, partnership and collaboration, innovation, state of good repair, and mobility and community connectivity. Within these areas, the Department considered how projects will improve accessibility for all travelers, bolster supply chain efficiency, and support racial equity and economic growth – especially in historically disadvantaged communities and areas of persistent poverty.

Minnesota received grants totaling \$99.4 million for six projects including projects that will improve transit service.

- **Big Woods Transit Facility** (The Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, \$9.5 million). The new transit facility will “house, maintain, and clean” vehicles for the Bigs Woods Transit public transportation program. The facility’s design includes parallel parking to “maximize the use of the space that will include a bus wash, a mechanics work bay with a lift, and solar power generation system.”
- **Lake Street Multimodal Improvements to Enhance BRT in Minneapolis** (Hennepin County, \$12 million). Crews will create new turn lanes and bus-only lanes, remove a lane, provide new pedestrian ramps and pave new surface along the Lake Street corridor in Minneapolis. The project will improve bus transit operations, improve pedestrian safety, reduce crashes and provide “significant benefits to the community through improved safety and travel time reliability.”
- **Station 73 Transit and Regional Improvement Program** in Plymouth (city of Plymouth, \$15 million). Workers will reconstruct part of Highway 55 in part by adding two new in-line bus platforms, constructing one mile of new multi-use path, and adding a new at-grade trail railroad crossing. Other scopes of work include a “pedestrian refuge” on Highway 55, a roundabout at South Shore Drive and 10th Avenue North, a realignment of County Road 73, stormwater improvements and construction of a bicycle station and e-bike/e-scooter charging area at Station 73.
- **West Superior Street Active Transportation Corridor** in Duluth (city of Duluth, nearly \$25 million). The project includes reconstruction of an approximately 2-mile stretch of West Superior Street in Lincoln Park and underground utility replacements. New features include electric vehicle charging stations, green infrastructure, and above-ground streetscapes. The project supports the Duluth Transit Authority’s Better Bus Blueprint, which will improve bus connections to medical facilities, grocery stores, schools and recreation areas.

Legislative Report

FY23 Appropriations

Congress is working on passing the FY2023 appropriations bills that keep the federal government operating. The House has been busy passing a number of “minibus” bills that combine several committee budgets into one. The Senate has released a plan for federal appropriations but has not passed any legislation at this point. The federal fiscal year ends September 30, 2022.

THUD Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations FY23

FTA	FY21	FY22	FY23 House	FY23 Senate
Formula Grants	\$10,150,348	\$13,355,000	\$13,634,000	\$13,634,000
Infrastructure Grants	\$ 516,220	\$ 504,263	\$ 646,428	\$ 527,131
Tech Asst/Training	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ 8,000	\$ 7,500
Capital Investment Grants	\$ 2,014,000	\$ 2,248,000	\$ 3,012,000	\$ 2,510,931
TOTAL FTA	\$12,957,482	\$16,258,029	\$17,450,428	\$16,829,562

Inflation Reduction Act Signed Into Law

President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act into law. The bill includes alternative fuel tax credits and significant new investments in climate, zero-emission technology, equity and environmental streamlining.

The bill includes numerous important provisions that benefit public transportation. The Inflation Reduction Act:

- ◆ Extends the excise tax credits for alternative fuels, biodiesel, and renewable diesel;
- ◆ Extends and substantially restructures the alternative fuel vehicle property credit;
- ◆ Establishes a new commercial clean vehicle tax credit; and
- ◆ Provides significant new investments in climate, zero-emission technology, equity, and environmental review, including \$27 billion for a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund; \$3.2 billion for Neighborhood Access and Equity Grants; and \$2 billion for Low-Carbon Transportation Materials Grants.

More details on this legislation are available at: <https://www.apta.com/advocacy-legislation-policy/legislative-updates-alerts/updates/>



2022 Bus Rodeo Winners



In the Small Bus Category, the winner was **Julio Zavala-Lopez** who drives for SMART Transit out of Owatonna. He has been a bus operator for 7 years. The second place prize winner was **T.J. Johnson** with Otter Express in Fergus Falls. T.J. has competed and placed in previous Rodeos and has been a transit driver for 16 years. **Kevin Hemann** with SMART Transit took the third place prize. He has been a transit driver for 17 years. Ryan Daniel, President of MPTA congratulated the winners.



Chris Daniels with Rochester Public Transit was the Large Bus Competition winner. He has competed in Bus Rodeos from 2013 to 2021. He has been a bus operator for 27 years. **Anton Pierson**, the second place winner drives for Metro Transit and has competed in Rodeos in 2018, 2019 and 2021 where he was a finalist. **Pete Mugg** with St. Cloud Metro Bus took third place in the competition. He has been a transit driver for 45 years. Ryan Daniel, President of MPTA congratulated the winners.

2022 Bus Rodeo



Bus Rodeo - Thank You Shawn Pierce!

Statewide transit events are only successful through the work of dedicated volunteers who care about transit in Minnesota.

Shawn Pierce with St. Cloud Metro Bus has been the backbone of the Bus Rodeo for many years - making sure that all of the volunteers know what to do, the judging is done correctly and the participants feel welcome and acknowledged for all the great service they provide.

Shawn will be moving on to new adventures so we want to wish him all the best and thank him for once again leading the 2022 Rodeo. We will all miss you!



SouthWest Transit Adds Electric Vehicles



NEWS RELEASE

Three New Electric Vehicles are added to SouthWest Transit's Prime Fleet

SouthWest Transit is pleased to announce the addition of 3 new Electric Vehicles to their SouthWest Prime fleet.

All 3 vehicles will be used for SW Prime, SouthWest Transit's popular on-demand rideshare service. The addition of the 3 EV's sets SouthWest Transit on a path of fulfilling one of its goals identified in its Agency Sustainability Plan – converting its entire fleet to Zero-Emission Vehicles by 2050.

The three electric vehicles joining the SW Prime service are two 2022 C40 all electric Volvos that offer 225 miles per charge, and a Ford Transit Passenger Van that was converted from gas to electric propulsion and has 140 miles per charge.

All three EV's have been in use for SouthWest Transit since mid-July. Along with the company's continued transition to become fully electric with their vehicles by 2050, the agency is also developing a plan for adding EV charging infrastructure for passenger vehicles at facilities.

SouthWest Transit: Providing public transit service for Chanhassen, Chaska, and Eden Prairie. Express bus service to Minneapolis, and the University of Minnesota.



Minnesota Public Transit Conference

October 24-26, 2022

River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud

Join Your Colleagues and Friends at this Year's Big Event

- Get the latest News and Updates on Transit in Minnesota
- Participate in training sessions
- Tour the Vendor Expo and see new products & services
- Enjoy great entertainment and networking
- Learn about important issues: staffing, marketing, funding, technology, mobility trends



We need You to help make the Minnesota Public Transit Conference a great event!

Sign up today!

*For 5311, 5310 and Tribal Transit systems, scholarships are available through the RTAP program.

*****Nominate a Transit Colleague for a MPTA Transit Award***

- ♦ Distinguished Career
- ♦ Transit Professional
- ♦ Transit System of the Year
- ♦ Bus Operator of the Year
- ♦ Management Innovation

Nominate Your Choice Today!

REGISTER TODAY!

www.mpta-transit.org

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PUBLIC TRANSIT
CONFERENCE

**BUILDING
ON
THE BEST
2022**

2022 Minnesota Public Transit Conference

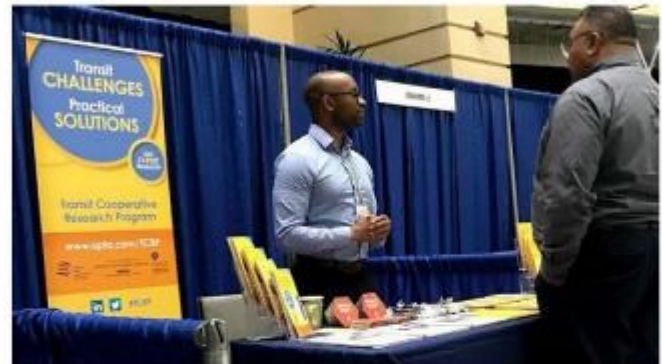
October 24-26, 2022

St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center

Register Today! <https://www.mpta-transit.org/event/2022-minnesota-public-transit-expo>

Your organization will be recognized with signs and announcements at all of these events throughout the conference:

- Monday Welcome Reception
- Tuesday Breakfast
- Tuesday Expo Luncheon
- Wednesday Breakfast
- Wednesday Closing Luncheon



Contribution Levels

PLATINUM LEVEL \$5,000

- Includes four representatives
- Special recognition at Plenary Sessions throughout the conference
- Prominent logo and company description in program
- Recognition in conference packet
- Prominent display on signs
- Prime booth location in the expo hall

GOLD LEVEL \$2,000

- Includes three representatives
- Special recognition at Annual Meetings and Welcome Reception
- Prominent logo and company description in program
- Recognition in conference packet
- Prominent display on signage at Events and Registration Area
- Prime booth location in booth and multiple attendee registrations included

SILVER LEVEL \$1,500

- Includes two representatives
- Prominent display in conference packet
- Company displayed on all signage at events
- Company recognized in conference program
- Better booth location and multiple attendee registrations included

BRONZE LEVEL \$600

- Includes one representative
- Company recognized on all signage at events
- Company listed in conference program
- Company recognized in conference packet

Updates from the Office of Transit and Active Transportation

JOB ALERT!

Please consider applying for and/or sharing with your network – the attached job

posting for a Principal Transit Planner in our office. Learn more from the attached job posting and/or the link here - Link to job posting: [Careers \(mn.gov\)](https://mn.gov/careers)



WELCOME NEW OTAT STAFF!

- Please join us in welcoming 2 new team members to our office:

- o Glenn Gadbois

✦ We are pleased to announce that Glen Gadbois has joined the Program Unit! He will be responsible for the Solicitation Process and will manage the new Planning Technical Assistance Program. Glen comes to us from Texas where he worked with the Plano Texas Transportation Management Association. He also worked on mobility options in Memphis, as Executive Director of the Downtown Austin Transportation Management Association and as a Transportation Consultant and a NCHRP Principal Investigator. Glenn was the principal investigator managing the first state assessment on the potential for coordinated public transportation services under an interagency funding agreement between the Texas Department of Transportation, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, and the Texas Department of Health. Glenn holds bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in political science from the University of Houston and we are delighted to have him join our OTAT Team!

- ✦ Cole Norgaarden

Cole joins the Office of Transit and Active Transportation in the Planning Unit as a Multi-modal Planner following four years working in affordable housing development and operations. Most recently he coordinated strategic initiatives including sustainability at the Philadelphia Public Housing Authority and prior to that served in the Office of Neighborhood Strategies at NYC Dept of Housing Preservation & Development. He has also worked with local community development groups to promote climate resilience in Buffalo, NY and Cleveland, OH. Cole earned a BS in Urban & Regional Planning from Cornell University in 2017 with a focus on social inequality and spent semesters studying abroad in both India and Italy. When he's not exploring Google Maps street view, Cole enjoys cooking (and eating), house music, taking trips to the North Shore, and spending time with his parents' elderly pug. He's excited to be returning to his home state and to be joining the dynamic OTAT team where we are very happy to have him on board!

Updates from the Office of Transit and Active Transportation

Hello Transit Friends and Partners! You may have noticed that the world has experienced significant amounts of change in recent months and years, and our office within MnDOT is no different. This past year has provided a significant amount of fluctuation beginning early in 2022 with our (previous?) Office Director Tori Nill departing to work outside of OTAT on a mobility assignment. (Mobility assignments are intended to offer a growth and development opportunity that MnDOT occasionally offers to staff to fill an often-temporary gap and to gain experience in a different office or work class.) Tori is presently working in MnDOT's district 7 as a District State Aid Engineer through the end of the calendar year. In most cases, once the mobility assignment ends, the employee will have the opportunity to return to their previous position. In some cases, the mobility opportunity provides a new permanent placement for the employee.

As a result of Tori's mobility, Mark Nelson (previously an Assistant Office Director for OTAT) has been placed in a mobility assignment as the Interim Office Director. Amber Dallman has replaced Mark in a mobility assignment as an Interim Assistant Office Director, and I (Melinda Estey) have replaced Amber in a mobility assignment as the Planning Unit Supervisor, in addition to maintaining my previous responsibilities as the RTAP Program Coordinator and other various office projects including communications. Each of us is working hard to learn the intricacies of our new positions and to maintain positive momentum on the many projects and annual processes that our office maintains. From Safe Routes to School to funding public transit operating budgets and everything in-between, there is A LOT of work that happens in our office. Only time will tell where Tori lands at the end of her mobility and in the interim, OTAT continues to work on projects and processes that are intended to positively impact public and active transportation in Minnesota. We take this goal seriously and are extremely appreciative of all our partners across the state and country that are working toward the same goal.

All the flux in both leadership and day-to-day challenges from the past several years has created a little chaos and a lot of opportunity ... and we are embracing the challenges of this new team formation to work toward a shared vision, mission, and processes for getting things done. Remember that Rome wasn't built in a day, but our office is committed to working as a partner in your efforts to deliver safe, efficient, reliable, and affordable public transportation across the state in addition to pursuing and promoting multi-modal and active transportation options that work together to help Minnesotans and our state-guests get where they need to go.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record ... The work you all do makes an incredible difference in the lives of the people we serve and we – at the Office of Transit and Active Transportation – are dedicated to helping you to do this as efficiently and effectively as possible. Thank You for all that you do and for helping us to help you to continue doing it.

Respectfully submitted by Melinda Estey, August 24, 2022

Do you have questions about how things work at MnDOT, what our thoughts are for current or future projects, or anything else? Let us know what you're interested in learning about and we can tackle those in future editions of In Transit!

DEED Assists MVTA Through Summer of Jobs Initiative

[Amid record low unemployment, Minnesota officials highlight underutilized labor pools](#)

Tim Nelson
Eagan, Minn.
July 25, 2022 2:34 PM

Summer is a busy time at the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority garage in Eagan. It's the time of year that the buses turn off their commuter routes for an annual deep cleaning.

But with the state's unemployment rate at a [record-low 1.8 percent in June](#), the company that services those buses wasn't sure it could find anybody to do it.

"We need summer detailers and everybody is kind of struggling to find workers," said Allie McCollough, human resources director at [Schmitt & Sons](#).

Enter Asher Tholl, Stefan Evers, John Jamer and Parker Leagjeld — four guys looking for work and now climbing daily onto the commuter buses to shine the windows, clean the air filters, scrub off graffiti and spiff up the floors, and earning \$16 an hour.

"Wipe down the seats, get underneath them, remove the cushions," Tholl recounted Monday, as he gave Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Commissioner Steve Grove a quick tour of their work on one of the buses parked at the Eagan garage.

Tholl and his colleagues are among 140 teens and adults with disabilities who work with [Great Work](#), an employment assistance agency in Lakeville. And they're part of the solution to a critically tight labor market.

In June, Minnesota had the lowest state unemployment rate ever recorded in the U.S., and that means workers are harder than ever to find. Harder — but not impossible. Grove's visit to the MVTA garage on Monday was part of his agency's "Summer of Jobs" push to encourage employers to dig a little deeper into the labor market.

More information about DEED's Vocational Rehabilitation Services is available online at careerforcemn.com.



EMPLOYMENT AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ryan Daniel Receives Gerald Anderson Award

On Monday, July 11, Metro Bus CEO, Ryan I. Daniel, was awarded the prestigious **Gerald Anderson Member of the Year Award** in front of over 700 attendees at the 51st Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO). The 2022 national meeting and training conference was held in sunny Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

According to the [COMTO website](#), the award honors “a COMTO member who has demonstrated commitment to the philosophy that *“the success of one is contingent upon the success of all.”* This award is COMTO’s way of honoring great service and the value of teamwork within the transportation industry *nationwide*. It is given to a pioneer who ensures growth and development within the transit industry, and its surrounding communities.

COMTO is the voice for equity in transportation. It is the leading national advocate for diversity, inclusion, and contracting opportunities in the multi-modal, multi-billion dollar transportation industry. [Their mission](#) is to eliminate barriers to maximum participation for minority individuals, veterans, people with disabilities and certified Minority, Women, Disadvantage Businesses, and Enterprise businesses through leadership training, professional development, scholarship, and internship funding, political advocacy, partnership building, and networking opportunities.

Daniel has been a member of COMTO’s Emerging Leaders Sub Committee, as a Program Manager for the last five years. The program has a stated goal to “empower leaders to assume individual and collective responsibilities for positive change in the community.” He continues to be instrumental in the



success of minorities in the workplace, and in the community by serving as an Advisory Board Member for the Jugaad Leadership program.

Please join us in congratulating Mr. Ryan Daniel, on all his hard work, and being worthy of this distinguished award.

DTA Implementing Better Bus Blueprint



A plan to simplify and invigorate public transit in Duluth would reduce the number of bus routes by more than half, while creating two high-frequency routes to serve as workhorses in the rebuilt network.

The Duluth Transit Authority announced its proposal this month, giving riders and residents until Aug. 2 to comment about the proposal.

"It might be the most substantial change in our history," said Chris Belden, the DTA's director of planning and grants.

The plan is cost-neutral and features 14 simplified routes recreated from the network's 33 existing ones.

There would be no decrease in service hours. Instead, the new network would expand its well-utilized weekend service by 25%, and prioritize connecting more people to key destinations over having widespread geographic coverage.

The two high-frequency routes would feature pickups every 10-15 minutes along routes to the Miller Hill Mall area and the University of Minnesota Duluth.

In terms of equity, the DTA says the plan better serves minority and low-income households by providing increased access to frequent service.

The proposed redesign followed a survey conducted by the DTA earlier this year, which showed respondents favoring a less complicated system with higher frequency service. Instead of tweaking the existing network, as has been the local practice, planners decided to create the new network from scratch.

"We erased all the routes and timetables — all of it," Belden said, describing a deep examination of the system and data, in consultation with Connetics Transportation Group, of Chicago.

"We saw with this that we needed to do a full-blown redesign of the system," he added.

Belden said the DTA's future intention would be to build-out the high-frequency routes with arterial features such as more robust passenger stations, limited stops, and technology that prioritizes transit at stop lights.

The DTA refers to its proposed high-frequency routes as "pre-BRT" routes.

Federal Grants Announced: No-Low Emission Vehicles and Bus and Bus Facilities

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration announced \$1.66 billion in grants to transit agencies, territories, and states across the country to invest in 150 bus fleets and facilities. Funded by the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, more than 1,100 of those vehicles will use zero-emissions technology, which reduces air pollution and helps meet the President's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.

The bus grant awards – made under FTA's Buses and Bus Facilities and Low- and No-Emission Vehicle programs – are FTA's first competitive grant selections under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Minnesota did very well, receiving funding for five applications totaling \$17,506,139.



SouthWest Transit - \$8,127,891

SouthWest Transit, which serves the southwest Minneapolis suburban cities of Chaska, Chanhassen and Eden Prairie will receive funding to buy battery electric buses and charging equipment to replace vehicles that have exceeded their useful life. SWT has set a goal to switch over its express and microtransit fleets to electric vehicles over the next 20 years.

MN Chippewa Tribe-White Earth Band of Chippewa Indians - \$3,607,642

White Earth Public Transit will receive funding to build a new bus facility and office space in Waubun. The facility will include a passenger terminal as well as bus storage and maintenance, improving the efficiency and reliability of transit service.

Minnesota Department of Transportation - \$3,414,680

The Minnesota Department of Transportation will receive funding to buy battery electric buses and charging equipment to replace buses that are part of four rural transit fleets. MnDOT will provide training for transit workers throughout the transition, part of its goal to help improve the overall state of good repair for the state's transit fleet and achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Prairie Island Indian Community - \$1,616,426

The Prairie Island Indian Community in Red Wing will receive funding to buy seven battery-electric buses and charging equipment and train transit workers to operate and maintain vehicles powered with new technologies. The buses will replace vehicles that had reached their useful life and help the tribe achieve its net zero-emission goals, which it plans to achieve through conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy generation and vehicle electrification.

Bois Forte Band of Chippewa - \$739,500

The Bois Forte Band of Chippewa will receive funding to buy propane-fueled buses to replace diesel buses to improve the efficiency of its Big Woods Transit fleet and minimize negative environmental impacts in the Arrowhead region of northern Minnesota. The buses will lessen idle time in cold weather, reduce fuel cost, and by emitting less carbon dioxide than gasoline, reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

PROTECT Grant Program Unveiled

New Grant Opportunity under IIJA

The new PROTECT funding program is designed to build community resilience in the face of extreme weather and natural disasters is called the ***Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) program***. The PROTECT program will deliver \$8.7 billion over the next four years to make transportation infrastructure resilient in our states and communities.

Most of the funds in the PROTECT program will be distributed through formula funding to each state department of transportation office (\$7.3 billion). Cities, towns and villages have the opportunity to apply for the remaining \$1.4 billion in competitive PROTECT grants that the U.S. Department of Transportation can award to local governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and other eligible entities. There are two types of PROTECT direct application grant opportunities to either plan or improve assets:

Planning Grants: As the law states, these competitive planning grants will “enable communities to assess vulnerabilities to current and future weather events and natural disasters and changing conditions, including sea level rise, and plan transportation improvements and emergency response strategies to address those vulnerabilities.”

Competitive Resilience Improvement Grants: These resilience improvement grants will be used to protect:

- Surface transportation assets, by making city assets more resilient to current and future weather events and natural disasters (such as severe storms, flooding, drought, levee and dam failures, wildfire, rockslides, mudslides, sea level rise, extreme weather (including extreme temperature) and earthquakes).
- Communities through resilience improvements and strategies that allow for the continued operation or rapid recovery of surface transportation systems that: 1) serve critical local, regional and national needs, including evacuation routes; and 2) provide access or service to hospitals and other medical or emergency service facilities, major employers, critical manufacturing centers, ports and intermodal facilities, utilities and federal facilities.
- Coastal infrastructure (such as tide gates to protect highways) that is at long-term risk to sea level rise.
- Natural infrastructure that protects and enhances surface transportation assets while improving ecosystem conditions (including culverts) that ensure adequate flows in rivers and estuarine systems.



**Federal Transit
Administration**

PROTECT Grant Program Unveiled

New Grant Opportunity under IIJA

For Minnesota, the program is estimated to provide formula funds of \$23,316,615 for FY22. For the life of the IIJA, Minnesota is expected to receive \$121,340,603 in PROTECT funds.

- A State may only use its PROTECT Formula Program funds for eligible activities and eligible costs (see below) associated with—
 - Highway projects eligible under Title 23, U.S.C.;
 - **Public transportation facilities or services** eligible under chapter 53 of title 49, U.S.C.;
 - Port facilities, including facilities that connect ports with other modes of transportation, Improve the efficiency of evacuations and disaster relief, or aid transportation. [§ 11405; 23 U.S.C. 176(c)(3)(B)]

Entities that receive PROTECT grants may use their funds to conduct vulnerability studies and for infrastructure improvements on highways, transit systems and certain ports. This means that if your city wants to figure out how vulnerable your transportation systems are and find potential solutions, PROTECT grants can provide the opportunity to accomplish that work.

Examples of work being done related to resiliency:

In **Phoenix, AZ**, the [Phoenix Public Transit Department](#) installed misted bus shelters along one of their bus routes to help with extreme heat. These improvements were the result of a community “HeatReady” workshop put on by Phoenix and Arizona State University. The new mist bus shelters will be a part of the city of Phoenix’s HeatReady toolkit as the city prepares for more extreme heat events. The HeatReady program aims to serve as a blueprint to other cities in the area that are also facing heat challenges.



A [study](#) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Tulane University found that rising sea levels will pose a threat to a rapid rail network in [Boston, MA](#) within the next 50 years. To prepare better for the challenges ahead, the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) partnered with the Transit Lab at MIT to create a climate modeling tool that will help MBTA assess the vulnerabilities of their transit systems. The Climate Change Vulnerability Dashboard will utilize a range of data sets to create a web-based analysis tool for evaluating the vulnerabilities of the MBTA assets due to climate change.

Heatwaves Are Perils for Public Transit Users

Bet you're feeling this intense heat. So are many of the roughly one in 10 Americans who ride public transportation daily. Climate change poses a real threat to mass transit systems. In 2021, extreme heat damaged Portland's streetcar wires and deformed Seattle's roadways, triggering suspension of service as so-called "sun kinks" from extreme temperatures can bend tracks and lead to a derailment. Scorching heatwaves this summer have had an impact on transit agencies in central Texas, Oklahoma and even New York City.

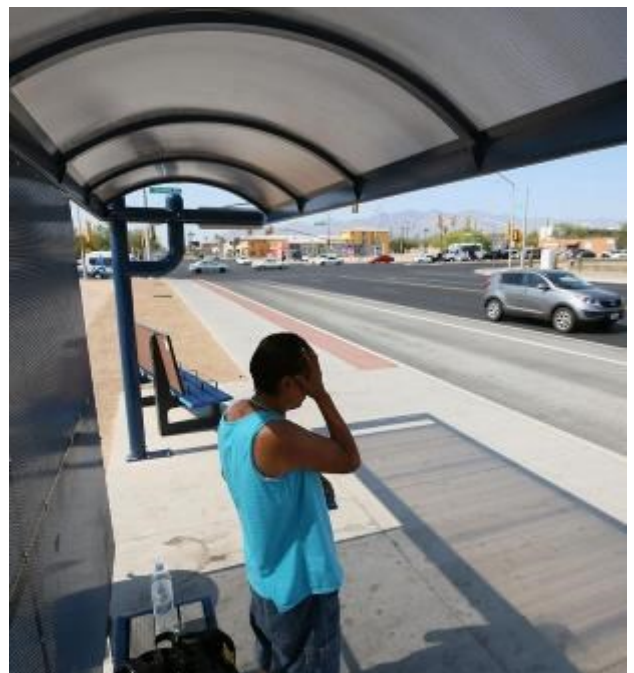
Public transportation officials have a duty, of course, to operate transportation systems resilient to changing climate impacts as they also aim for net-zero carbon emission. More transport planners find it essential to collaborate with climate adaptation or resilience teams in their cities to adapt to critical weather events for their riders' safety. Increasingly, municipal policymakers and planners are developing and adopting climate-sensitive design for public transit stops and transportation, from buses to trains. Some cities, such as Las Vegas, have raised awareness of the dangers of extreme temperatures to their transit riders. Las Vegas has modified its transit service schedule as part of its "beat the heat" initiative, and others are rerouting buses to reduce wait times and passengers' exposure to the heat. Making operational adjustments often cost less than building and maintaining new physical infrastructure.

In general, city planners and transit officials can take several initiatives to reduce their transit passengers' heat stress while waiting for and taking public transportation. One essential: public officials must develop extreme-weather emergency plans and identify and adopt adaptation actions.

More specifically, they can: cool pavements on transit routes and transit station roofs via higher solar reflectance to lower surface temperatures; shade main walking and cycling routes to public transportation; use low-energy ventilation systems on buses and metro trains; paint buses white and tint windows to shade off the sun; install thermometers inside buses and trains for riders to monitor temperatures; set up misting systems in waiting areas (while being conscious of water and energy demands); and install drinking fountains in public spaces.

As for riders, what can they do when taking public transportation during off-the-chart heatwaves? They can stay hydrated, use a handheld fan, choose light and airy clothes, travel when it's cooler, avoid needless trips, and avoid sugar and salt that can aggravate thirst. When possible, they should avoid the sun and be prepared for delays.

In other words: stay cool.



Upcoming Events:

**2022 MPTA
Transportation
Conference**

***October 24-26
2022***

St. Cloud, MN



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