



# LADDERS OF OPPORTUNITY

— Connect — Work — Revitalize —  
U.S. Department of Transportation

“ At USDOT we are making opportunity and inclusion part of everything we do. ”

— Transportation Secretary Anthony R. Foxx

## — THE OPPORTUNITIES AGENDA —

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) plays a critical role in connecting Americans and communities to economic opportunity. Transportation infrastructure choices made at the Federal, State, and local levels can strengthen communities, create pathways to jobs, and improve the quality of life for all Americans.

The OPPORTUNITIES AGENDA empowers transportation leaders, grantees and communities to revitalize, connect, and create workforce opportunities that lift more Americans into the middle class through initiatives, program guidance, tools and standards.



Transportation infrastructure can lift up neighborhoods and regions by attracting new opportunities, jobs, and housing.



A multimodal transportation system provides Americans with safe, reliable, and affordable connections to employment, education, healthcare, and other essential services.



Infrastructure investment creates jobs and paves the way for business, particularly small and disadvantaged business enterprises.

“ The challenge we face as a country is that we must reinvent how we think about transportation. We need to aspire to more, we need a transportation system that connects a big missing dot in the line between income inequality and opportunity. ”



Learn more on how to support connecting people to opportunity at [www.transportation.gov/opportunity](http://www.transportation.gov/opportunity)

## Connecting People to Opportunity — A Vision for Bridging the Divide —

- 01 Transportation connects people to opportunity and can invigorate opportunity within communities. To the greatest extent possible, we should support transportation projects that do both.
- 02 While we cannot change the past, we can ensure that current and future transportation projects connect and strengthen communities, including areas that have, in the past, been on the wrong side of transportation decisions.
- 03 Transportation facilities should be built by, for and with the communities impacted by them. Development of transportation facilities should meaningfully reflect and incorporate the input of all the people and communities they touch.

# Policy Solutions

USDOT is using every tool at its disposal to expand access to opportunity, promote safety, revitalize communities, and create pathways to jobs through technical assistance, program guidance, and competitive funding.

## Funding Projects that Promote Ladders of Opportunity

- The most recent rounds of Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (**TIGER Grants**) prioritized projects that strengthen access to opportunities through transportation improvements and promote Ladders of Opportunity, to the extent permitted by law.
- The Federal Transit Administration **Bus & Bus Facilities “Ladders of Opportunity” Initiative**, awarded funds to modernize and expand transit bus service to disadvantaged and low-income individuals, veterans, seniors, youths, and others to local workforce training, employment, health care, and other vital services.
- The Federal Transit Administration launched the **Rides to Wellness Initiative** to ensure more Americans have access to health care destinations. The initiative awarded grant funds and technical assistance to support innovative solutions that improve mobility challenges.
- Final guidance for the Federal Transit Administration **Capital Investment Grant Program** includes an affordable housing criterion to ensure that neighborhoods surrounding proposed transit stations have the fundamentals in place to ensure that as service is improved over time there is a mix of housing options.

## Closing Safety Disparities

- **The Safer People Safer Streets Initiative** provides technical assistance to advance safety and accessibility goals for local communities and transportation professionals through the Mayor’s Challenge with over 200 registered cities, research, and resource tools.
- The Department successfully advocated for a provision called the **High Risk Rural Roads Special Rule** which requires States to obligate funds to High Risk Rural Roads if the fatality rate is rising on those roadways.

## Prioritizing Vital Projects that Yield Local and Regional Benefit

- **The Ladders Transportation Empowerment Pilot (Ladders<sup>TEP</sup>)** provides technical assistance to local cities on game-changing community revitalization projects related to major infrastructure investments that revitalize, connect, and support access to economic opportunity. DOT launched the program in seven U.S. cities (Atlanta, Baltimore, Baton Rouge, Charlotte, Indianapolis, Phoenix, and Richmond).
- USDOT, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other agencies, established the **Local Foods, Local Places Initiative** that provides technical assistance to create walkable, healthy, economically vibrant neighborhoods through the development of local food systems.

## Promoting an Inclusive Transportation Workforce

- The USDOT **Local Hire Initiative** makes it easier for states and cities to hire local residents for transportation projects. This initiative enables the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration grantees to utilize contracting requirements and other labor hiring preferences such as geography and socioeconomic status so that local workers can participate in the rebuilding of their communities.
- The Federal Highway Administration **On-the-Job Training Program** requires State DOTs to make full use of apprenticeship and training programs targeted to develop the skills of women, minorities, and disadvantaged individuals to ensure that a competent workforce is available to meet highway construction hiring needs.

## Holding Decision-makers Accountable

- The Department is increasing its efforts to remove barriers from federally sponsored projects. This includes updating the Department’s **Title VI Order** and strengthening guidance for grantees; enhancing compliance reviews and training for the **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program**; and increasing transparency in adoption of **Americans With Disabilities Act Transition Plans**.
- The Department is updating its **Environmental Justice Strategic Plan** that underscores the importance of using existing laws to prevent disproportionately adverse effects on minority or low-income populations through Title VI and environmental justice analyses, conducted as part of Federal transportation planning and **National Environmental Policy Act** provisions.

## Empowering the Public

- **The Transportation and Health Tool** helps transportation decision-makers understand how their community or state compares to their peers in terms of key health and transportation indicators.
- The **Location Affordability Portal** provides estimates of household transportation and housing costs at the neighborhood level to help consumers, policymakers, and developers make more informed decisions about where to live, work, and invest.
- The Federal Highway Administration **Transportation Decision-making Guide** will help the public, particularly disadvantaged populations, understand how transportation decisions are made at the local, State, and national levels and how to take advantage of the opportunities provided.
- Federal Highway Administration **Public Involvement Techniques Guide** offers a variety of public involvement techniques available to transportation agencies and assist practitioners in coordinating a full public involvement program.
- The Department has released guidance, based on new statutes, that adds new eligibility for transit-oriented development projects to TIFIA and to RRIF loans, and lowers the cost threshold for using TIFIA loans from \$50 million to \$10 million for those **Transit-Oriented Development Projects**.

## Raising the Standards for Connectivity

- The Department is advancing **Connectivity Measures** that allow State and local decision-makers and constituents to determine whether transportation investments and policies are providing people safe and convenient access to jobs, education, health care, and other essential services.
- Federal Highway Administration has adopted new policy that improves **Highway Design Standards** and encourages greater flexibility to achieve a design that best suits the desires of the community while meeting the purpose for the project and needs of its users.

**21st Century Investment** | In developing the USDOT fiscal year 2017 budget, Secretary Foxx and President Obama introduced a groundbreaking proposal to raise billions of dollars in new funds dedicated to transforming how our infrastructure is built. The proposal is designed to reduce the carbon intensity of our transportation network and aims to achieve that goal by pushing more money to local Decision-Makers and incentivizing integrated land-use planning and projects that reconnect communities separated by physical barriers and insufficient transit services.



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