



August 19, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Request for Information on Surface Transportation Reauthorization

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the City of Santa Rosa, California, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments to inform the development of the next surface transportation reauthorization. Santa Rosa, as a growing mid-sized city in Northern California, depends on a reliable, safe, and efficient transportation system to support our residents, small businesses, and regional economy. We respectfully offer the following recommendations:

1. Increase Direct Funding and Flexibility for Cities and Regions

We strongly support proposals to allow federal dollars to flow directly to metropolitan areas. In addition to STBG and CRP, we recommend adjusting the following programs to incorporate more local input and "local area" funding commitments into these programs: the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), and a renewed Bridge Formula Program (BFP). This model ensures that cities bear direct responsibility for priorities like local safety, equity, and emission reductions while honoring the fact that local road users contribute substantially to federal revenues.

We also support increasing the total STBG funding and enhancing local flexibility—especially for basic pavement maintenance and preservation in urban areas like Santa Rosa. Deferred maintenance on aging neighborhood streets is a serious concern, and flexible STBG funding would allow us to preserve safe, reliable streets before they deteriorate further.

2. Expand and Boost Funding for Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)

Santa Rosa embraces a Vision Zero commitment and has ready-to-start safety projects like intersection redesigns, traffic calming, and safer crossing infrastructure. We call on Congress to increase SS4A implementation funding and improve accessibility for mid-sized cities that already have safety plans in place. Streamlined access for shovel-ready projects would enable us to deliver life-saving improvements faster.

3. Expand Eligibility & Funding for Active Transportation & Transit Infrastructure

We further urge expanding eligible uses to cover first/last-mile transit connections and enhanced shelter infrastructure. Broadening funding scope in this way would better support Santa Rosa's efforts to keep vehicles moving by providing alternatives for those who wish to travel by something other than a private



automobile. Santa Rosa also emphasizes the importance of strengthening public transit as a cornerstone of a safe, sustainable, and equitable transportation system. Our SR Bus system is working to expand transit service but needs additional funding to increase service and improve service reliability and connectivity. Continued federal investment in transit—through programs like STBG, CMAQ, and RAISE—is critical to ensuring that mid-sized cities like Santa Rosa can modernize local bus networks, provide safer, more efficient, and more desirable service.

4. Rebalance Spending Toward Multimodal Investments (e.g., RAISE)

We ask that a greater share of federal transportation funding be allocated to discretionary grants like RAISE, rather than highway expansion. These programs empower localities to design and pursue projects that prioritize safety, sustainability, and access to increased economic development in established communities, including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure.

5. Provide Direct Technical Assistance for Local Capacity Building

Small, rural and mid-sized cities often lack grant-writing and administrative resources to compete effectively. We recommend expanding direct technical assistance programs—like Thriving Communities and ROUTES—to better support cities in navigating federal opportunities, ensuring transportation investments are implemented effectively, equitably, and fast.

We respectfully request that these priorities be reflected in the Department's recommendations to Congress as it develops the next surface transportation reauthorization bill.

Thank you for your leadership in ensuring America's transportation network remains a driver of safety, mobility, and economic opportunity.

Sincerely,

Mark Stapp

Mayor, City of Santa Rosa

Thank you for all of your work on these issues, and greetings from a fellow Northern Wisconsinite!