

FLEXIBLE FUNDING FOR TRANSIT ACCESS

Sponsored by:

FTA's Office of Research, Demonstration, and
Innovation and FHWA's Office of Planning

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Welcome!

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If you have technical difficulties, contact flexfunds@dot.gov for assistance.

For more information on flexing funds: <https://www.planning.dot.gov/flex.aspx>

Agenda

- DOT strategic goals
- What is flex funding?
- Types of projects eligible to flex funds
- Why flex funds?
- FHWA programs eligible to flex to FTA
- Federal requirements
- Key players, flex process, and options for project delivery

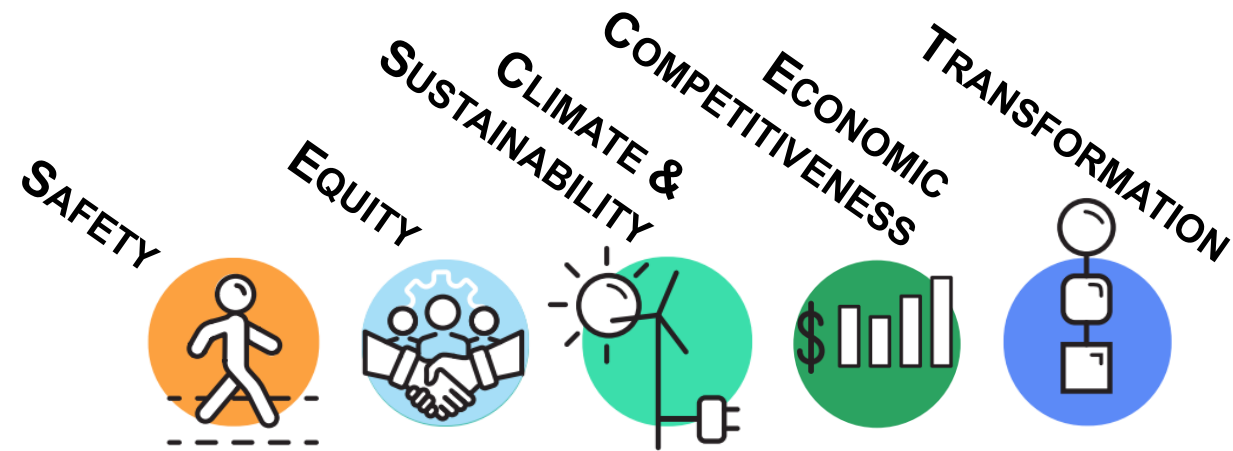
POLL #1

How familiar are you with flex funding?

POLL #2

What is the biggest barrier to using flex funding?

DOT Strategic Goals



Transit access supports...

Complete streets and multimodal design

Low-income and marginalized communities

More walking and bicycling

More transit use

Access to opportunities (jobs, education, etc.)

	SAFETY	EQUITY	CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY	ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS	TRANSFORMATION
Complete streets and multimodal design	✓		✓		✓
Low-income and marginalized communities		✓			✓
More walking and bicycling	✓		✓		✓
More transit use	✓		✓		✓
Access to opportunities (jobs, education, etc.)		✓		✓	✓

What is Flex Funding?

- Broad authority to transfer funding between Federal agencies
- Provided by Congress under the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)
- Can support and enable projects like:
 - Transit capital improvements
 - Access improvements to and around transit (e.g., pedestrian and bicycle access)
- Catchment area established in 2011 FTA Policy Statement



Types of Projects Eligible to Flex Funds

- Pedestrian access and walkways
- Bicycle/pedestrian access
- Signage
- Enhanced access for persons with disabilities to public transportation
- Bus shelters
- Lighting
- Historic preservation, rehabilitation, and operation of historic public transportation buildings, structures, and facilities
- Functional landscaping and streetscaping

Eligible “associated transit improvements”:

- Pedestrian improvements located within half a mile of a transit stop or station.
- Bicycle improvements located within three miles of a transit stop or station.
- Pedestrian/bicycle improvements located outside of this “catchment” area if project sponsor can demonstrate the improvement is within the distance that people will travel by foot or bicycle to a transit stop or station.



Example: Milford Rail Station Bike Lockers

- **Location:** Milford, CT
- **Total cost:** \$70,000 – 80% CMAQ, 20% local
- **Key players:** Milford Transit District, City of Milford
- **Project details:** Installation of 25 bike lockers at Milford train station, which serves riders commuting to NYC, creating a need for longer-term secure bike parking
- **Flex motivation:** Nexus between bike access/storage and transit (lockers are located on station site)



Milford Rail Station Bike Lockers. Source: Milford Transit District



Why Flex Funds?

- Facilitate (and increase) investment of Federal-Aid Highway Program funding of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit projects and associated safety improvements
- Reduce costs associated with project delivery, including pre-construction design costs
- Accelerate project delivery
- Encourage “complete trip” network design and project planning
- Increase local design control and improve context-sensitive design
- Improve the safety and accessibility of the transit network
- Provide access for people of all ages and abilities, including those from marginalized communities facing historic disinvestment



Downtown Fort Lauderdale Mobility Hub Streetscape improvements, including a two-way cycle track, pedestrian lighting, and ADA improvements. Source: Broward MPO.

Example: Montague Pedestrian Overcrossing

- **Location:** Milpitas, CA
- **Total cost:** \$21.7M – 49% federal (mostly CMAQ), 16% state, 35% city
- **Key players:** Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, Santa Clara County, City of Milpitas
- **Project details:** Pedestrian overpass across the Montague Expressway connecting a high-density residential and commercial area with the new BART station in Milpitas
- **Flex motivation:** More flexible, timely, and streamlined process



Montague Pedestrian Overpass. Source: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

FHWA Programs Eligible to Flex to FTA

Eligible Programs to be flexed to FTA	
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)	✓
Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)	✓
Transportation Alternatives (TA)	✓
Ferry Boat Program	✓
Carbon Reduction Program <i>[New under BIL]</i>	✓
Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)	✓
National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)	✓
State Planning and Research (SPR)*	✓
Metropolitan Planning Funds (PL)*	✓

Federal Requirements for Flexed Funds

- Eligibility and Federal match requirements retained from **original FHWA program**
- Eligibility must **also** match FTA program into which the funds are flexed
- Once transferred from FHWA to FTA, projects:
 - Under FTA oversight
 - Coordinate through FTA Regional Office
 - Follow FTA project delivery reviews and processes



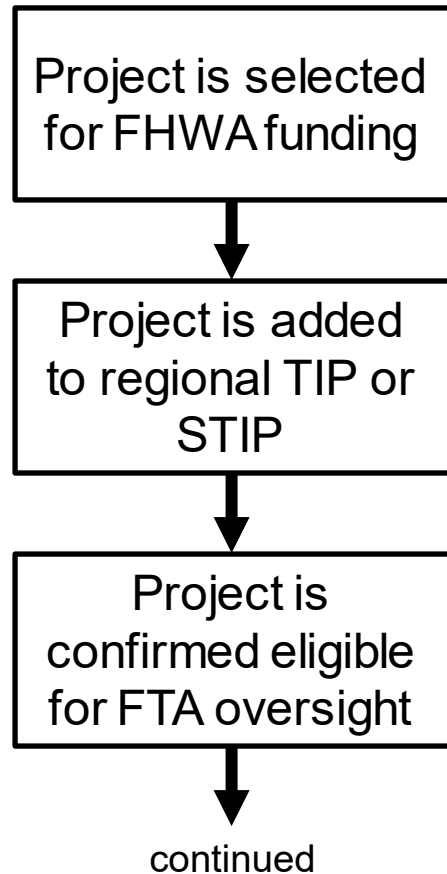
Rendering of Rock Region METRO solar-powered bus shelter, which includes lighting, a bench, and a small bike rack. Source: Rock Region METRO.

Key Players in Flexing Funds

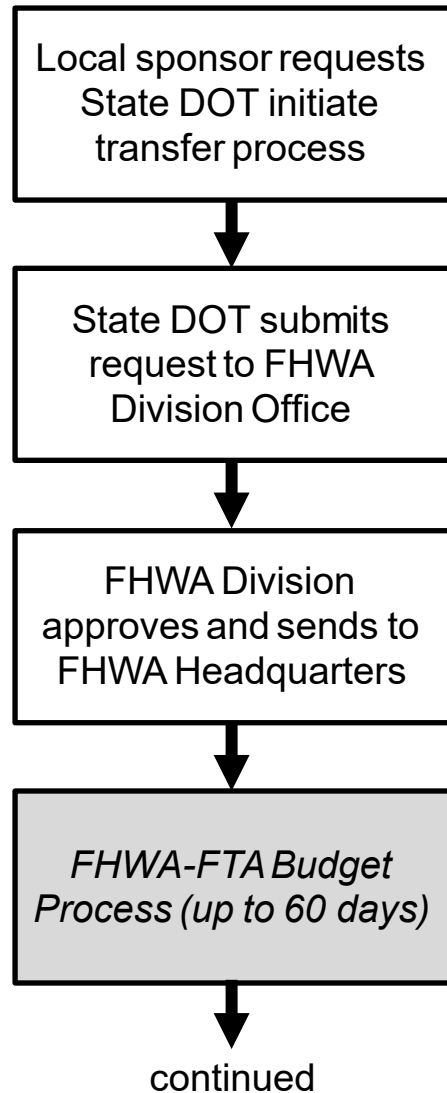
- **Project sponsors:** Develop project, support flex request, may implement the project
- **MPOs:** Award funding within regions, stakeholder in the flex process
- **State DOTs:** Principal grantee for FHWA funds, must submit request to flex to FHWA Division Office
- **Transit agencies:** May be FTA direct recipient, may directly implement projects or establish agreement with subrecipient
- **FTA:** Approves flex request, oversees flexed projects
- **FHWA:** Approves flex request, transfers obligation authority to FTA



What is the process for Flexing funds? (1/3)



- **Prepare the project and confirm eligibility:**
- Stakeholder engagement between local, regional, State agencies, and transit agencies
- Develop projects and submit for consideration at the regional or state level
- Ensure eligibility for FHWA **and** FTA funding
 - Outreach to FHWA Division and FTA Regional Offices

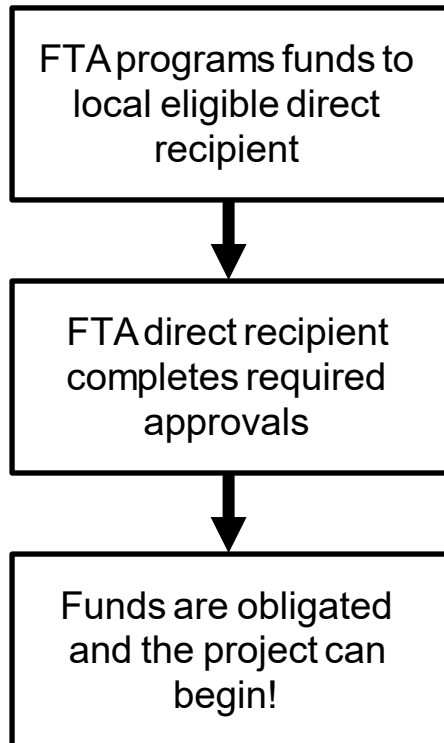


What is the process for Flexing funds? (2/3)

- **Request flex fund using FHWA transfer form:**
- Project sponsors provide letters of support
 - Transit agency
 - Local government
- State completes transfer form and submits to FHWA
- FHWA Division Office is responsible for ensuring eligibility and Federal requirements



What is the process for Flexing funds? (3/3)



- **FTA direct recipient receives funds and begins work**
- FTA Region coordinates with direct recipient
- Direct recipient may establish subrecipient agreements to complete the project
- Work can begin once funds are obligated
- FTA direct recipient is responsible for ensuring all Federal requirements are met

Options for Project Delivery

FTA Direct Recipient

Subrecipient

Advantages

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recipient may have more capacity to implement projects in communities with fewer resources • Regional transit agencies may be better positioned to work across multiple jurisdictions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local sponsor may have more capacity to deliver roadway infrastructure improvements • Local sponsor may be better able to manage projects within the roadway network |
|--|---|

Considerations

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit agency may lack capacity to implement roadway infrastructure improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires subrecipient agreement and oversight |
|---|---|

Example: Bissonnet Pedestrian-Transit Improvements

- **Location:** Houston, TX
- **Total cost:** \$8M – 23% federal (STBG), 77% local
- **Key players:** Upper Kirby Management District, Upper Kirby Redevelopment Authority
- **Project details:** Streetscape improvements along a half-mile corridor served by and intersecting multiple fixed-route Houston METRO bus lines.
- **Flex motivation:** Ability to use local design and project delivery processes, leading to time and cost savings.



Bissonnet Streetscape Improvements. Source: The Goodman Corporation.

POLL #3

How likely are you to flex funds for a future project?

Contact FHWA or FTA field offices

FHWA Division Offices

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/about/field.cfm>

FTA Regional Offices

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/regional-offices/>

**Contact us with questions or
share your experiences**

flexfunds@dot.gov