



American Planning Association  
**New York Metro Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

**August 19, 2019**

**Dear Representative Nita Lowey, Chair, House Appropriations Committee; and  
Representative Sean Patrick Maloney, Chair, House Transportation and Infrastructure  
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation**

On behalf of the American Planning Association (APA), the New York Metro Chapter thanks you for your leadership on the on-going work related to surface transportation reauthorization. APA appreciates your efforts to prioritize transportation and infrastructure as critical components of creating great communities. APA New York Metro Chapter represents more than 1,600 planners, planning officials and engaged citizens who work to ensure prosperity, opportunity and mobility for all. An important part of our work is ensuring that planners have the tools to address the evolving nature of transportation policy.

Last month, important steps were made toward surface transportation reauthorization in 2020 with the bipartisan vote to approve the America's Transportation Infrastructure Act. As critical work moves forward on transportation and infrastructure, APA identifies four critical components of reauthorization and funding:

- 1) **States and communities need increased, sustainable, and predictable funding.** This means advancing increases in vital discretionary programs through THUD appropriations legislation. It means increasing the gas tax to support smart and forward-looking plans and projects while seriously moving toward a new user-fee revenue model. Congress should also advance new finance tools like private activity bonds and advanced refunding of municipal bonds that support critical investment. The Rebuild America Act of 2019 (H.R. 2864), Building United States Infrastructure and Leveraging Development Act (H.R. 2541) and Investing in Our Communities Act (H.R. 2772) are examples of bills that work toward accomplishing these needs.
- 2) **Federal transportation programs must do more to promote transit, biking and walking. These options make places safer and healthier and provide more options for mobility.** This means expanding and improving the TAP program, increasing and better targeting funding for the BUILD (formerly TIGER) program and transit grants, significantly increasing transit funding, expanding bikeshare, and supporting critical planning and design for a better network. The Transportation Alternatives Enhancement Act (S. 1098) is one way that Congress can promote more options for mobility.
- 3) **Our transportation policies have to make communities more resilient and address the challenge of climate change.** This will require new approaches that require greater resiliency in infrastructure and more planning for resilience and hazards. It also means supporting expanding planning that incorporates climate measurement and mitigation. And, it requires investment in infrastructure that supports reduced emissions through bills like the Green Transportation Act (H.R. 3822).



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- 4) **Transportation legislation must be forward-looking and help communities prepare for the future.** Advancing understanding of the implications and new practices related to incorporating technology into planning, decision-making, public engagement and the infrastructure itself is critical. Special attention needs to be paid to the emergence of autonomous vehicles and connected infrastructure through research and standards related to local impacts. Congress should invest in helping communities plan for a new future of transportation and not simply pile investment into past approaches through legislation such as the Preparing Localities for an Autonomous and Connected Environment Act (H.R. 2542).

Communities face critical challenges that can be addressed through federal funding and legislation regarding surface transportation. APA New York Metro Chapter thanks you for your leadership and support and looks forward to working with you as we continue to move toward surface transportation reauthorization in 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MS', with a horizontal line underneath.

Maxwell L. Sokol, AICP

President, American Planning Association, New York Metro Chapter