

FTA Discretionary Grants for Bus and Urban Circulator Livability Projects

FTA is allocating available Section 5309 Bus and New Starts funds to innovative Bus and Bus Facility projects and Urban Circulator projects - including streetcars - to advance the six livability principles adopted by the DOT-HUD-EPA

Partnership for Sustainable Communities:

1. Provide more transportation choices.
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing.
3. Enhance economic competitiveness.
4. Support existing communities.
5. Coordinate policies and leverage investment.
6. Value communities and neighborhoods.

Using available funds that do not require new appropriations, FTA will deliver tangible livability improvements within existing programs. This initiative will demonstrate the value of these investments to achieve the livability principles. The programs will help inform the next surface transportation reauthorization.

FTA is publishing two notices of funding availability (NOFAs) in the next week, with grantee selections announcements early in 2010.

Urban Circulator Grants

Up to \$25 million for each selected project will be available from approximately \$125 million in prior year unallocated Section 5309 funds available now. Eligible projects include streetcars, bus rapid transit and other eligible fixed guideways. Priority projects will connect destinations and foster the redevelopment of districts into walkable, mixed use, high density environments.

FTA will select projects on the basis of four criteria:

1. **Livability**: Improving the quality of living and working environments in the corridor in which the project is located. Specifically, the availability of existing or planned mixed income housing, including low income housing, within walking distance of the project and the strategies proposed to deliver high quality pedestrian environments will be evaluated.
2. **Sustainability**: Benefitting the environment through implementation of practices beyond the minimum requirements necessary to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act, such as the use of green technologies, energy efficient and sustainable infrastructure and other measures to reduce mobile source pollutants.

3. Economic Development: Contributing to the economic development of the corridor in which the project is located over the medium- to long-term. Plans and strategies to strengthen existing or encourage planned mixed use development that provides local jobs and services within the community, in addition to housing, will be assessed.
4. Leveraging of Public Investments: Demonstrating strong collaboration among a broad range participants and/or integration of transportation with other public investment efforts such as HUD-supported housing investments or EPA-funded brownfields projects.

The Notice of Funding Availability will provide further details for applicants.

Bus “Livability” Projects

Funding will be available from up to \$150 million in prior-year unallocated Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facility funds available now. Priority projects will foster the preservation and enhancement of urban and rural communities by providing new mobility options which provide access to jobs, healthcare, and education, and/or which contribute to the redevelopment of neighborhood spaces into walk-able, mixed-use, vibrant environments.

FTA will identify meritorious projects on the basis of three criteria:

1. Livability: For Bus Projects, assessment of the impact on livability will focus on the project’s ability to improve access to jobs, education, medical services and other necessities; support the independence of the elderly and disabled to remain in and contribute to their communities; or preserve and invigorate town centers.
2. Sustainability: FTA will emphasize projects which benefit the environment through activities which support more environmentally sustainable transportation systems; i.e. reducing reliance on automobile travel, improving the pedestrian and walk environment of a community, and use of sustainable design techniques in their planning, construction, and operation.
3. Leveraging of Public Investments: Bus projects will also be evaluated based on the degree to which they demonstrate strong collaboration among a broad range participants and/or integration of transportation with other public investment efforts such as HUD-supported housing investments or EPA-funded brownfields projects.

The Notice of Funding Availability will provide further details for applicants.