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# INVEST: A Roadmap to Sustainable, Equitable Transportation

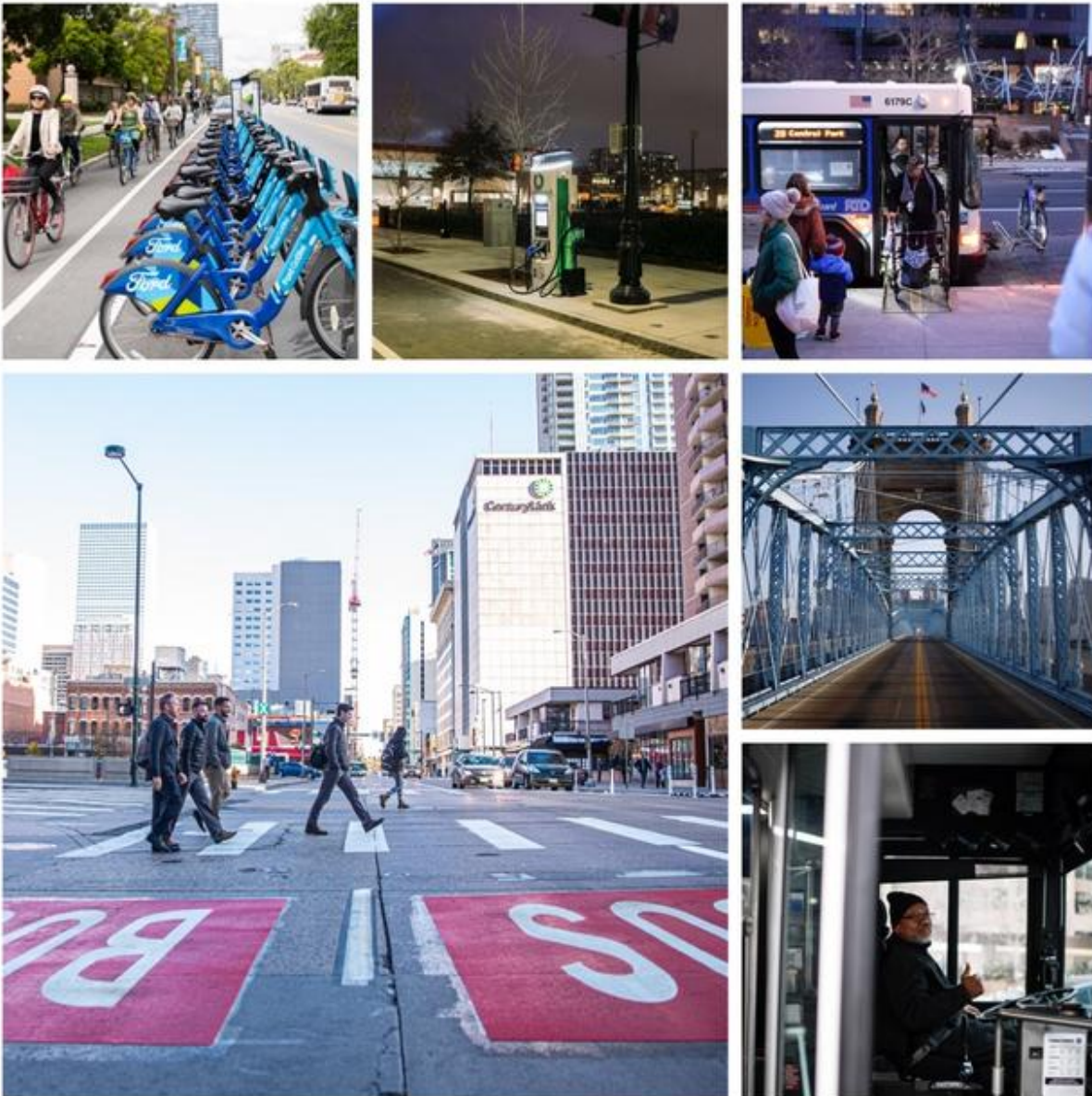
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[Stephanie Gidigbi](#) & [Ann Shikany](#)

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The future of transportation needs to be safe, equitable and sustainable.

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The protests and violence around the country highlight an inequitable system that Black and brown communities have been required to navigate since the days of the underground railroad. The history of [transportation and the civil rights struggle](#) in the U.S. has been deeply connected for centuries. The recent introduction of the [INVEST](#)

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Although it does not obviate the need for direct system change of public policy and reforms to policing, the INVEST in America Act is the kind of action and investment needed to directly address institutional racism, decades of disinvestment, and tackle the cumulative effects of air pollution in Black, brown, and low-income communities.

Sadly, as our country continues to grapple with unrest, it must also face the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic which continues to place millions of Americans out of work. The INVEST in America Act is an ideal opportunity to provide Americans with good-paying, meaningful jobs rebuilding a more sustainable transportation system. An investment like this will only work if it is large enough to meet the scale of all of the issues facing our country now – the systemic effects of institutional racism, and the COVID-19 recession, and the climate crisis.

This bill puts people first and addresses climate impacts across multiple fronts by reducing carbon emissions across the transportation sector and increasing resilience throughout the system. This reauthorizing is an opportunity for Congress to remake our transportation system as one that works for all and towards a sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future, and we feel the INVEST America Act rises to that challenge.

There are a number of provisions in the INVEST America Act for communities and climate activists to celebrate. Some of the most important include:

**Measuring what matters:** A requirement for the Department of Transportation to establish a new greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions performance measure, which will measure and reduce carbon and other pollutants from the transportation system, a critical step for reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. It also establishes a new connectivity performance measure for transportation access that improves

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**Funding for climate mitigation:** \$8.35 billion in funding over fiscal years 2022 through 2025, through a new Federal Highway Formula program, to support carbon pollution reduction. This program will support multi-modal investments and operations across highway, transit, and rail projects. It also gives teeth to the GHG performance metric by holding States accountable for measuring their annual progress towards emission reduction goals. The program is designed to support States that attain higher reductions and requires low-performing states to invest 10 percent of their Surface Transportation Program funds in projects that reduce carbon pollution.

**Funding for climate resilience:** \$6.25 billion in funding over fiscal years 2022 through 2025, through a new Federal Highway Formula program, to support resilience and make it a core part of the Federal-aid highway program. This new program will create state and regional plans that address climate vulnerability and direct investments towards more climate resilient infrastructure.

In addition, the INVEST in America Act supports the policies NRDC has championed as necessary to transform our communities and transportation system, including increasing the share of low-carbon transportation trips, electrification, and putting more funding directly in the hands of local communities and workers.

Tackling climate change will mean shifting our investments towards infrastructure that supports low-carbon transportation options like transit, biking and walking. The INVEST in America Act will increase funding for mass transit by \$105 billion over five years, \$60 billion for rail, and a 30 percent increase in the Transportation Alternatives Program, which supports the build out of safe, low-stress bicycle and pedestrian networks. Low-carbon trips are more likely when communities are planned around high-capacity, high-quality transit, and that will be supported through an additional \$20 million for transit-oriented development grants.

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mass transit and active alternatives instead of driving alone. The INVEST in America Act gives the Secretary of Transportation authority to allow dynamic pricing on highways when used as a part of a local congestion reduction program, while ensuring those programs take into account impacts on equity and environmental justice.

Of course, cars and vehicles will remain an integral part of our transportation system. There's a lot the federal government can do to encourage people who use cars to make the switch to electric. One of the biggest hurdles consumers face in making the switch is a lack of consistent charging infrastructure. The INVEST in America act includes \$350 million per year to build and expand zero emission vehicle charging infrastructure across the country. It will also support the electrification of our transit fleets by reforming existing bus grant programs, which in addition to reducing overall GHG emissions has important air quality benefits for communities.

We encourage Congress to go even further in promoting adoption of electric vehicles by constructing charging stations at government facilities, like national parks. Congress also has the ability to incentivize government agencies to purchase electric vehicles for their own fleets.

The INVEST in America Act also upgrades the freight formula program to expand environmental and community impact considerations in freight planning. It provides funding for projects that demonstrate localized air quality benefits, which can address pollution hot spot improvements for communities.

Another important aspect of the INVEST in America Act is its inclusion of funding and policies that empower state and local leaders to take the lead on transportation and climate through \$600 million per year in Community Transportation Investment Grants, \$250 million per year in Community Climate Innovation Grants, almost \$40 billion over

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transportation infrastructure. These programs empower cities and rural communities to direct investments towards safety and connectivity.

Our local communities depend on good jobs, and the INVEST in America Act makes sure to support our workers as well. With high labor standards, enhanced worker training, strong Buy America provisions, and an increased focus on ensuring worker safety, the investment provided by this bill will help create the high quality local jobs in construction, manufacturing, and operations that families and communities need to recover and thrive.

While we support the INVEST in America Act, we understand that it cannot achieve significant decreases in transportation carbon pollution and positive community impacts without a long term, sustainable funding source. We look forward to working with Congress to determine a long term solution.

The urgency of the climate crisis, COVID-19, and the ongoing fight against institutional racism demands transformative action. The INVEST in America Act provides a roadmap to a connected, sustainable, and equitable transportation system, which is a key step towards the change we need.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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**STEPHANIE GIDIGBI**

Director of Policy & Partnerships, Healthy People & Thriving Communities Program



**ANN SHIKANY**

State and Federal Policy Advocate, Healthy People & Thriving Communities

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