



May 26, 2026

The Honorable Brett Guthrie, Chair
The Honorable Frank Pallone Jr., Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves, Chair
The Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tim Scott, Chair
The Honorable Elizabeth Warren, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Chair
The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs Capito, Cruz, Graves, Guthrie and Scott, and Ranking Members Cantwell, Larsen, Pallone, Warren and Whitehouse:

As your committees advance surface transportation reauthorization legislation, USAging urges you to prioritize and strengthen access to adequate, accessible transportation for older adults and people with disabilities and we offer several policy recommendations in this letter to advance that important goal.

[USAging](#) represents the more than 600 [Area Agencies on Aging](#) nationwide, which help older adults, people with disabilities and family caregivers live with optimal health, well-being, independence and dignity in their homes

and communities. USAging also advocates for the more than 280 Title VI Native American Aging programs. Area Agencies on Aging provide access to adequate, accessible transportation for older adults and people with disabilities in communities nationwide.

Our members are the local leaders who develop, coordinate and deliver a wide range of home and community-based services beyond and complimentary to transportation access, including information and referral/assistance, case management, home-delivered and congregate meals, in-home services, caregiver supports, evidence-based health and wellness programs and more.

Adequate, accessible transportation is critical for older adults and people with disabilities to maintain active and successful lives. For many older adults and people with disabilities, access to transportation can mean the difference between dependence and isolation or independence and productivity.

Our nation is aging, with more than 58 million people over the age of 65 in the United States currently—a number that is expected to rise to 88 million by 2060. But even within a decade, by 2035, older adults are expected to outnumber children under 18 for the first time in history, which will dramatically impact the face and fabric of society for generations to come.

That is why USAging believes all federal policy discussion and advancement must consider the aging perspective, to reflect the new realities of all states and communities and the massive demographic change we are experiencing as a nation.

Ensuring Access for Older Adults and People with Disabilities

We urge you to direct the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to dedicate funding for a standalone national training and technical assistance center to ensure that older adults and people with disabilities have access to adequate, accessible transportation. From 2006 to 2025, that National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) was a major contributor to understanding and meeting the needs of these populations. The NADTC was defunded by FTA in 2025 with the idea that its efforts could be rolled into

another resource center, the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility Technical Assistance Center (CCAM-TAC). However, NADTC played a unique role, as it was led by USAging and other aging and disability organizations that brought both aging/disability expertise and community-level access to these populations and the human service and transportation providers that serve them.

Burying this critical, focused work into a larger resource center with broader goals and without aging/disability expertise is not in the best interest of the OAs and PWDs. These populations rely both on our nation's transportation systems, from the large to the small, such as aging services transportation programs and other community-based efforts to fill in gaps left by existing systems.

This is especially important given the demographics of our aging nation, which include history-making increases in the number of adults, and with PWDs and older people living much longer than before.

We ask Congress to **direct FTA to provide not less than \$2,600,000 for a cooperative agreement with a technical assistance center with aging and disability expertise to advance accessible transportation nationwide by providing technical assistance, training and coordination resources that help communities improve mobility options for older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers.**

Congress already did this in the 2005 reauthorization package in creating the precursor to NADTC, the National Center on Senior Transportation. The center must advance the nation's understanding of the transportation needs of and barriers faced by older adults and people with disabilities and seed innovation by investing in local pilots that can be replicated by other communities.

Sections 5310, 5311

We encourage Congress to **strengthen and increase funding for the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5310 program**, which provides services for older adults and people with disabilities in areas where standard public transportation is lacking.

Section 5310 is one of the only federal programs focused specifically on accessible transportation and without increased investment, communities risk cutting services as demand continues to rise as more Americans age.

Additionally, organizations serving these populations often lack the resources to meet high match requirements, particularly in rural, small and tribal communities. And complex grant processes often exclude under-resourced, smaller providers from applying, even when need is significant. Furthermore, short grant application timelines for the program are particularly challenging for tribal nations, which often require council approval before submitting applications. Reducing these barriers and increasing flexibility make it more likely that federal funds reach people who rely on accessible transportation the most, such as older adults and people with disabilities. That is why USAging urges Congress to **reduce or eliminate match requirements and implement simplified grant applications** and longer application timelines, especially programs most often used by aging and disability providers, including Sections 5310 and 5311.

We also encourage Congress to increase flexibility within Section 5310, allowing states greater flexibility to direct funds to rural and small urban areas where aging-related transportation needs are often greatest.

Safety Programs

Older adults face higher risks of serious injury or death in traffic crashes, especially in rural areas. Many rural roads in particular lack sidewalks, safe crossings and accessible infrastructure, and safety investments often focus on vehicles rather than people who walk, use wheelchairs or rely on transit.

To curb these risks, USAging urges Congress to **encourage and fund safety programs that prioritize age-friendly and accessible roadway design**, including pedestrian infrastructure and safe access to transit. We also urge **more transportation safety funding for rural communities and lower match requirements for safety programs**.

Flexibility to Address Aging and Disability Needs

USAgings also encourages Congress to support **formula programs that give local and regional partners the flexibility to address aging and disability transportation needs.** Formula funding gives communities predictable resources to plan for long-term aging and disability needs, while locally centered decision-making allows partners the flexibility to address transportation decisions that reflect real community conditions and service gaps. We also encourage an increase in planning funding, stronger Surface Transportation Block Grant suballocation to local areas and urge Congress to protect formula funding if discretionary programs are consolidated.

Transportation Planning

Regional and rural transportation planning is a key factor in determining transit needs for older adults and people with disabilities, often across city and county lines. Regional planning organizations are often where coordination occurs between transit, human services and local providers, like Area Agencies on Aging and disability service programs. Without stable planning funds, rural and small communities struggle to include aging and disability needs in long-term transportation plans.

To strengthen regional planning capacity and ensure aging and disability needs are considered in planning efforts, we urge Congress to provide **dedicated funding for Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, and increase funding for Metropolitan Planning, State Planning and Research and the Surface Transportation Block Grant.** We also urge Congress to emphasize the importance of engaging Area Agencies on Aging, disability service providers and human services transportation partners in regional and rural transportation planning.

Transit Providers

Public transportation is often the lynchpin that allows people to work, go to the doctor's office, volunteer in their community, live independently, get an education, go shopping or visit friends and relatives. As such, USAgings urges you to **strengthen and protect the Mass Transit Account within the Highway Trust Fund.** Reliable transit funding is critical for older adults and people with disabilities who depend on public and human services transportation. We also recommend increasing the federal share for

operating assistance for eligible public transit projects, up to 80 percent, to help sustain essential services in rural and small communities.

Transit providers play a critical role in ensuring access to essential services in communities across the country. To ensure they can operate as efficiently as possible, we recommend **increasing operating funding flexibility for rural and small urban transit providers** to help sustain essential services, including demand-response and volunteer driver programs. We also encourage you to reduce administrative burdens for small transit providers, including codifying safety plan exemptions or allowing states to certify plans for smaller Section 5310 and 5311 providers. Additionally, we recommend allowing transit agencies to retain proceeds from vehicle sales after useful life. Retaining these funds would help replace vehicles used to serve older adults and people with disabilities.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests and your leadership on surface transportation reauthorization. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Amy Gotwals, Chief, Public Policy and External Affairs, and Olivia Umoren Ezeuko, Director, Public Policy and Advocacy, policy@usaging.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandy Markwood".

Sandy Markwood
Chief Executive Officer

cc:

Members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Members of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

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