



TITLE III – CONSOLIDATED COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAMS

COMMUNITY MOBILITY PROGRAM

FRAME Policy Paper – Title III, Subtitle B

The problem, the proposed solution in plain language, the legislative proposal, and the data case ·
Sections 305–308

For more information and full legislation, go to frameformobility.org

CONTENTS

I	The Problem	II	The Proposed Solution	III	The Legislative Proposal
IV	The Data Case	V	Sources		

PART I

THE PROBLEM

Road deaths are the first fact. U.S. traffic deaths totalled 40,901 in 2023; NHTSA's early estimate for 2024 is 39,345 — an improvement that still leaves the annual toll near forty thousand, on a network most of whose miles, and most of whose risk, are locally owned. The regime that is supposed to reduce that toll by target-setting is documented as unenforceable: GAO found that states did not achieve most of the fatality-related targets they set for 2014–2017, and FHWA's own guidance confirms the agency has no authority to approve or reject the targets states set (GAO-20-53). Targets without consequences have not bent the curve.

THE PROBLEM IN NUMBERS

40,901

U.S. traffic deaths in 2023;
2024 early estimate 39,345
(NHTSA, 2025)

~75%

of U.S. road miles are locally
owned, ~50% of bridges (LOT
Coalition, 2025)

~15%

of formula dollars reach local
governments directly (LOT
Coalition, 2025)

5:1 – 12:1

what deferred repair costs:
rehabilitation vs preservation,
per lane-mile and per bridge
(Caltrans, 2009)

PART I – THE PROBLEM, CONTINUED

The second fact is a mismatch between ownership and money. Local governments own roughly three-quarters of the nation's road miles and about half of its bridges, yet receive only about 15 percent of federal formula dollars directly (Local Officials for Transportation Coalition, 2025). The local networks where most deaths occur and most trips begin are funded indirectly, after state priorities, or not at all. The third fact is fragmentation: the federal money that does reach local safety planning, bus capital, and street repair is divided among three separate programs in two titles of law, each with its own application, criteria set, and calendar — a structure that prices small and mid-sized communities, which have the least grant-writing capacity, out of competitions they are eligible to enter.

Stated plainly: the outcomes are measured nationally, the assets are owned locally, and the money arrives through doors that match neither. Safety is pursued by setting targets no one is empowered to enforce; repair is deferred until it costs five to twelve times more than preservation; and the communities accountable for the streets apply for funds through three unconnected programs. What is missing is a single, direct route by which local governments are funded for measured outcomes.

PART II

THE PROPOSED SOLUTION

The Community Mobility Program gives local transportation a single front door. City and county governments, regional planning organizations, Tribal governments, and transit agencies apply directly — there is no state pass-through and no state application tier — in one competition that replaces today's separate bus, street-safety, and local discretionary grant programs. The program's focus is the community level: improving safety, expanding mobility options, and bringing local networks into good repair.

The money can pay for the work local networks actually need:

- A comprehensive local safety action plan built on the Safe System approach, and the capital projects that carry it out — intersections and corridors redesigned to protect people walking and cycling;
- Buses and other rolling stock, bought new or rehabilitated, with a priority for zero-emission vehicles;
- Bus maintenance facilities and other transit infrastructure, built or rebuilt;
- Reconstruction and rehabilitation of locally owned roads, streets, and bridges;
- Infrastructure that supports walking and cycling; and
- Modern traffic technology and on-demand transit services.

PART II – THE PROPOSED SOLUTION, CONTINUED

Projects are ranked by measured value, not by narrative. Safety is scored on the deaths and serious injuries a project is projected to prevent. Alongside safety, projects are scored on how much they improve access to jobs, schools, and essential services — particularly for residents of underserved or disadvantaged communities — and on how far they bring the local transportation network into a better state of good repair. The funding rules pay for those priorities: the federal share is generally 80 percent of a project’s cost, rises to 90 percent where the main purpose is repair, reaches 100 percent for proven safety countermeasures and qualifying innovation and technology projects, and falls to 50 percent for projects that add new general-purpose traffic lanes. The calendar is fixed and public: a funding notice within about four months of money becoming available, at least three months to apply, and a decision, with notification to every applicant, within about seven months of the application deadline. Every award is governed by an agreement that sets the scope, the cost, the performance measures, and the reporting owed.

PART III

THE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

Subtitle B of Title III consolidates three existing local-facing programs — Bus and Bus Facilities Grants (49 U.S.C. 5339), the RAISE discretionary grant program (IIJA §21201), and Safe Streets and Roads for All (IIJA §24112) — into one competitive program, the Community Mobility Program. **Section 305** repeals all three; **Section 306** makes the conforming amendment.

The stated purpose (**Sec. 307(a)**) is “to provide direct Federal financial assistance, on a competitive basis, to local and regional entities to plan and implement projects that solve community-level transportation challenges, with a focus on improving safety, enhancing mobility options, and bringing local transportation networks into a state of good repair.” Two design features follow. First, the money is *direct*: eligible applicants (**Sec. 307(c)**) are units of local government, MPOs, federally recognized Tribal governments, and public transit agencies — States are not eligible applicants. Second, the eligible activities (**Sec. 307(d)**) are defined at community scale.

- Development or implementation of a comprehensive local safety action plan consistent with the Safe System Approach;
- Capital projects to improve roadway safety, including redesign of intersections and corridors;
- Acquisition or rehabilitation of buses and other rolling stock, with a priority for zero-emission vehicles;
- Construction or rehabilitation of bus maintenance facilities and other transit infrastructure;
- Reconstruction or rehabilitation of locally owned roads, streets, and bridges;
- Construction of infrastructure to support active transportation; and
- Deployment of intelligent transportation systems and on-demand transit technology (**Sec. 107**).

SELECTION BY MEASURED VALUE

The Secretary is directed to “prioritize projects that provide the greatest value” in three stated terms (**Sec. 308(a)**): **(1)** improving roadway safety, “as measured by the project’s projected reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries”; **(2)** enhancing mobility and access to jobs, schools, and essential services, “particularly for residents of underserved or disadvantaged communities”; and **(3)** bringing the local transportation network into a better state of good repair, as defined in **Section 102**. Safety is scored on a projected outcome — fatalities and serious injuries avoided — not on activity counts.

PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

The program runs on statutory clocks, stated compactly at **Section 307(e)–(f)**: a notice of funding opportunity not later than 120 days after funds are made available; an application period of not less than 90 days; and completion of evaluation with notification to all applicants not later than 210 days after the application deadline. Each award is governed by a grant agreement specifying scope, cost and award amount, performance measures, and reporting (**Sec. 307(g)**). **Section 307(h)** enumerates the applicable Federal requirements: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, NEPA, the Davis-Bacon Act, Buy America (**23 U.S.C. 313**), the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act, and chapter 53 of title 49 for public transportation projects. *Drafting note: as written, Sec. 307(f) keys the Secretary’s review to criteria “established in section 306”; the operative selection criteria are stated at Sec. 308(a).*

FEDERAL SHARE – SEC. 308 (B)

The Federal share is determined under **Section 106**, the Act’s variable cost-share: 80 percent as the general rule; 90 percent for projects whose primary purpose is state of good repair; 100 percent for proven safety countermeasures identified in the Highway Safety Manual or qualified innovation and technology projects; and 50 percent for projects adding new general-purpose lanes on the National Highway System. The Secretary determines each project’s primary purpose. Under this subtitle, that schedule prices the program’s own priorities: a proven safety countermeasure can be fully federally funded, and a repair project outranks an expansion project on match.

WHAT CHANGES

- **Three programs become one door.** Safety planning, bus capital, and local discretionary projects — today three programs in two titles of law — share one application and one criteria set.
- **Direct to local.** Eligibility runs to local and regional entities and transit agencies without a State applicant tier.
- **Outcome-scored safety.** Selection is keyed to projected reductions in fatalities and serious injuries, stated in the statute.

THE DATA CASE

Why would the program work? Each of its design choices maps to a documented result: safety funding scored on projected outcomes, because target-setting without consequences has not reduced deaths; direct local eligibility, because ownership and funding are mismatched; proven countermeasures funded as a portfolio, because cities that have deployed them publish the outcomes; and repair priced ahead of expansion, because the preservation arithmetic is unambiguous.

Safety, measured as outcomes. The existing performance regime has not bent the fatality curve by target-setting: GAO found that states did not achieve most of the fatality-related targets they set for 2014–2017, and FHWA’s own guidance confirms it has no authority to approve or reject state targets. The Community Mobility Program takes the other route available in statute: it does not set targets for others, it *buys projected outcomes* — ranking local safety projects by their projected reduction in fatalities and serious injuries, and funding proven countermeasures at a 100 percent Federal share under Sec. 106. The model is the Safe System Approach the bill requires in local safety action plans: Sweden, which adopted Vision Zero in 1997, reduced road deaths from 541 in 1997 to 192 in 2021 while traffic grew.

City results, published. The model also has domestic results at municipal scale. Hoboken, New Jersey — a Vision Zero city since 2019, rebuilt with daylighting, curb extensions, and a 20 mph citywide limit — has recorded eight consecutive years without a traffic death; after its 2022 street upgrades, the city reported injury crashes down 18 percent and serious injuries down 62 percent in one year. New York City, investing early in the same countermeasure set — lower speed limits, speed safety cameras, corridor redesign — reduced pedestrian deaths by 45 percent between 2013 and 2023 (Vision Zero Network). The pattern in both cases is the program’s theory stated as a result: proven countermeasures, funded as a portfolio, measured in outcomes.

Direct access matches ownership. The mismatch stated in Part I — roughly three-quarters of U.S. road miles and about half of bridges locally owned, against about 15 percent of federal formula dollars received directly (LOT Coalition) — is structural, and the structural answer is a program whose applicants are the owners: local governments, MPOs, Tribal governments, and transit agencies, the entities accountable for the assets they apply to fund. The program’s access criterion is likewise a measurable quantity rather than a survey response: the Accessibility Observatory at the University of Minnesota computes jobs reachable within fixed travel times for every census block in the nation’s 50 largest metropolitan areas (*Access Across America: Transit 2024*), the standing national measurement of exactly the access that criterion names.

PART IV – THE DATA CASE, CONTINUED

Repair economics. The third criterion — state of good repair — follows asset-management arithmetic: Caltrans’ published life-cycle comparison puts pavement preservation at \$90,000 per lane-mile against \$442,000 for rehabilitation (about 5:1), and bridge preservation at \$60,000 against \$720,000 (12:1). Funding local networks before they fail is the cheaper federal posture by an order of magnitude.



One door for local safety, mobility, and repair — scored on outcomes.

Subtitle B folds bus capital, RAISE, and Safe Streets and Roads for All into a single direct-to-local competitive program, ranks projects by projected reductions in deaths and serious injuries, access, and state of good repair, and applies the Act’s variable cost-share to price those priorities.

PART V

SOURCES

The proposal. Framework for Rebuilding America’s Mobility Economy (FRAME) Act, Official Draft of December 15, 2025 — Title III, Subtitle B, Sections 305–308; cross-referenced provisions at Sections 102, 106, and 107, and the repealed authorities at 49 U.S.C. 5339 and §§21201 and 24112 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117–58). Quotations are from the bill text.

The data case. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2024 early fatality estimates (39,345; rate 1.20 per 100M VMT) and final 2023 figure (40,901), as reported by the AASHTO Journal (2025). U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Traffic Safety* (GAO-20-53, 2019); Federal Highway Administration, *Transportation Performance Management FAQ*. World Economic Forum, “Sweden’s Vision Zero” summary (541 deaths in 1997; 192 in 2021). Local Officials for Transportation Coalition (NACo), letter to Congress (November 5, 2025) — local ownership and formula-share figures. California Department of Transportation, *2009 Five-Year Maintenance Plan* — preservation vs rehabilitation life-cycle costs. Vision Zero Network, *A Decade of Vision Zero: Gauging Progress & Barriers* (2025) — Hoboken eight consecutive years without a traffic death; New York City pedestrian deaths down 45 percent, 2013–2023; City of Hoboken results, 2022–2023. Owen, A., Liu, S. & Lind, E., *Access Across America: Transit 2024*, Accessibility Observatory, Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota (Report CTS 25-18, December 2025).

Evidence check (Part IV): Sweden missed its interim Vision Zero targets, and its results come from a smaller, more centralized system; the case here is directional, not a forecast. The local-ownership and formula-share figures are as published by the LOT Coalition (NACo-led, 2025). The Caltrans ratios are agency life-cycle cost models (2009); direction is consistent across FHWA and AASHTO asset-management practice, exact multiples vary.

Colophon: Set in Manrope and TeX Gyre Heros in the FRAME Policy Paper design family (Deep Navy #0B1D33 / Steel #5E6E7E / Grid #DFE9F4). © 2026 Institute for Civic Service · FRAME for Mobility.