



ADDENDUM

**Virtual Meeting of the Connect Transit Board of Trustees
September 22, 2020 – 4:30 P.M.
351 Wylie Drive – Training Room
Normal, Illinois 61761**

- E. Consent Agenda
 - 4. Cardinal Infrastructure Federal Report
- F. New Business
 - 6. Recommendation to Approve Bid for Bus Stop Construction (Rollcall Vote)

Federal Update for Connect Transit
Prepared by Cardinal Infrastructure, LLC
September 22, 2020 Board Meeting

Supreme Court

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg passed away on September 18th, which has brought into question how the Senate will approach filling her seat with just six weeks left until the election and October recess around the corner. Senate Republicans could move to vote on her successor before Election Day or wait until immediately afterwards, when President Trump will still be president until next January regardless of the November 3rd outcome. The nominee needs 51 votes in the Senate; Senate Majority Leader McConnell (R-KY) can afford to lose three Republican votes and force a vote anytime he has 50 senators ready to back a confirmation, with Vice President Pence serving as the tie breaker.

Appropriations

On July 31st, the House passed their version of the FY 2021 transportation appropriations bill. The transportation appropriations measure totals \$107.2 billion in total budgetary resources for U.S. DOT, an increase of \$21.1 billion above FY 2020 and \$19.4 billion above the President's budget request. On July 30th, the White House issued a veto threat to the House appropriations bill in its statement of administration policy (SAP). While the SAP makes note of the appropriations package exceeding Congress' two-year budget agreement spending limits, it specifically notes objections to the transportation appropriations bill, specifically opposing \$26 billion in DOT emergency spending and the mask mandate applicable to airlines, certain public transit, and Amtrak. The Senate has not taken up the measure.

The end of the federal fiscal year is September 30th. If a continuing resolution (CR) is not passed before then, the government will shutdown. House Democratic majority leadership, Senate Republican majority leadership, and the White House have all stated they do not want to shutdown the government and that a continuing resolution must be passed. House Speaker Pelosi and Secretary Mnuchin have agreed in principle to a clean CR but at this point its length is not determined. The ease of passage of a CR depends upon what other legislation is included in the vote to keep the government funded, including but not limited to, COVID-19 relief legislation, FAST Act surface transportation reauthorization (which also expires September 30th), and National Flood Insurance Program reauthorization.

COVID-19 Relief Package

On July 27th, Senate Republican leadership released several pieces of legislation that take the form the Health, Economic Assistance, Liability Protection, and Schools (HEALS) Act. The HEALS Act does not include funding for public transit agencies, or supplemental funding for state and local governments. APTA is advocating for the inclusion of \$32-36 billion in transit funding. The total price tag of the HEALS Act is in the \$1 trillion range.

The House-passed Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act includes \$15.75 billion in operating assistance grants for public transit. For state and local funding, the bill provides \$500 billion to states and \$375 billion to local governments, and \$15 billion to state DOTs. The total price tag of the HEROES bill is in the \$3.2 trillion range.

On August 18th, Senate Republicans released a "skinny" COVID-19 relief bill, the Delivering Immediate Relief to America's Families, Schools and Small Businesses Act. This bill was slightly amended and re-introduced on September 8th. Among other provisions, the bill includes liability limitations for COVID-19 personal injury claims, funding for the Education Stabilization Fund, federally funded supplemental unemployment benefits, a second round of Paycheck Protection Program funding with reforms on new applications and existing loans, assistance for child care providers, extends the deadline for Coronavirus Relief Funds, and additional appropriations for

testing, contact tracing, and vaccine development. This bill is in the \$500 billion range and may be acted on by the Senate this week.

On September 10th, the Senate failed to advance its Delivering Immediate Relief to America's Families, Schools and Small Businesses Act, the "targeted" coronavirus relief measure, by a 52-47 vote. This is unsurprising as Minority Leader Schumer labeled the legislation as "emaciated" in advance of the vote, and Speaker Pelosi suggested that lawmakers should not "have a 'skinny' bill when we have a massive problem."

It is worth noting that 52 out of 53 Republican Senators (Senator Rand Paul being the outlier) voted in favor of the bill. This show of unity indicates the Senate GOP Conference is willing to act on some additional relief. It also provides vulnerable Senators with some coverage as they head home to campaign.

The "skinny" proposal does not fix the core issue between the House and Senate - the size of the relief package. In fact, it goes in the opposite direction. The House and Senate remain far apart, both in scope and overall funding, and negotiations have stalled. The timeline for passage of a relief package remains incredibly fluid. With political pressure mounting and layoffs threatened, it is anyone's guess as to what Speaker Pelosi and Leader McConnell will be able to agree to, if anything.

Intergovernmental Organizations Letter

A letter to Congressional leadership from intergovernmental organizations urged Congress to allocate any COVID-19 highway funding using the STBG formula, extend the FAST Act by one year with increased funding levels for FY 2021 and allow 100% federal cost share, extend deadlines for long-range transportation plans, triennial reviews, and other transportation-related administrative documents that occur during FY 2020 and FY 2021. The letter was signed by the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, National Association of Counties, National Association of Development Organizations, National Association of Regional Councils, National Leagues of Cities, and U.S. Conference of Mayors.

U.S. Conference of Mayors

The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) released its "American Breakthrough" platform of 10 priorities "inspired by the Conference's bipartisan focus on creating a safe, sustainable, and equitable future through investing in America's communities." One of these priorities is: "Build Modern, Resilient Infrastructure to Address Climate Change, Promote Environmental Justice, and Enhance Opportunity and Productivity: Transportation, Water, Green Energy, and Technology Systems." Within this priority, USCM proposes:

- Secure the highway trust fund and direct more highway dollars through the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program and other programs.
- Make public transit investment a higher priority and reward cities that embrace new initiatives and innovations...including local hiring...and support local efforts to complete streets and advance safety first outcomes, improve transit access and services, promote transit adjacent housing, reduce air pollutants...and harden existing transportation facilities and networks to make them more resilient to climatic events.
- Support continuing local efforts to address future transportation needs...incentivize the local deployment of new transportation technologies and update local regulatory regimes to address autonomous vehicles...and embrace shared mobility services and resources that expand travel options in cities and their regions and increase the throughput of urban networks serving people and vehicles.
- Support local efforts to pilot and test new technologies, especially in the transportation sector.

Presidential Memorandum

On September 2nd, President Trump signed a memorandum to the Attorney General and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), entitled, "Reviewing Funding to State and Local Government

Recipients of Federal Funds that are Permitting Anarchy, Violence, and Destruction in American Cities." The memo includes reference to Washington, DC, Portland, New York, and Seattle. The memo instructs Attorney General Barr to develop and publish a list of "anarchist jurisdictions" that "permitted violence and the destruction of property to persist and have refused to undertake reasonable measures to counteract these criminal activities." OMB is directed to issue guidance on restricting or disfavoring the eligibility of anarchist jurisdictions to receive Federal grants.

Select Committee on the Climate Crisis

The Senate Democrats' Select Committee on the Climate Crisis released its framework for comprehensive legislation to address climate change. The overarching goals of the framework are to achieve 100% net-zero emissions by 2050, increase federal spending on climate action to at least 2% of GDP, and create at least ten million new green jobs. The report provides, "Rapid increases in zero-emission vehicles, cleaner liquid fuels, public transportation, and smarter planning can significantly reduce emissions from the transportation sector."

Census

A federal judge in California directed the Trump Administration to stop winding down 2020 Census field operations until a court hearing next week on the matter. Despite the pandemic, the Census Bureau announced it would wrap up field operations a month early at the end of September, which civil rights groups argue will lead to an undercount of hard-to-count populations. To comply with the order, the Bureau will retain temporary enumerators and restore accuracy checks it had cut to meet the expedited timeline.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors have sent letters to Congress and the Administration concerning the U.S. Census. One letter urges congressional leaders to include language in the next COVID-19 relief package to officially extend the statutory and data collection deadlines. A second letter urges the Census Bureau to stand by its April decision to extend the data collection deadline through October 31, 2020.

Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, led a letter to leadership (signed 88 Members of Congress), urging them to prohibit the shortened collection deadline. Furthermore, following a request by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Science, and Justice Ranking Member Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), the U.S. Department of Commerce Inspector General notified Commerce Secretary Ross that they will investigate the decision to shorten 2020 Census field data collection and self-response operations.

It has been reported that, after October 7th, the Census Bureau will stop accepting paper census forms postmarked by September 30th. There are concerns as to whether existing delays in USPS operations could negatively impact accuracy of these mail-in forms, especially in more rural areas.

Democrat's Economic Recovery Proposal

Democrats unveiled the Transform, Heal, and Renew by Investing in a Vibrant Economy (THRIVE) Agenda, a framework for economic recovery that addresses the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, economic inequality, and racial justice. The resolution includes, "...investing in projects including upgrading our broken infrastructure to expand access to clean and affordable energy, transportation, high-speed broadband, and water, particularly for public systems..."



MEMO

DATE: September 22, 2020

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Brady Lange, Maintenance Manager

SUBJECT: IFB 21-01 for FY21 Bus Stop Improvement Construction – Normal Stops

RECOMMENDATION: Authorize the General Manager to award a contract to JG Stewart for construction of thirty-one (31) bus stop improvements in the Better Bus Stops Campaign. These improvements include ADA landing pads and concrete pads for five (5) Simme-Seat benches and one (1) shelter.

BACKGROUND: Connect Transit issued an IFB requesting bids for construction of thirty-one (31) bus stops. Connect Transit received three (3) bids for site construction. JG Stewart provided the lowest bid.

DISCUSSION: Three (3) bids were received from JG Stewart, Knapp Concrete, and Stark Excavating. JG Stewart has a long-standing history in Bloomington-Normal and has completed many similar projects in our communities as well as other bus stop improvement projects for Connect Transit.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The total cost will be \$88,360.00.