PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FUNDING THREATENED BY CONGRESS

At stake is about $10 billion per year in federal transit funds for communities big and small — money to build brand new systems, expand existing ones, improve service, and operate smaller systems. This includes the shovel-ready transit projects that have already received approval from USDOT to proceed and are only awaiting the checks from the federal government. REMINDER: This is for use when talking to your members of congress and their staff in DC or at home in their district offices...or other key decision-makers locally who have influence.

Our community relies on federal funding for public transportation – any cuts would be devastating to [your city/town]

• Any cut to federal transit funding will cause pain and hardship for the millions of Americans who use transit each day and everyone in [your city/town] who depends on critical service.
• Nationally, 10.6 billion trips were taken on transit in 2015. Over the past 20 years, ridership has risen 39 percent, far outpacing the 21 percent increase in population during the same period.
• More than ever, Americans need an affordable, reliable way to get to work, and employers depend on transit for a reliable workforce.
• Nationally, an estimated 895,000 jobs (per year) are tied to this annual federal transit spending.

Public transportation is driving economic development in [your city/town]

• Talent drives economies and place draws talent. Transit is a crucial piece of drawing today’s in-demand talent in our community. [cite local example here]
• Smart Growth America’s Core Values report examined more than 500 companies that picked up and moved between 2010 and 2015 to downtown locations, often because of good transit connections.
• State Farm is closing smaller suburban offices in favor of larger locations near transit in at least three regions, moving more than 16,000 of their employees to locations near high-quality public transportation.

Our local transit agencies depend on federal dollars to make capital improvements

• Transit agencies use local, state or farebox dollars to operate their systems, but as road projects do, transit agencies depend on federal dollars for their capital needs, like buying new buses, new trainsets or railcars, and expanding their service.
• More than 40 percent of America’s buses and 25 percent of our rail transit assets are in ‘marginal’ or ‘poor’ condition.
• There’s a backlog of $90 billion in capital investments needed to bring bus and rail systems just into a state of good repair, according to USDOT. [Include local example here].

ASK: Protect and enhance federal funding for public transportation

1. Don’t allow any cuts to transit funding in the current budget when the Continuing Resolution expires in April 2017.
2. Don’t allow any cuts to the New Starts and Small Starts programs that mean thousands of jobs for communities big and small.
3. Don’t even think about kicking transit out of the dedicated federal trust fund for transportation and highways, where it’s enjoyed guaranteed funding since President Reagan enshrined the Mass Transit Account.