

The Cardin-Cochran Amendment Gives Local Leaders a Voice In Small But Significant Community-Based Transportation Investments

The Senate's transportation reauthorization bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), goes farther than any recent transportation measure to **devolve federal funds to the state level. The Cardin-Cochran amendment**, expected to be debated on the Senate floor the week of February 13th, **works in that same spirit to devolve a small portion of those funds to the local level, giving leaders — who know the transportation and safety needs of their constituents best — direct control over how to spend those funds.**

The Cardin-Cochran Amendment is about empowering local governments to revitalize their communities while building out a full transportation network. States usually build larger projects that connect local communities, but those projects often need further connections within those communities in order to function well. These larger projects can also sometimes create health, safety or other impacts that local communities are eager to address. Local communities have a wide range of needs for travel solutions that are critical to making the overall system work for everyone.

"I have served on the State level of government; I have been mayor of a major city. I believe the closer you get to the people, the more responsible government is. I believe that to be true."

Sen. Jim Inhofe
(R-OK), 2/9/2012



What the Cardin-Cochran Amendment Does

The Cardin-Cochran Amendment gives increased decision-making authority and control to local governments in cities, small towns and rural areas alike to fund transportation projects that get the most bang for the taxpayer buck. The Senate MAP-21 bill creates a new program called "Additional Activities" that includes a broad range of eligible projects that include Main Street revitalizations, local street safety improvements, street and boulevard redesigns, bus stop and rail station access improvements, Safe Routes to Schools, Recreational Trails, among many others. **This amendment turns that Additional Activities program into a competitive grant program for local governments and other entities.**

Communities can then apply for funds from this program to build these kinds of projects that are extremely popular with local governments — and their citizens — because they promote safer, healthier communities, economic redevelopment and tourism, while creating connections to job centers, transit stops, recreational areas and other destinations. This would provide flexibility and funding certainty to local planning entities to ensure that a portion of their gas taxes are utilized to address the specific transportation needs in their communities, improving health, safety and the bottom line. If local mayors and government do not have a use for the funding, states are free to direct the funds to other state priorities.

Increases local involvement and control by suballocating funds to large MPOs

Metropolitan areas with a population over one million (Tier 1 MPOs) would be allocated a portion of the state's Additional Activities funds based on their share of the state's population.

Creates a competitive grant program for local governments to obtain Additional Activities funds

Remaining funds would be available to smaller MPOs and local governments through a competitive grant process.

Guarantees local governments the chance to apply for funds before states move funds to other programs

If there are not enough applications to use all of the competitive grant funding, remaining funds would revert to the State for its use of Additional Activities.

Preserves state control

States administer the grant program and maintain control by allowing up to 10 percent of Additional Activities funds to go toward administering the grant process, and for state priority projects eligible under Additional Activities.

Local Control in Practice

Saving lives in Nashville, Tennessee

The planned construction of new sidewalks on the south side of Harding Place from I-65 to I-24 in Nashville would connect multi-family housing to grocery stores, restaurants and other retail destinations, as well as provide a connection to the closest transit stop. This safety project is designed to reduce the high number of pedestrians who are injured and killed while walking along roads that are currently dangerous for residents.

Reviving downtown in Meridian, Mississippi

Beginning in the early 1990s, community leaders worked to create a multi-modal transportation center in the heart of town with the help of over \$5 million in federal and state grants. As a result, Meridian's Union Station (right) was reborn as a thriving rail and bus depot. The \$6.8 million project has leveraged more than \$8 million in private investment in the Depot District, raising property values and city tax receipts, and lowering crime in the station's neighborhood.



The revitalized Union Station in Meridian, Mississippi

Creating access for all in Springfield, Missouri

A planned project to provide continuous ADA-compliant sidewalks on both sides of Kearney St. from the Kansas Expressway (Route 13) to Glenstone Avenue (Loop 44) is a high priority for local and state officials and would provide connectivity to area shopping centers and transit stops. This project is projected to cost less than \$1 million, but without funding, local officials cannot move forward with building safer streets for pedestrians and residents with disabilities.

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