



**U.S. Department
of Transportation**

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RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES

**Toolkit for Amplification of the Reconnecting
Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program**



Reconnecting Communities

Toolkit for Amplification of the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program

Background:

On June 30th, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced the notice of funding opportunity for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program. This is a historic investment in communities who are already leading the way in building transportation networks that connect people to opportunities. And with the funding in the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we can do even more. The funding can serve as a catalyst for communities to build transportation that benefits everyone by making it easier and more affordable for people to live where they want to live, to get to work, to connect businesses to customers and prospective employees, and children to travel safely in their communities.

For questions, please email ReconnectingCommunities@dot.gov

Resources:

- [Press Release](#)
- [Social media toolkit](#)
- [Reconnecting Communities Webpage](#)

Example Press Release (Based on final DOT release)

U.S Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
www.transportation.gov/briefingroom
News



June 30, 2022

Contact: PressOffice@dot.gov

Biden Administration Announces First-Ever Funding Program Dedicated to Reconnecting American Communities

The pilot program created by the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will help reconnect people to economic opportunities and essential services in their communities

BIRMINGHAM, AL – Today, U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and other senior leaders from USDOT joined U.S. Rep. Terri Sewell, Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin, and other local leaders in Birmingham, Alabama, to announce the Department is now accepting applications for the first-of-its-kind Reconnecting Communities pilot program. Birmingham will soon launch Birmingham Xpress, new bus rapid transit service that will connect Alabamans in 25 communities to jobs, schools, and healthcare.

Created in the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, funding from the \$1 billion pilot program will help reconnect communities that were previously cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure. Reconnecting a community could mean adapting existing infrastructure— such as building a pedestrian walkway over or under an existing highway— to better connect neighborhoods to opportunities or better means of access such as crosswalks and redesigned intersections.

“Transportation can connect us to jobs, services, and loved ones, but we’ve also seen countless cases around the country where a piece of infrastructure cuts off a neighborhood or a community because of how it was built,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. “Using funds from President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we are proud to announce the launch of Reconnecting Communities: the first-ever dedicated federal initiative to unify neighborhoods living with the impacts of past infrastructure choices that divided them.”

USDOT will also be launching the Thriving Communities Initiative to provide technical assistance and hands-on planning support for transformative infrastructure projects that serve disadvantaged communities. This includes a new DOT Navigator to provide better access to technical assistance programs across the Department, and a new program to provide capacity

building support to communities. U.S. Housing and Urban Development is providing complementary technical assistance as part of the Thriving Communities program to improve the coordination of housing and transportation planning to advance residents' access to opportunity and increase housing supply. USDOT and HUD plan to issue their notices of funding availability in the Fall to select capacity builders.

While the Reconnecting Communities pilot program is the first-ever Federal program to have funding dedicated solely to reconnection efforts, other USDOT discretionary grant programs, including the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program, have funded projects such as interstate capping in Atlanta, a greenway project in St. Louis, and a Bus Rapid Transit line in Baltimore – all examples of connecting neighborhoods with job opportunities in a city where transportation infrastructure previously acted as a barrier. States are also encouraged to use their formula funds to help finance reconnection projects.

The Reconnecting Communities pilot program may help support planning efforts that advance projects to a phase where they are more competitive for these other sources of capital funding.

Eligible applicants for the Reconnecting Communities competitive grant pilot program include:

- States
- Local and Tribal governments
- Metropolitan planning organizations
- Nonprofit organizations
- Other transportation facility owners

Preference will be given to applications from economically disadvantaged communities, especially those with projects that are focused on equity and environmental justice, have strong community engagement and stewardship, and a commitment to shared prosperity and equitable development. Of the \$195 million available from the grant program this year, \$50 million is dedicated to planning activities for communities that may be earlier in the process.

The Reconnecting Communities Notice of Funding Opportunity announced today can be found [here](#). Information on Reconnecting Communities technical assistance and other resources can be found [here](#). Applications are due October 13, 2022. Awards are expected to be announced in early 2023. The new DOT Navigator can be accessed [here](#) and information on the Thriving Communities program can be found [here](#).

The Department will convene a series of stakeholder webinars to help potential applicants learn about the RCP grant program and what they need to know to prepare an application. The first one will be held Thursday, July 14 at 12 pm EST.

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Suggested Media Tactics to Drive Awareness in Your Community:

1. Hold a media availability to highlight a dangerous intersection or high-traffic corridor that has experienced numerous crashes. Gather community leaders advocating for better crosswalks and lighting, including in minority neighborhoods or rural Tribal areas that experience a disproportionately high number of traffic and pedestrian deaths
 - **Example:** Hold a media availability in front of a major infrastructure barrier that currently requires support to help reconnect your community (ie: highway, bridge, rail station, major road, etc).
 - **Example:** Hold a media availability in a community divided by an infrastructure barrier like highway or rail line that needs improved transportation access to other communities, jobs, schools, health care, grocery stores, and more.
 - **Example:** Host a walking tour of a community that has been cut off from other parts of your city.
 - **Example:** Hold a “race” between someone on foot, someone on bike, someone on transit and someone with a rideshare and someone with a car to illustrate the time or cost disparities of getting between one community to a job center or a health center and the need to reconnect this community.
2. Gather federal, state and local officials, safety advocates, and parents and/or seniors for a roundtable conversation or media event the urgent need to make the streets safer for people in your community to walk, bike, and play.
 - **Example:** Convene local community and business leaders, anchor institutions, business owners and community residents to discuss how transportation funding can better connect businesses to customers, prospective employees, and make it easier for residents to get to work.
 - **Example:** Host a panel discussion on the benefits of communities that have better access to jobs and services, and how connection helps residents to be healthier and make communities more prosperous.

Suggested Social Media Tactics to Drive Awareness in Your Community:

Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn

Post 1: The Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program is a step towards ensuring transportation projects connect people to better jobs, educational opportunities, and services no matter where you live. Learn more about [tag the U.S. Department of Transportation]'s program and apply for the funding opportunity here: <https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting> #ReconnectingCommunities

Post 2: Highways, railroads, and other types of transportation infrastructure should get people where they need to go – not serve as a barrier. When we create good transportation, it gives Americans endless possibilities to shape both their destination and their starting point.

Find out how your community can apply for funding from [tag the U.S. Department of Transportation]'s Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program <https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting> #ReconnectingCommunities

Post 3: Attention local leaders

Do you have a vision for a project that would give your neighbors access to good job opportunities, school, health care, and much more? Apply now for funding to turn that vision into a reality with the [tag the U.S. Department of Transportation]'s Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program <https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting> #ReconnectingCommunities

Post 4: People who live in communities that have better access to jobs and services, are healthier and their communities are more prosperous.

Find out how the [tag the U.S. Department of Transportation]'s Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program can support a community's efforts to make it easier to get to work, and more affordable for people to live where they want to live <https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting> #ReconnectingCommunities

Post 5: Reconnecting communities means that businesses are better connected to customers and prospective employees, and children can travel safely in their communities.

Learn how the [tag President Joe Biden]'s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will help communities to build transportation that benefits everyone through [tag the U.S. Department of Transportation]'s Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program <https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting> #ReconnectingCommunities

Post 6: Good transportation should give you:

- Freedom to go anywhere affordably
- Access to good job opportunities
- Access to good schools
- Access to good health care

Learn how the [tag the U.S. Department of Transportation]'s Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program can help your community <https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting> #ReconnectingCommunities

Twitter

Post 1: Work is already underway across the nation to reconnect communities and with @POTUS's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law we can do more to build transportation that connects people to good jobs, services, and loved ones. Learn more: <https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting> #ReconnectingCommunities

Post 2: When we create good transportation, it gives Americans endless possibilities to shape not just their journey but their destination.

Apply now for @USDOT's Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program: <https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting> #ReconnectingCommunities

Post 3: Attention local leaders

Do you have a vision for a project that will create better access to good job opportunities, school, health care, and much more? Apply to receive funding from @USDOT's Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program <https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting> #ReconnectingCommunities

Post 4: Good transportation projects should directly serve the community they are located in.

Find out how @USDOT's #ReconnectingCommunities Pilot Program can support community efforts to make it easier and affordable for residents <https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting>

Post 5: #ReconnectingCommunities means businesses are better connected to customers & prospective employees, and kids can travel safely in their communities.

Learn how @POTUS' Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will help build transportation that benefits everyone <https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting>

Post 6: Good transportation should give you:

- Freedom to go anywhere affordably
- Access to good job opportunities
- Access to good schools
- Access to good health care

Learn how @USDOT's #ReconnectingCommunities Pilot Program can help your community: <https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting>

Social Media Accounts:

Secretary Pete



USDOT



Sample Email/Newsletter Blurb

The following list includes examples of ideas and information that could be incorporated into an email, newsletter, or website blurb:

- Share how the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Program can benefit your community.
- Include the number of projects in your community that would benefit from additional funding and support to connect residents to jobs, schools, businesses, places to live, health care, grocery stores, and more.
- Share how the program is a step towards doing better and reimagining who transportation projects should serve and how disconnection impacts rural, tribal, and communities of color at higher rates.
- Include a quote from your organization or agency leader on their thoughts regarding the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Program and how it would improve projects in the community.
- Share how the program will give residents and Americans across the country freedom and endless possibilities to share both their destination and their starting point.