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FY-2015 Budget Proposes \$2.5B of Federal Transit Grants

by [Jim Watts](#)

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DALLAS — President Obama's proposed budget for fiscal 2015 proposes \$2.5 billion of Federal Transit Administration capital investment grants for 26 rail, bus, rapid transit and streetcar projects in 16 states.

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx told reporters on Wednesday that the projects to be funded would expand transportation options and create or sustains of construction-related jobs.

"We are committed to ensuring that every American has access to the ladders of opportunity that lead to success, and access to public transportation is essential to making that happen," Foxx said, releasing the list of projects to receive the grants, if the funding is approved.

The proposed grants would complete the federal funding commitment for 10 New Starts transit projects that received grants earlier. These include the East Bay bus rapid transit project in Oakland, Calif., slated to receive \$27.6 million in fiscal 2015 and the Central Corridor light rail project in Minnesota to connect the downtowns of St. Paul and Minneapolis, which will in line for \$109 million.

The New Starts program was created by the two-year transportation authorization law, Moving Ahead For Progress in the 21st Century, which expires on Sept. 30, the end of fiscal 2014.

Some of the projects selected to receive their first grant could be delayed if Congress does not provide the full \$2.5 billion requested for the program, said Deputy Federal Transit Administrator Therese McMillan.

"If the full amount is not funded, it may mean that some projects may have to wait another year," she said. "But good projects don't just fall off a tree and go away. It's just a question about how soon we can get back to them."

The total requested for fiscal 2015 includes \$1.4 billion for 12 projects in the FTA's New Starts program with existing full funding agreements, \$578.2 million for the first-year New Starts projects, \$275 million to modernize Chicago Transit Authority's heavy rail system, and \$199.1 million for six Small Start projects expected to cost less than \$250 million each.

The FTA capital grants program is funded at \$2.1 billion in fiscal 2014.

The eight new projects were selected over tough competition because they will connect thousands of residents to jobs and other opportunities, McMillan said.

The new projects include a bus rapid transit project in El Paso, Texas, to serve troops stationed at Fort Bliss, she said, and the Amp bus project in Nashville that will eliminate transfers for residents of the area's low-income neighborhoods.

Another new project getting its first federal funding is the Green Line Extension outside Boston that will bring rail service to commuters who currently lack direct access to rail transit, McMillan said.

"We must continue investing, together, in our nation's public transportation infrastructure, so future generations have the mobility they will need to succeed," she said.

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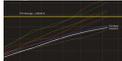


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