



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration



FTA Report on 2015 Section 5312 Projects

Background

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) drives public transportation innovation with projects of national significance to improve our nation's public transportation. Section 5312 of Title 49 U.S.C., as amended by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), outlines three types of projects eligible for funding under 5312: research projects, innovation and development projects, and demonstration, deployment, and evaluation projects. FTA's Office of Research, Innovation, and Demonstration (TRI) uses Section 5312 investments to leverage a collective perspective of stakeholders, placing significant emphasis on partnerships to achieve research goals.

Objectives

MAP-21 required a report on research to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act amended this requirement; when completed, the report now must be posted on FTA's website. This report fulfills that requirement.

Findings and Conclusions

In 2015, FTA funded projects in 19 areas of inquiry in safety, mobility, and asset management and asset innovation to ensure that public transit agencies benefit from the fast rate of change being experienced in the domestic public transportation industry.

FTA invested almost \$136 million in Fiscal Year 2015 and previous Fiscal Year appropriations for ongoing or new projects in three strategic priority areas: research projects, innovation and development projects, and demonstration, deployment, and evaluation projects. These investments are leading innovation and change across the public transportation industry through many affiliations, stakeholder engagements, and collaborations. Essential components of cooperative agreements are field-based demonstration grants that test promising practices across the three strategic priority areas.

FTA-funded projects across the three types of eligible projects included the following:

- **Research Projects** – \$10 million (7%) for public transportation projects to develop and deploy new and innovative ideas, practices, and approaches
- **Innovation and Development Projects** – \$11 million (8%) for projects to improve public transportation systems nationwide to provide more efficient and effective delivery of public transportation services including through technology and technological capacity improvements

- *Demonstration and Deployment Projects and Evaluation* – \$114 million (85%) for early deployment and demonstration of innovation in public transportation that has broad applicability, including low or no emission vehicle deployment. Projects in this area require a comprehensive evaluation within two years of being funded; the major projects in this category were in safety and asset management/asset innovation.

In 2015, active projects funded under Section 5312 spanned 19 areas of inquiry: 4 for safety, 6 for mobility, and 9 for asset management and asset innovation. The report provides details of these projects, including their purpose, relevance to the industry, national significance, and timeframes for completion.

Benefits

Overall, mobility projects are improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of public transportation services through adaptation to new mobility options by public transportation providers that increase geographic coverage, service times, address “last mile” issues for travelers, and ensure accessibility. Transformative and, at times, disruptive technologies are driving massive changes in the way customers access and use public transportation and transportation information. New technologies are enabling greater levels of accessibility for people living with disabilities of all ages. Research and innovation projects show promising ways to help people accurately plan and safely navigate trips both inside and outside. FTA is uniquely positioned to drive research projects to ensure that public transit agencies benefit from the fast rate of change being experienced in the domestic public transportation industry.

Project Information

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