ADVANCING CAPITAL INVESTMENT GRANTS *STRATEGY*

April 2026 **For Choose How You Move**

On April 22, 2026, subject matter experts from the AmericaFWD Project Delivery Accelerator Lab (americafwd.org) conducted a series of fireside chats on best practices for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program.

Attendees included representatives from the Choose How You Move (CHYM) Chief Program Office, Metro Nashville departments, Advisory Committee on Transportation (ACT), Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC), Nashville Electric Service (NES), and key local stakeholders.

This is a summary of AmericaFWD's recommendations for Nashville's Choose How You Move (CHYM) program.

BACKGROUND

All-Access Corridors (AACs) are Nashville's most heavily traveled roadways that will receive a complete upgrade through Choose How You Move. Each corridor integrates high-frequency bus service with strategically located transit lanes, smarter signals, and safety and accessibility improvements.

AACs are designed to:

- Increase the frequency, reliability, and capacity of public transit.
- Improve safety for all users, especially in high-crash areas.
- Reduce congestion and improve travel-time reliability.
- Support neighborhood connectivity with better walking, biking, and rolling infrastructure.

Early project initiation is underway on the Nolensville Pike, Gallatin Pike and Main Street All Access Corridors. In the coming months, early corridor design will kick off, including corridor design consultants and active public engagement. Concurrently, CHYM is prioritizing system-wide planning to best position Nashville to competitively compete for FTA CIG funding.

FTA CIG PROCESS

The CIG Program (https://www.transit.dot.gov/CIG) is FTA's primary funding source for major transit capital projects nationwide. Under current program requirements, individual awards vary depending on type of project.

- ***"New Starts"*** **are projects with total project cost of $400M or more, seeking CIG funding of $150M or more.**
- ***"Small Starts"*** **are projects less than $400M in total project cost, seeking CIG funding of less than $150M.**

CIG grant applications and subsequent grants are governed by federal policy guidance and oversight procedures and entail a multi-year, multi-phase process with multiple interim project ratings prior to grant award.

As of June 1, 2026, transportation reauthorization legislation is currently being drafted that may impact the FTA CIG process in future years.

Prior to initiating CIG process:

- Alternatives Analysis
- Stakeholder Outreach
- Conceptual Engineering

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop a long-term CIG strategy and manage to that strategy. CHYM includes ten AAC corridors, all of which would benefit from diverse federal investment. The CHYM Program Management Team (PMT) has experience with the CIG program and is providing sound advice on moving forward. Alongside the delivery of smaller local projects like sidewalks, smart signals, and complete streets, long term success of the CHYM program will require the development and delivery of a multi-project CIG strategy.

2. Pick one AAC project as your first venture into the CIG process. CIG is a highly competitive grant program and some agencies have extensive experience putting together multiple successful grant applications. As Nashville and Tennessee are new to the CIG process, it is important to initially focus on one project's success in the CIG program. In doing so, CHYM will have a higher likelihood of grant award and will develop institutional muscle memory which will enable multiple future applications.

3. Keep all AAC corridors federal aid eligible. CIG is a key component of CHYM's long-term strategy, but it is not the only federal funding program for which AAC projects are eligible. Managing the planning, environmental and engineering phases of all AAC projects so that CHYM can pivot quickly to access a variety of federal funding sources will position Nashville for success.

4. Get to know your FTA Region and Headquarters partners and stay in touch. CHYM is embarking on a long-term capital program. FTA is a critical partner in this endeavor. Developing and sustaining relationships with region and headquarters staff before you enter critical phases in project development will make the process much more efficient.

5. Determine the third-party agreements needed for each project and work to draft and execute those agreements in a timely manner. Nationally, many CIG projects are delayed or fail because the project sponsor cannot secure agreement with entities whose consent is critical to the project in a timely manner. CHYM is dependent on clear understanding and agreement with the Tennessee Department of Transportation, utilities, and other entities to advance the AAC program. Now is the time to identify all partners and embark on resolving issues of importance to those third parties.

6. Develop projects with scope, benefits, and delivery capacity that are credible and sustainable. Successful CIG projects demonstrate consistency between the scale of the proposed investment, the benefits being claimed, and the sponsor's ability to deliver and sustain the project over time. Project scope, schedule assumptions, ridership forecasts, local funding plans, staffing capacity, and implementation strategies should remain aligned throughout project development. First-time CIG sponsors frequently encounter challenges when project ambitions outpace available organizational or financial capacity. Maintaining realistic assumptions and clearly aligning project commitments with available resources will improve credibility with FTA and support more successful long-term program delivery.

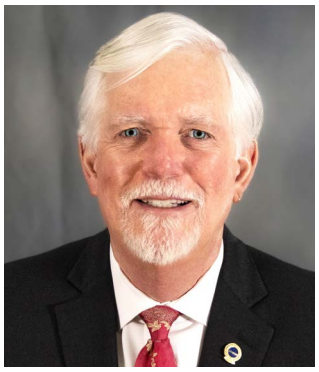
7. Be prepared to manage the shifting priorities of multi-year delivery timelines. Agencies and projects spend years in the CIG program pipeline. During that time there will be changes in local, state, and federal agency leadership. Priorities will shift in response to elections and to events beyond the control of the CHYM program. Managing through these changes requires political acumen and sustained effort.

PROJECT DELIVERY ACCELERATOR LAB TEAM

The team that visited Nashville on April 22 consisted of:

Felicia Alexander, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation, and former Associate Administrator of the FTA Office of Planning and Environment, where she led the CIG program nationwide.

Carrie Deichl, former FTA Region 10 transportation program specialist, where she provided oversight of CIG projects in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska.



Roger Millar, former Washington State Secretary of Transportation and Sound Transit Board member, who participated in several CIG projects with Sound Transit.