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ITS AMERICA

SURFACE

TRANSPORTATION

BROADBAND POLICY

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ITS America Surface Transportation Broadband Policy

Introduction

Providing national, state, and local broadband infrastructure that supports the implementation of intelligent transportation systems, including connected and automated vehicles (CAV) and cooperative automated transportation (CAT), to improve the safety, mobility, equity, and operational efficiency of our surface transportation system is critical to meet the demands of rural, urban and underserved communities.

Likewise, the process necessary to make connected infrastructure a reality should be managed to ensure safety; otherwise, it may result in unsafe conditions.

Define broadband infrastructure that meet national cyber security standards and include all outside plant (OSP) items, including but not limited to fiber, conduit, duct banks, handholes, backhaul equipment, and junction boxes, with appropriate physical security safeguards.

As with the installation of guard rails, broadband communications that has the capability of achieving greater than 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload, which is connected to our transportation infrastructure, will bring safety benefits. It is a key tool to reducing fatalities and injuries on our roadways. Additionally, the interconnectivity that broadband can bring to operations will reduce travel times, reduce congestion, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions by providing clearer, faster, and more reliable traveler information directly to consumers and businesses.

Surface transportation investments in wireless and wired broadband infrastructure will benefit public transit, including commuter rail, provide benefits to passenger and freight rail, and support freight intelligent transportation systems and digital infrastructure to improve the movement of goods through the multimodal supply chain, including last-mile delivery.

High bandwidth communications in surface transportation infrastructure will also help bridge the broadband digital divide in rural and urban communities and provide the foundation needed to achieve long-standing smart state and city goals, as well as advancing economic and educational opportunities by connecting communities.

ITS America supports making broadband deployment for intelligent transportation systems, including connected transportation infrastructure, an explicitly eligible use of highway funds in the reauthorization of the FAST Act.

Policy Recommendations

1. ITS America encourages the Secretary of Transportation to consider broadband a necessary foundation of any transportation infrastructure project and to make broadband infrastructure and its ancillary systems eligible for funding. Just as guardrails are a critical safety component when building a highway, broadband infrastructure is a critical safety element and asset of any connected transportation infrastructure project.
2. Support broadband infrastructure deployment in public rights of way as an explicitly eligible activity under existing federal-aid highway programs, such as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG), National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), National Highway Freight Network (NHFN), and the Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program (ATCMTD), or a successor thereof.
3. Support policy that makes broadband infrastructure deployment for intelligent transportation systems explicitly eligible under U.S. Department of Transportation's Build America Bureau Programs, such as Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA), Public-Private Partnerships, and the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant programs.
4. Establish funding eligibility for transportation and infrastructure projects that have a broadband component, including fiber, conduit, duct banks and associated handholes, junction boxes, backhaul equipment, and any other technology that provides broadband connectivity under federal highway programs.
5. Provide a policy that makes broadband infrastructure deployment for intelligent transportation systems explicitly eligible under the appropriate programs funded in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, and in the American Rescue Plan Act.
6. Support broadband infrastructure eligibility within public rights-of-way under the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity or RAISE and other discretionary grant programs.
7. Support the need for federal agency collaboration on broadband infrastructure funding to coordinate deployments more effectively within the nation.

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