



## **FAQ: Differences Between Regular Annual IMPROVE Act Award Cycle and the Advance Commitment of IMPROVE Act Funds**

**Q:** What are the differences between the annual IMPROVE Act award cycle and the Advance Commitment of IMPROVE Act funds?

**A:** The annual IMPROVE Act award cycle is a competitive grant process that includes the submission of a formal grant application and evaluation. Applications are evaluated on criteria such as project readiness, safety, reduction of congestion, and economic development benefits. An “Advanced Commitment of IMPROVE Act funds” is meant to provide FTA 5307 and 5311 eligible transit providers a means of strengthening their Federal discretionary grant applications by reducing the overall Federal match level. An advance commitment request form can be submitted on a rolling basis throughout the year. We only ask that you provide our office with enough lead time to discuss the request internally; and if appropriate, our office will bring the request before the Commissioner of TDOT. All advance commitments are at the sole discretion of the Commissioner of TDOT.

**Q:** What is the purpose and intent of the regular IMPROVE Act award cycle?

**A:** The purpose and intent of the regular IMPROVE Act award cycle is to provide capital assistance to support and expand public transportation services in Tennessee through an annual, competitive grant application process.

**Q:** What is the purpose and intent of the Advance Commitment of IMPROVE Act funds?

**A:** Given the USDOT’s recent emphasis on maximizing the non-federal share in its discretionary grant programs, transit agencies may wish to consider using the strong state support to reduce the amount of federal funds requested in a discretionary grant application, thereby making the grant application more competitive. The Advance Commitment of IMPROVE Act funds process is meant to aid transit agencies in light of this shifting dynamic with the FTA and USDOT.