



December 15, 2021

Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Docket No. DOT-OST-2021-0140, USDOT Strategic Plan

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the American Highway Users Alliance (Highway Users), a coalition of 300 organizations including companies, trade associations, safety advocacy groups, and motoring clubs that represent millions of motorists and serve as the united voice of the roadway users' community, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the draft DOT Strategic Framework. Allowing for feedback from the stakeholder community is a welcome opportunity to voice our thoughts on such an important undertaking for the nation.

First, we commend your focus on safety and working toward a future where transportation-related serious injuries and fatalities are eliminated. The Highway Users couldn't agree more with this focus. With the serious uptick in roadway fatalities the nation has been experiencing over the past two years this priority must be at the top of the list. The increased investment provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), including approximately \$3 billion added to the Highway Safety Improvement Program, is the right investment at this critical time.

The Highway Users is also supportive of the inclusion of transformation as a priority. The nation must be investing in purpose-driven research and innovation to meet the challenges of the present and modernize a transportation system of the future. Through advancing research and testing new innovations we can build our roadways for the future. Our vehicle fleet is changing with new advanced safety technologies and autonomous vehicles ready for testing and deployment we need to ensure our roadways are prepared for these vehicles to thrive. For example, one simple engineering improvement that could help assist autonomous vehicles as they deploy but also help all drivers is widening pavement markings from the traditional 4-inch width to 6 inches. This improvement will help keep the autonomous vehicle in their lane and at the same time help all drivers to cut down on lane departure.

One area we would suggest adding to the framework and including in the Strategic Plan is a focus and prioritization on highway investment. We appreciate that, as drafted, the framework does not mention any mode. But, by far the greatest amount of passenger and freight

American Highway Users Alliance

1920 L Street NW, Suite 525, Washington, DC 20036, 202-857-1200, 202-857-1220 (fax), www.highways.org

movement in this country is on the road, and improving highway transportation is important. Investment in highways, whether by the Federal, State, or local governments contributes to economic growth and improves roadway safety. Funding in the BIL represents a significant increase over prior investment levels for roads, bridges, and major projects. This includes a roughly 30% increase in highway funding from the Highway Trust Fund over the next 5 years plus major additional appropriations from the General fund for bridges and other investments. This highway funding will create jobs, improve passenger and freight mobility through roadway improvements, upgrade facilities, and reduce congestion. Additionally, these roadway improvements will drive down fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways.

Again, we truly appreciate having the opportunity to comment on the draft DOT Strategic Framework. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at lauraperrotta@highways.org or 571-239-0765. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Perrotta". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Perrotta, CAE
President and CEO

American Highway Users Alliance

1920 L Street NW, Suite 525, Washington, DC 20036, 202-857-1200, 202-857-1220 (fax), www.highways.org