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U.S. DOT makes significant changes to capital transit investment program

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On December 27, 2012, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) unveiled a streamlined approach for administering its primary capital public transportation program for expanding transit systems. The New Starts/Small Starts program, one of the largest competitive grant programs in the U.S. government, funds roughly half the cost of new and extended light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit and ferry systems built in the U.S.

The new approach is the product of more than two years of public outreach to identify ways to cut red tape, reduce regulations for communities seeking federal funds, and help get critical transit projects under construction more quickly without compromising a stringent project review process.

The changes are estimated to save taxpayers almost \$500,000 annually by requiring less time-consuming paperwork and allowing communities to pre-qualify for certain projects.

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