Institute for Civic Service
Together, We Serve

INSTITUTE FOR CIVIC SERVICE

2025–2026 Impact Report

OUR MISSION

We empower individuals and institutions to harness the transformative power of civic service, fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and excellence for the common good of all.

incivicservice.org
October 2026

Together, We Serve



civ·ic ser·vice

[siv-ik sur-vis] noun

The noble calling spanning the full spectrum of work toward the common good — volunteers, nonprofits, private-sector partners, and, at its cornerstone, the professional civil service. We exist to **renew** it.

We are the Institute for Civic Service (ICS) — a nonprofit led by practitioners. We work across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

2025 FLAGSHIP PROJECT

FRAME for Mobility — a from-scratch Surface Transportation Act

EXPLORE

Visit our website

Our mission, projects, and latest work

SUPPORT THE MISSION

Donate

Help renew the work of civic service

Our methods: Policy · Best Practices · Education · Empowerment

quiet cri·sis

[kwahy-it krahy-sis] noun

A slow, decades-long erosion of public trust in institutions — not from a single event, but from a pattern citizens have come to expect: delivery failures, bureaucratic inertia, and siloed, risk-averse government. It announces itself not in headlines but in the resignation of people who no longer believe the state can build, deliver, or keep its word.

Our method: transform the mindset and the tools — how civil servants think, plan, and deliver — while holding fast to the timeless values — the ethical inheritance that makes public service worthy of the public's trust. Ambition in method, constancy in values.

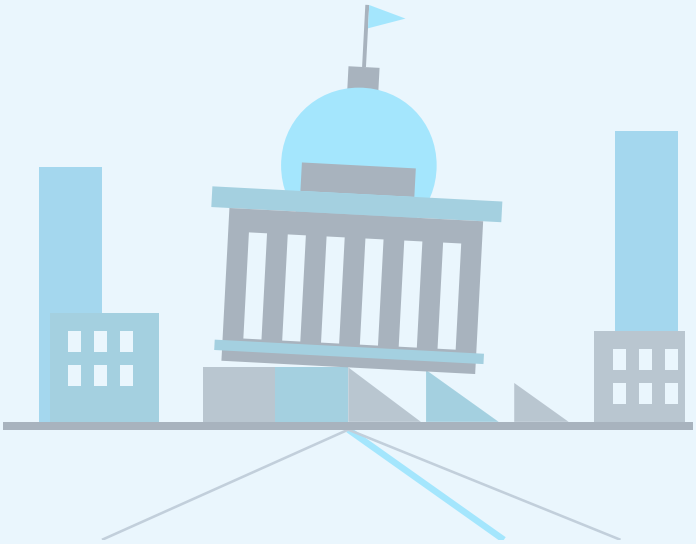
"Society needs things to be done, not just arguments won."

A convener, led by practitioners

We are a **convener**: we bring together public agencies, private firms, universities, and civic organisations, working across sectors to turn ideas into deliverable reform. We are **led by practitioners** — people who have built and run public systems.

If you would like to read more about our diagnosis:

Read the Quiet Crisis essay



Five Values, One Living DNA

The Institute runs on five values. They do not change. Everything we make — every policy, every guide, every program — is judged against them.



Collaboration

Building across sectors and silos to solve complex public problems together.



Rigor

Grounded in evidence before ideology — exhaustive analysis before action.



Innovation

New tools for old duties; relentless ambition in administrative method.



Stewardship

Guarding the public trust with unyielding constancy in core values.



Non-partisanship

Service above politics; institutional merit above faction.

Beneath the five values sits an older ideal — the scholar-official. Service is not about grand gestures or self-promotion; it is about quietly and effectively making a difference in the lives of others. It is the thread that runs through every project in this report.

A civil service is **the permanent memory of a democracy**.
Governments change; **the craft endures**.
So we hold **the values constant** and **upgrade the methods** — that is the whole discipline.
The work is **old**.
The duty is **current**.

FRAME

FRAME: Rebuilding America's Mobility Economy

Why this project: mobility is where Americans meet their government most tangibly — the road, the bus, the bridge. When the system fails, trust in every institution fails with it. Rebuilding it is civic service in its most concrete form — and the people who run the system know best how to fix it.

The Problem: Never Designed as a System

America's surface transportation system was never designed as a system. It accreted — program layered upon program across decades, each created for a reason of its moment, none designed to work with the others. The result: a federal apparatus that moves money through rigid formula pipelines, rewarding the spending of funds rather than the delivery of outcomes, while the system it funds falls further behind.

63 hrs

DELAY PER COMMUTER

Annual traffic delay per commuter in 2024 — up from 28 hours in 1990

–29%

TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

Down from the 2014 peak of 10.8 billion trips to 7.7 billion in 2024

About 7,500

PEDESTRIAN DEATHS IN 2022

Up from 4,763 in 2000 — Governors Highway Safety Association (2023)

2008

TRUST FUND EXHAUSTED

The Highway Trust Fund ran dry in 2008; the gas tax has not been adjusted since 1993

The system in numbers. Sources: Texas A&M Transportation Institute (2025); APTA; Governors Highway Safety Association (2023).

FRAME was built the opposite way. ICS went to the practitioners and built the reform from best practice, on a "Year Zero" baseline: the **FRAME Act** — a comprehensive, from-scratch **Surface Transportation Act** that would consolidate more than 100 programs into three formula block grants plus three competitive grants, with pay-for-performance accountability and a transition from the gas tax to a vehicle-miles-traveled fee.

The Catalyst: Moving the Needle in Washington

FRAME's authors took the bill to Capitol Hill — months of engagement. The House answered with a bipartisan reauthorization bill — the **BUILD America 250 Act (H.R. 8870)** — that **includes reforms from FRAME**: formula block grants in place of rigid pipelines, consolidated competitive programs, modern performance and data standards, faster project delivery, and a Safe System approach to safety.

What FRAME Offers

FRAME is a complete reform package — written, researched, and ready to use. Three offerings, one goal: **better infrastructure, better transportation, and improved mobility for us all.**

1 Legislation, Written from Scratch

The **FRAME Act** — a complete Surface Transportation Act, drafted from a "Year Zero" baseline with the practitioners who build and run the system. Not a patch on the old law: a new one, whole.

2 Policy, Well Researched

The **FRAME Policy Paper** — the evidence and reasoning behind the Act: the diagnosis of a system at an inflection point, the architecture of reform, and the case for performance over pavement.

3 A Field Guide of Best Practices

The **FRAME Field Guide** — Best Practices for the practitioners who deliver, drawn from the people doing the work and written in their terms. **Recently completed.**

4 Why It Matters

America's system still runs on a mid-twentieth-century paradigm — built to expand highways, not to maintain what exists or to move people well. FRAME would make the foundational shift: the federal role would move from passive provider of capital to active steward of a performance-based mobility economy, where the movement of people and goods is treated as what it is — the primary engine of economic output and social opportunity.

Where It Stands

The House's bipartisan reauthorization bill, the **BUILD America 250 Act (H.R. 8870)**, includes reforms that began in FRAME — among them modernized capital eligibility that treats software and data as infrastructure, a consolidated funding pilot, the first federal electric-vehicle registration fee dedicated to the Highway Trust Fund, and expanded state authority to deliver projects. The work continues — with the Senate, the committees, the Department of Transportation, and our practitioner partners.

Explore FRAME | **Read the Field Guide**

The Field Guide — recently completed, built from the questions and feedback of practitioners across the country.

Civil Service DNA

Crafting the New Civil Service: Upgrading Governance for a High-Velocity Age

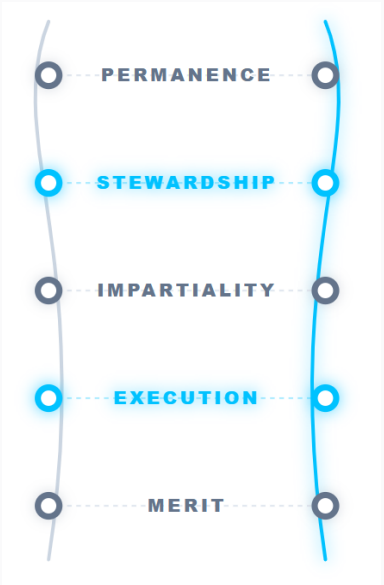
Why this project: Government is staffed by brilliant specialists, and citizen trust keeps collapsing anyway. Somewhere along the way we engineered the soul, the judgment, and the historical depth out of the craft — and what's left is defensive caution that hardens into gridlock. This project restores what was lost: the timeless operating principles of a professional civil service, upgraded for a high-velocity age.

What we offer

The Doctrine — *Crafting the New Civil Service*, the book that makes the diagnosis and sets out the upgrade: how defensive bureaucracies become engines of public delivery.

The Living Helix — the framework in one picture: five pillars, interlocked, showing how institutional integrity and operational speed hold each other up.

Practitioner Guides — applied toolkits for agency leaders: how to cut administrative friction, give every decision a named owner, and run a department at pace.



The five pillars:

Permanence · **Stewardship** · **Impartiality** · **Execution** · **Merit**

Where it stands: In development. The doctrine is drafted; the guides follow it.

Plan for Planning

IN SOFT LAUNCH

A Plan for Planning

Why this project: The planning profession has retreated into administrative timidity — processing applications rather than envisioning futures. A century after its founding, there is no consensus on what planners are for. Yet the comprehensive plan remains the most powerful tool a community has for seeing itself whole and choosing its future deliberately. The profession lost its soul. We are recovering that craft — planning that is comprehensive, human centered, and honest about whether the last plan worked.

What we offer

The Book — *The Lost Art of the Plan: A Guide to Seeing the City Whole.* A book-length, visually led argument in three movements: the history of American planning — its foundations, its drift, and the consensus it lost; the diagnosis of a profession that traded vision for process; and the method for winning it back. Planning knows a city three ways — by its numbers, by its history, and by the lived experience of the people in it — and this book teaches planners to hold all three at once. It is designed as an object of art in its own right, because a book about seeing should itself be worth looking at. Credit. Published by the Institute for Civic Service.

The Field Guide — the book's companion for practitioners: 100 questions planners actually ask, each answered with Best Practices drawn from the book. Live now, free, at planforplanning.org/guide.

The Artist's Method

1

Witness

See the city as it is, on foot and in person, before you touch a map

2

Moral synthesis

Weave the city's needs into one moral picture, not a pile of competing memos

3

The courage to test

Prototype courageously — test the idea small before you build it big

4

Critique

Keep the institution's memory, so every plan learns from the last one

Where it stands: In soft launch — the guide is live, the site is live at planforplanning.org, and the book is published in its Second Edition, 2026.

Visit the site

Read the Field Guide

Led by practitioners, built to grow

We are built around practitioner leadership — the people designing our reform agenda are the same people who have run the systems it aims to fix.

Jonathan Rewers

CHAIR & PRINCIPAL ADVISOR OF PRACTICE

Chairs the Institute and leads its strategy, advocacy, and public voice — including the FRAME legislative effort and the growing publications program.

Esther Younan

VICE CHAIR FOR STRATEGIC GROWTH & PARTNERSHIPS

Leads the Institute's partnerships and growth — strengthening relationships with funders, institutions, and civic leaders.

Jim Morrill

DIRECTOR & SENIOR FELLOW OF POLICY

Counsels the Chair on mission, vision, and strategic objectives, and leads applied policy work — turning bold, evidence-based ideas into legislative drafts and governance tools.

Tim Manglicmot

DIRECTOR & SENIOR FELLOW OF INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE

Counsels the Chair on mission, vision, and strategic objectives, and leads the infrastructure finance practice — shaping strategies that scale new institutional models.

Behind the leadership sits a growing network of practitioners and convening partners — transportation professionals, academics, public agencies, and civic organisations.



It's time to renew the work we were born to do.

Donate

Tax-deductible via The Hack Foundation, our 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor

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