Technology Performance –
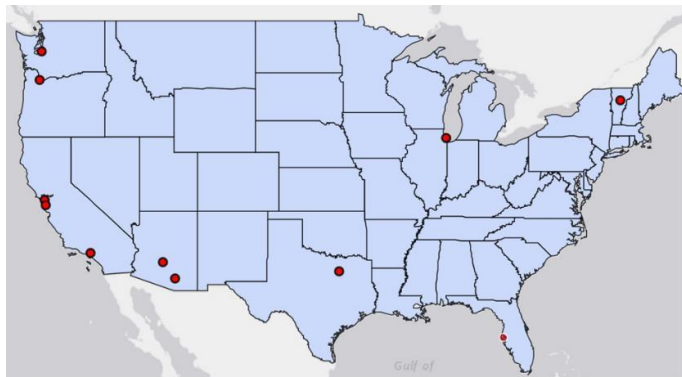# Spurring Innovative Mobility Technology Adoption

Although buses, shelters, trains, and stations may all look pretty much the same from one day to the next, a closer look may reveal small but important changes. Technology is changing the way riders interact with transit services.

Many people now rely on apps to identify how long it will take to reach a destination or see how far away the bus is from a stop, people paying a fare are likely to use an electronic smart card or a cell phone instead of cash or a paper ticket, and other features are helping shape the ride, such as software that agencies use to optimize services and schedules or plan new routes based on future demand.

For a number of years, the transit industry has been quietly implementing technologies and partnerships that provide more seamless origin-to-destination travel. In 2016, when FTA's Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox **program** launched 11 demonstration projects with funding of $7.9 million, transit agency partnerships with transportation network companies (TNCs), travel navigation apps, and cashless fare payment were the exception. Today, these technologies have proliferated; agencies are increasingly spending FTA formula and discretionary program funds on innovative mobility hardware, software, and fare payment infrastructure.

TRI recently researched budget line items and description narratives of over 1,000 FTA grants awarded between 2016 and the first half of 2021. Budget narratives that used key words and phrases such as "cashless fare payment," "real time arrival," "scheduling and dispatching software," or "automatic vehicle location" indicate that an agency is deploying innovative mobility technology similar to those sponsored by FTA in 2016. From 2018 to 2021, a total of 232 transit agencies received 276 awards for $238 million in FTA funds for innovative mobility technology. FTA is proud to support this transformation.

Locations of MOD Sandbox recipients

Locations of MOD Sandbox recipients and other agencies that adopted Innovative Mobility Technology from 2018 to March 2021