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Stimulus TIGER Projects: What Happens When We Use Transportation Dollars to Strengthen Communities, States, and the Country

Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program achieves multiple goals and helps federal dollars go further

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Washington, DC – In today’s announcement of \$1.5 billion in TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) awards, the US Department of Transportation (US DOT) showed the kinds of transportation projects that move people and freight in a way that makes places stronger, cleaner, and safer.

DOT received 1,380 applications for the \$1.5 billion pot, for a grand total of \$56.5 billion in funds requested. The 51 projects announced under TIGER, part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), include:

- Port and freight-rail projects in Tennessee, Alabama, Hawaii, Illinois that support economic growth and take freight off the road;
- Bridge replacements in Oklahoma, Michigan, Wisconsin, Kentucky and Indiana that support multiple modes of travel;
- Modern streetcars to support vibrant places in Tucson, Dallas, Portland, New Orleans and Detroit;
- Innovative highway funding and operations in Texas, North Carolina, Colorado, South Carolina and Arkansas;
- Bicycle and pedestrian networks in Philadelphia, Indianapolis, and complete streets in Dubuque, IA;
- Beautiful new train stations in places as different as New York and Normal, Illinois.

“These projects show the kinds of transportation investments that will make our lives better: projects that get freight out of people’s way, that give people a place to walk and bike, that replace unsafe bridges, and that in the end, help connect our communities in ways that make them stronger,” said William Schroeer, State Policy Director for Smart Growth America.

“We applaud states and cities for submitting these projects for funding, and US DOT for choosing them,” continued Schroeer. “It’s worth noting however, that many of these activities technically could be funded through current programs.

The fact that they aren't and it takes a special program to get this kind of innovation, just highlights the need for broader transportation reform at both federal and state levels.”

Project applications had to show multiple benefits, with priority given to projects that: 1) Improve the condition of existing facilities and systems, 2) contribute to U.S. economic competitiveness, 3) improve the quality of living and working environments for people, 4) improve energy efficiency, reduce dependence on foreign oil, and reduce pollution, and 5) improve public safety.

Congress and the Obama Administration are working hard to change how states and the federal government fund transportation in America so that more projects produce all five of these benefits. While they complete that task, TIGER projects are excellent examples of the kinds of investments that states can and should be making today.

Smart Growth America is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring smart growth practices to more communities nationwide. From providing more sidewalks to ensuring more homes are built near public transit or that productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth helps make sure people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods. For additional information, please visit www.smartgrowthamerica.org.

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