

## Administrator Speeches 2010

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## **Administrator Peter Rogoff Delivers Remarks at Denver Union Station**

**02-05-10**

Thank you for that kind introduction...

On behalf of President Obama and Secretary Ray LaHood, I'm delighted to be here today to celebrate Denver's future.

And we do have a lot to celebrate today.

As the Federal Transit Administrator, I'm here to celebrate Denver's vision. It's a vision:

- for a rejuvenated downtown;
- for quick and easy rail access between downtown and the suburbs
- for easy rail access from one suburban community to another.
- And is a vision for easy rail access to a great international airport.

Most importantly, I'm here to celebrate the fact that, this week, Denver's FasTracks program is taking two giant steps forward to becoming a reality.

Five days ago, President Obama sent his budget for 2011 to Congress. That budget included \$80 million dollars for the Eagle projects -

- the East Line to the Airport
- and the Gold Line out to Ward Road.

These dollars are an initial downpayment on those projects. The most important part of Monday's announcement is that the Obama Administration committed itself to signing a Full Funding Grant Agreement for both of these projects.

That means that the Federal Transit Administration will be contributing over a billion dollars over the next few years to construct those two lines.

That's a billion dollars on top of the \$300 million that we are already contributing to build the West Corridor Light Rail line.

That's a billion dollars and the hundreds and hundreds of jobs that come with it.

Today, we are taking another giant step forward.

I'm thrilled to announce that Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood is today approving over \$300 million in loans to make a rejuvenated Union Station a reality.

Today's commitment means that all the funding sources for Union Station are now secure.

Make no mistake about it - Union Station is going to happen.

The West Corridor, the East Line, the Gold Line and Union Station are all at the center of Denver's FasTracks program. They are also at the center of President Obama's vision for economic recovery.

The Recovery Act is one of a many funding sources that will bring a new Union Station to life. And these projects are what the Recovery Act is all about.

They will create thousands of jobs NOW while improving the lives of millions of citizens in the future.

These projects are what the Obama Administration means when we talk about investing in America and creating jobs right here at home.

And when we create jobs by building projects like these - projects that greatly improve mobility around a region, it means that even more jobs will be coming in the future.

You watch -- more businesses will be relocating to Denver.

Why?? Because, with new rail lines, they will know that their employees and their products won't be spending hours stuck in traffic jams.

More businesses will be relocating to Denver because they will know that their workers will have a good quality of life.

It also will mean that parents will get home in time to actually have dinner with their kids - and supervise homework. It will mean that families will have a family life seven days a week rather than just two days a week.

While that is usually the case when we invest in public transit, the FasTracks vision takes it to a whole new level.

Mayor Hickenlooper, the RTD, the Union Station Authority, and the entire team, have demonstrated the vision, the flexibility and the sophistication to bring this network together in ways that no other cities have.

Union Station will actually piece together funding from so many separate Federal programs covering three different parts of the DOT.

This is the first project in the nation to combine:

- Recovery Act money
- Federal Transit dollars
- a TIFIA loan from the Federal Highway Administration
- and a RRIF loan from the Federal Railroad Administration

Frankly, no other project in America has even come close to integrating our programs so quickly and so effectively.

I think a lot of credit goes to my boss, Secretary LaHood, who, from his first day on the job, has moved our Department to one that is focused on delivering results for the American people.

Ray LaHood and the President Obama's DOT are about job creation and delivering results – not about bureaucracy and paperwork.

We are about building projects that will lead our economic recovery. And projects that will leave communities like Denver in a much better place when the jackhammers and the cranes are all gone.

That said, none of this would have happened without the aggressive and persistent leadership of Mayor Hickenlooper, Senator Bennet, Senator Udall, Congresswoman DeGette and Congressman Perlmutter.

As we have been working through the hurdles to make this project happen, Mayor Hickenlooper and your two fine Senators have been at the other end of our phone line – it seems, almost daily.

No day went by when we weren't reminded of the need to move Union Station forward because it seemed that no day went by when we didn't have a phone message from either Mayor Hickenlooper, Senator Bennet, Senator Udall, or Reps. DeGette and Perlmutter.

Back in September, Secretary LaHood, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson came to Denver to hear and see Mayor Hickenlooper's vision for a better, more livable Denver. That visit – and that vision -- left a big impression on all three of those leaders.

More than anything else, that visit, that vision, and the tireless persistence of your Mayor and Congressional delegation – people like Senator Bennet, that's why I'm here today.

So, on behalf of President Obama and Secretary LaHood, congratulations!

This is a great day for Denver. And it has arrived because of your hard work.

## **Administrator Rogoff Issues Oral Statement on Federal Transit Administration's recent audit of WMATA and the Tri-State Oversight Committee**

**03-04-10**

### Final SSO Audit Report (PDF)

Senator Mikulski and other members of the National Capital Region Delegation, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Federal Transit Administration's recent audit of WMATA and the Tri-State Oversight Committee or TOC.

At the outset, I want to point out that this audit was very different from past audits conducted by the FTA. Because FTA is currently prohibited by law from having direct safety oversight of Washington Metro and similar agencies across America, FTA typically limits the focus of our audits to the State Safety Oversight agency or TOC, in this case. However, at the direct request of Senator Mikulski and Secretary Ray LaHood, and with the encouragement of WMATA's interim Chief Safety Officer, this audit, for the first time, took a hard look at WMATA's own safety program.

FTA's audit revealed a number of troubling findings both at Washington Metro and the TOC. Our audit makes clear that these two agencies are not doing enough to guarantee the safety of Metro passengers or Metro workers. While we have observed some improvements in recent months, a great deal more needs to be done to ensure that Metro passengers are receiving the safest possible service. A great deal more needs to be done to ensure that the lives of Metro workers are protected as they do their jobs maintaining and operating the system.

Our audit resulted in 21 findings and recommendations: 11 findings and recommendations for TOC and 10 findings and recommendations to WMATA.

Before I highlight the findings and recommendations made by FTA, I want to convey to you three important messages.

First, the findings in our audit are merely symptoms of a larger problem. Each finding and recommendation in our report reveals a hole or vulnerability in the very systems that have been implemented to ensure the safety of Metro passengers and employees. However, without a strong and daily commitment to safety from everyone at Washington Metro, from executive leadership down to the most junior employee, these systems cannot succeed. Addressing each of our recommendations, one by one, will not solve the whole safety problem. The overarching safety problem will

only be solved through a top-to-bottom change in the safety culture and focus at Washington Metro.

Second, I want to emphasize that, under current law, the FTA, like the TOC, has no legal authority to compel Washington Metro to respond to any of our findings. As I have testified before, the FTA is actually prohibited by law from issuing safety regulations of any kind. And the State Safety Organizations like the TOC similarly have no legal authority to compel transit agencies like Washington Metro to respond to their safety findings. They don't have to respond to them in a timely way. In fact, they don't have to respond to them at all.

These are precisely the reasons why Secretary LaHood, on behalf of President Obama, formally transmitted a transit safety reform bill to the Congress back in December. I want to thank Senator Mikulski for her leadership in getting this bill introduced along with Chairman Dodd, Subcommittee Chairman Menendez and Senator Cardin. I also want to thank Representative Edwards for serving as an original cosponsor of the House bill along with Chairman Oberstar and Subcommittee Chairman DeFazio.

The Metrorail crash last summer certainly accelerated our efforts within the Obama Administration to develop and transmit our transit safety reform bill. However, we have also been focused on accidents and safety lapses at the Chicago Transit Authority, the MUNI system in San Francisco, the "T" up in Boston and elsewhere. While we believe the situation at Washington Metro is particularly troubling, some of the deficiencies and vulnerabilities that we identified in our audit of Metro and the TOC are similar to problems that exist at transit agencies and State Safety Organizations across America. That is precisely why we need Congress to move forward with our transit safety reform bill now. The U.S. Department of Transportation cannot move forward to address these problems in any meaningful way while we are still prohibited in law from issuing safety regulations or conducting direct safety oversight. Just a few weeks ago, Secretary LaHood used his authority to prohibit texting while driving nationwide for truck drivers, bus drivers and train operators. But even a simple common-sense safety measure like that cannot and will not apply to train operators at our nation's transit systems like Metro until Congress changes the law. So, on behalf of the President and Secretary LaHood, I must ask you collectively to do all you can to rapidly move this legislation to the President's desk.

Third, we must remember that, despite Metro's safety challenges, every Washington area commuter is far safer traveling on Metro than they are traveling on our highways. Anyone who decides to drive to work instead of taking Metro is immediately putting themselves at much greater risk of accident or injury. The Metro rail system has experienced 13 on-board crash-related fatalities during its 33-year history. While every one of the

fatalities has been a tragedy, the fact is that automobile accidents on the roads of the Washington area claim the same number of fatalities every two weeks. Nationwide, a person is 107 times more likely to die and 57 times more likely to be injured as a motor vehicle passenger than as a rail transit passenger. So, does Washington Metro and the TOC need to make changes to improve safety? Absolutely! Should Metro's safety challenges prompt riders to drive their cars instead? Absolutely not!

That said, I would like to present the results of our recent audit. I will not summarize all 21 findings and recommendations. Every Member should have a complete copy of the audit report. Rather, I will provide highlights of those that concern us most. But, as I summarize the audit findings and recommendations, you will see common challenges faced by both TOC and WMATA in the areas of:

- Inadequate authority,
- Inadequate resources,
- Inadequate expertise, and
- Inadequate communication.

Regarding WMATA, we believe there are serious organizational failures that must be addressed immediately. For example, our audit found that there is no internal process for communicating safety-related information across all WMATA departments. Worse still, there is no internal process for the Chief Safety Officer to communicate safety priorities to the General Manager. We are also deeply troubled by the fact that WMATA's safety department does not routinely have access to operating and maintenance information so that it could analyze the information for safety implications. Put simply, Metro's safety department has been isolated both from top management and from other Metro departments. In fact, the Safety Department has had their access and authority questioned by other operating departments. And this dynamic has seriously undermined the Safety Department's ability to conduct its safety responsibilities.

For example, FTA found evidence that WMATA's Safety Department is not "plugged-in" to critical conversations, decision-making meetings and reporting systems that provide information on hazards and potential safety concerns throughout the agency. Key documents, reports, and decisions are not consistently shared with the Safety Department. In addition, the Safety Department does not receive and review available monthly reports from the Rail Operation, Quality, or Maintenance departments. On numerous occasions during the audit interviews, Safety Department representatives indicated that they were learning for the first time that information of a safety nature was being documented by operating departments.

In addition to our concerns about WMATA's silo approach to communication, we are also concerned about the resources dedicated for



the Safety Department, the lack of stability within the Safety Department, and the scant attention it has gotten from senior management. Three illustrative observations are worth sharing with you:

1. At the time of our audit, there was a 25% vacancy rate within the Safety Department.
2. The Safety Department itself has been reorganized 6 times since 2005.
3. Since 2007, there have been 4 different individuals in charge of safety.

Given this record, no one should be surprised that Metro's Safety Department has been dysfunctional and ineffective.

Further, the lack of effective communication channels within WMATA also impacts the communication between WMATA and TOC wherein TOC members do not have access to top executives and decision-makers. Put simply, the multistate agency that is charged with overseeing safety at Metro hasn't until recently, had a way to communicate with Metro's senior management. Before October 2009, TOC members worked primarily with lower staff levels within WMATA and with WMATA's Safety Department and its Chief Safety Officer to address safety issues, accident investigations, and open corrective action plans. Safety Department representatives were expected to advocate on behalf of TOC within WMATA. That means that the regulator had to depend on underpowered mid-level players within Metro to advance their safety concerns. Until recently, TOC members did not directly work with key personnel in WMATA's rail operating and maintenance departments.

TOC representatives stated to us that when TOC members disagreed with the decision of the Chief Safety Officer, or did not believe that enough work had been done in a specific area, there were no processes in place to bring these concerns directly to the General Manager for action.

As a result, we recommend that WMATA develop internal processes for communicating safety-related information and procedures for elevating safety-related concerns.

Further, in 2005 and 2007, FTA determined that WMATA had not conducted internal safety audits according to approved schedules and requirements. Independent reviews conducted by TOC in 2004 and 2007 identified the same deficiency.

Over the last five years, TOC and FTA have made repeated findings regarding the inability of WMATA's Safety Department to work with other WMATA departments to develop and manage an effective internal audit program. In interviews, WMATA personnel explained that they did not have the resources or training to conduct internal safety audits without the assistance of the American Public Transportation Association or other contracted support.

In addition, WMATA representatives revealed that there is general confusion regarding why the Safety Department would need to conduct or manage internal audits of other departments.

Given this, we are recommending that WMATA conduct a comprehensive review of its Safety Department to determine the level of resources and expertise needed to carry out its mission. The results of that assessment must be used to set adequate staffing levels and ensure that necessary expertise exist within the Safety Department.

Finally, , WMATA must finalize its right-of-way protection rules and develop consistent and comprehensive training as part of implementing the new rules and ensure that right-of-way employees and contractors receive the training before accessing the right-of-way.

During our audit, we found that WMATA's procedural protections for right-of-workers, implemented after the 2006 Dupont Circle accident, were not developed in consultation with TOC or even evaluated for its impact on safety. In addition, while WMATA representatives stated that employees were provided training on this directive, during our interviews we found that employees were simply provided the directive and asked to sign a form stating that they understood the rule.

And, given the communication problems within Metro, it is troubling that while Metro intends to revise this rule, in light of the recent tracker worker deaths, the Safety Department has not been tasked to conduct an analysis of the revisions. Also, supervisors and operators told FTA that communications from right-of-way workers do not specify their exact location on the alignment. Specifically, operators stated that in some cases they do not know if workers are on the alignment until they have visual contact, and, when this occurs, especially in "blind spots", operators have limited ability to slow the train.

WMATA must institute a better process for protecting track workers.

Regarding TOC, we found that the sponsoring jurisdictions for TOC do not devote enough resources to TOC for it to function efficiently and effectively.

The six TOC staff members combined devote between approximately one and one and half full-time equivalents or FTE to the program and TOC contractors also provide between approximately one and 1.8 FTEs to the program. In March of 2009, Virginia dedicated a full time staff person to TOC. During audit interviews, both Maryland and the District of Columbia representatives stated that there are initiatives underway in their jurisdictions to attempt to commit full-time members to TOC.

Even so, since its inception in 1997, TOC has experienced considerable turnover among its members. Only one TOC member has served on TOC for three years. In fact, only one current TOC member was serving on TOC

when FTA conducted its 2007 audit, and no current member served on TOC when FTA conducted its 2005 audit.

In addition, until recently, assignment to TOC was a collateral duty for each jurisdiction, and TOC membership was not included in TOC member employee job descriptions with their home agencies.

Since there is a steep learning curve required to understand WMATA's operations and safety issues, we believe committing the necessary resources will ensure continuity and consistency as well as the ability for TOC members to conduct the needed oversight activities.

Despite evidence of good intention, TOC staff also lacks the technical and professional skills to effectively carry out its oversight duties. There are some notable exceptions among the current membership, but that is a recent development and the jurisdictions neither provide training to TOC members nor, until recently, have actively recruited members with a background in rail transit safety.

With regard to authority, there are two areas of concern for us. First, the way in which TOC is organized has proven problematic when it comes to decision-making. It is nearly impossible for the members of TOC to act quickly and with one voice, when all decisions have to be elevated in each jurisdiction. In other words, when specific compliance issues emerge at WMATA, TOC members often must obtain the authority to act from higher level executives in three separate agencies.

In addition, since TOC is not a legal entity, there is no formal process to manage conflicts of law and policy that arise among the three jurisdictions. What we found is that the lowest common denominator often prevails because that is the only way for all three jurisdictions to agree.

TOC has not been empowered by the sponsoring jurisdictions to take decisive action when WMATA fails to implement corrective actions identified by TOC. This is particularly troubling when you consider that in 2007, TOC was tracking over 200 open corrective action plans designed to prevent the recurrence of accidents. Some of those corrective action plans date back to 2004.

For these reasons, we want TOC to consider whether full-time TOC positions can be vested with decision-making authority to act in specific safety situations with WMATA.

Overall, our audit concludes that TOC and WMATA still face serious challenges. Resources for both organizations must be identified and committed. Expertise, both for TOC members and WMATA's Safety Department, must be addressed. TOC's authority must be reconsidered both from an operational perspective as well as for enforcement purposes. WMATA must find a way to communicate and set safety priorities within its organization. Stove-piping within WMATA, especially regarding safety, will

continue to hinder its ability to address corrective action plans and meet critical safety needs. WMATA must also communicate better with TOC and TOC members must have access to WMATA's top executives, board members and other decision-makers.

In conclusion, I want to take a moment to explain how the Obama Administration's transit safety reform bill would address many of the deficiencies that we found at WMATA and the TOC.

First, our legislative proposal would provide FTA direct oversight authority over individual transit systems. The bill would grant us the ability to issue regulations and enforce them. So our legislative proposal would allow FTA to set minimum, national standards regarding such issues as track worker protection, crashworthiness, on-board event recorders or the institution of safety management systems to ensure critical safety issues receive the attention they deserve.

Under our legislative proposal, the FTA would be empowered with the same tools that agencies like the FAA have to compel the compliance of regulated parties. While State Safety Oversight (SSO) agencies would have the opportunity to enforce Federal regulations on the FTA's behalf, they would only be allowed to do so if they had the staff strength, expertise, and legislative authority to compel compliance by the transit providers.

Importantly, our legislative proposal would provide Federal funds to SSOs for hiring, training, inspections, and other safety-related activities. Rather than having SSO's that are understaffed and undertrained, the FTA would provide resources to ensure that they are up to the task.

Most importantly, our legislative proposal is built around the goal of getting every rail transit provider, including Metro, to embrace state-of-the-art Safety Management Systems (SMS). An effective SMS is one where every employee, from the lowest to the highest rungs of the operation, are keeping their eyes and ears on safety concerns. Those employees are routinely reporting their observations and concerns in a non-threatening environment to agency experts who regularly analyze and address the most critical safety concerns first. It's an environment where communication is constant and safety is paramount. That is our vision for safer rail transit systems across the nation, including Washington Metro. We ask for your help in getting us there by passing President Obama's transit safety legislation promptly.

You have my commitment and Secretary LaHood's commitment that we will continue to work with this regional delegation to advance the cause of safety on Washington Metro.

I thank you again for the opportunity to be here today to summarize our audit findings and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

## **Administrator Peter Remarks at the Boston Reserve Bank - Next Stop: A National Summit on the Future of Transit (SOGT)**

**05-18-10**

Commend you for holding this national summit on the most challenging and troubling issue for our industry - SGT.

As FTA Administrator for almost exactly one year, I've been so impressed with the people, their commitment - truly do it for our grandchildren.

When it comes to SGT, we really need to unpack that statement. It's not enough to just toil in public transportation and pat ourselves on the back for leaving our grandchildren a better system and a cleaner environment.

No, what its really about is the decisions we make as practitioners in public transportation that will really determine whether we leave a workable system that meets their economic and lifestyle needs or one that sputters along and is burdened by reliability problems and a sea of debt.

If we are really serious, as a nation, as an industry, as a state or city, or as an individual - if we are seriously committed to tackling the challenge of the State of Good Repair, than we must insist that our commitment inform and infuse the decisions we make.

You have heard from some of the leading General Managers in our industry. These are the heroes of our industry. They are also our teachers. I know each of them - some more than others.

I also know that each of them spend at least a few seconds every week, if not every day, questioning the decisions made by their predecessors - wondering how and why certain critical needs were not addressed earlier.

I can tell you that under each of their fine business outfits you will find the scars from brutal battles with their local and state governments over the resources they need.

I also know that they are collectively, some of the best walking examples of stress management you will ever want to meet.

Don't be fooled by their cool outward demeanor. There is plenty of stress to manage.

They are required to turn out service to millions every day, and to simultaneously keep the warts hidden from us.

When you consider what real conditions are out there, they are nothing short of miracle workers.

What do we know about the real conditions of our systems? The FTA is in the midst of completing a new report on the topic.

As many of you know, last year we conducted a study at the request of a number of legislators that asked us to look specifically at conditions of our largest rail operators. That report takes on particular significance in our department since one of the legislators that requested that report was the then-Junior Senator from Illinois, Barack Obama. The report revealed a backlog of deferred maintenance at our seven largest rail operators of no less than \$50 billion dollars.

The number was certainly eye-popping. But upon reviewing the results with Secretary LaHood, he insisted that we expand the study to take a hard look at the entire transit industry. In doing so, Ray LaHood was displaying his customary insistence that we address transportation challenges with our eyes wide open.

We are in the midst of finalizing our new report, but I can today share some of our more noteworthy findings.

First, when you expand the universe of transit agencies studied from the seven largest rail operators to 690 separate rail and bus systems, the estimated funding shortfall to bring the entire transit system in a state of good repair grows from \$50 billion to \$78 billion.

Importantly, bringing assets into a state of good repair is NOT the same as bringing them into pristine new condition. For the purposes of this study, assets that are in a “state of good repair” are those that are brought to what was called the “marginal” range. They were brought to a score of 2.5 with a score of 1 reflecting assets in “poor” condition and a score of 5 reflecting assets in excellent condition.

Fully 29 percent of all transit assets – rail, bus and paratransit – are in poor or marginal condition.

Those are the national numbers – but these numbers exhibit themselves in events that we are reading and seeing in the media far too frequently.

- Just three weeks ago here in Boston, the “T” experience a cable fire that sent 20 passengers from two different stations to the hospital for smoke inhalation.
- Just last month in Cleveland, urgent repairs were suddenly needed to sure up a crumbling wall at the RTA’s Lee Road station. Buses were called in so the passengers could bypass it.
- Also last month, the Washington Metro system discovered three cracked rails along the Red Line in just one week.
- The Chicago Transit Authority discovered a potential defect with a component of the signaling system. As a result, Orange line trains are being slowed to 35 mph between Midway and the Loop while repairs are made to the signaling system.

Increasingly, I have become convinced that the solutions to these problems are not about engineering. They are not just about economics.

- They are about honesty;
- They are about the necessity to tell truth to power
- They are about the necessity for political guts – the guts to tell it like it is – the guts to say “no” when everyone around the table wants you to say yes.
- They are about the need to rethink the questions we ask of ourselves. And insisting on asking them, again and again.

If we really care about what we leave to our grandchildren, we will each use this summit to strengthen our resolve to do just that. And keep doing it – because this problem isn’t going to be solved over just a few budget cycles or even over one generation.

In the end, while we often like to sugarcoat it, these decisions we make are truly moral decisions. Moral decisions about who we serve with scarce resources. Moral decisions about whether we leave the next general manager, the next Chief Engineer, the next bus driver, a system that is stressed even further or is on the path to wellness.

Moral decisions about whether we direct scarce resources to transit riders that might otherwise drive their car vs. transit riders who will have no choice but endure the service we give them, no matter how troubled.

What do I mean by honesty?

Share some simple truths that folks don’t want to hear. One is this -- Paint is cheap

Riders often want rail – but you can entice diehard rail riders onto a “special” bus, sometimes by just painting the bus a different color than the rest of the fleet.

Busways are cheap. You can get a designated lane just by painting it. And with signal preemption, you can move a lot of people at very little cost compared to rail.

Earlier I pointed out that our new estimate for the deferred maintenance backlog for the entire transit universe is roughly \$78 billion. But you should know that fully 75 percent of that figure is for the replacement of rail assets. Now remember that the majority of transit trips taken in America are still done by bus. In fact, Americans take 21 percent more bus trips than rail trips. But when it comes to the need to replace transit assets, the costs associated with replacing rail assets eats up three quarters of the entire backlog.

Agencies deciding between bus and rail investments need to stare those numbers in the face. It’s one thing to pay the cost differential now. They need to be mindful of the costs they are piling up for future generations.

Is Bus Rapid Transit a workable option for every corridor – no. But it's a fine fit for more communities than are seriously considering it.

Another simple truth -- by ignoring deteriorating conditions at our transit systems, we run the very real risk of losing riders.

The Obama Administration wants to grow transit ridership. It is wholly consistent with the President's goals to lower greenhouse gas emissions and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. But we can't achieve our goals while ignoring the state of good repair. Transit riders – especially those that are not transit dependent – will only put up with so much. There is a point where dirty stations, unreliable service, slowed train speeds, inoperable escalators, and worries about safety push riders back on the highway. Ironically, every study ever conducted will show that, from a safety perspective, passengers are far safer riding even our most fragile transit systems than driving on the highway. But that doesn't necessarily influence the choices commuters make.

What do I mean by guts to say no?

I'm now concluding my first year as Administrator. I meet with a great many transit general managers. While these meetings are all different, they often follow a certain pattern.

I start off the meeting by asking how things are going. They express gratitude for the new Recovery Act funds but then go on to explain that the downturn in municipal revenues, the downturn in sales tax receipts, the cutbacks in the city and state levels, has necessitated service cuts. Sometimes we talk about serious service cuts of 20 percent or more. We talk about:

- route reductions
- layoffs
- furloughs
- significant chunks of capital reinvestment being deferred as they use Federal capital dollars for preventive maintenance to close operating gaps.

It's all very grim. But then we get to the second part of the meeting. The consultants start to get excitable and the glossy brochures come out. And the next thing you know, the general manager wants to talk about their new plans for expansion -- the spanking new rail service to communities not yet served.

In fairness, many of these new communities have been waiting for a long time to get rail service. Indeed, many were promised rail service as part of a sales tax referendum that was passed a decade ago. The other communities got service – but now those are more expensive than originally forecast – and the sales tax is taking in far less than expected.



At times like these, we need to ask the hard question: if you can't afford to operate the system you have, why does it make sense for use to partner in your expansion? Are we not helping you dig a deeper hole for our children and our grandchildren?

These ARE moral questions.

Should we count on the economy coming back. Yes we must. And indeed, the economy is coming back. But what will be required of us when it does. We were already at record ridership when the economy started to contract. While ridership has dipped with employment, we can expect it to come back to new record levels when the economy fully recovers. So what pressures does that put on our struggling systems.

I was recently talking to a friend in the freight rail industry. He told me that one of the benefits of slower traffic on their main lines was that it gave them the opportunity to reinvest and do some major restoration projects without being so disruptive to their freight traffic. Well how many of our transit agencies had a similar opportunity? How many systems actually had access to enough money to seriously reinvest in the midst of a recession? There is no question that the Recovery Act helped, but our transit agencies will still struggle to handle the traffic that will come with a recovered economy.

When I said earlier that one of the solutions is to tell it like it is - that includes the uncomfortable situation of calling someone out when their behavior isn't responsible. My favorite example is the Douglas Branch of the Blue Line in Chicago

It actually passed FTA's funding test for a brand new rail line. Why, because it was so slow and decrepid - it was allowed to deteriorate to such a state, its restoration brought so many new riders - saving as much as 30 minutes over current rail service over the identical route - the identical stations. Just the absence of slow orders was the game changer.

But the question has to be asked, how was it allowed to just rot on the vine? Where were the policymakers at all levels that allowed conditions to deteriorate so.

When it comes to calling out the truth - let me praise Governor Patrick for requesting the D'allesandro study. Tells a stark picture of what needs to be done here in Boston.

What is FTA doing about it?

- ARRA 80 percent, through leadership of John Olver and others. ARRA will have an impact. Our new study indicates that more than 6,000 of the nation's almost 72,000 buses are in need of replacement, having exceeded their useful life. But we also know from our own grant reporting system that the Recovery Act is going to replace more than

12,000 transit vehicles. This will include a lot of buses as well as paratransit vans. So this may be one area where we look back in a few years and discover that the Recovery Act has really alleviated a major shortfall.

- DOT's new strategic goal - SGR - its not just transit, its runways, highways, etc.
- Emphasis in tight budgets - 8 percent vs. 1 percent
- Saying no:
  - Sacramento
  - Hartford - New Britain
- Innovation - sinking funds. Diminution in earmarking of our Research budget means we can go out and get good answers on these things
- Rethinking questions - 20 years vs. longer (rail cars are 25)
- Asset management
- Safety bill - a Federal backstop
- And reminding all that we have no ability that it is entirely ours to solve. We are at 40 percent now. This will take partnership.

Success will require us all to wake up those that want to stay asleep.

Let's all go to railroad tie replacement. The do a ribbon cutting for the new concrete retaining wall that replaced the last concrete retaining wall.

## **USDOT Officials Deliver Encouraging Message to “Bike to Work Day” Rally**

**05-21-10**

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### *Department Enters New Era of Bike-Friendly Policies*

U.S. Transportation Undersecretary for Policy Roy Kienitz and Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff, both avid cyclists who participated in "Bike to Work Day 2010," encouraged fellow event participants following their ride to Freedom Plaza this morning by announcing that the Department is changing the way it funds transit-related bike improvements.

"People are enthusiastic about a return to a healthier, greener way to get where they need to go," Secretary Ray LaHood said. "Bicycles help reduce congestion, improve our environment, and are a smart investment for our country's transportation system."

"The Department is serious about incorporating bikes into our transportation system," Kienitz said. "The Secretary has directed transportation agencies to go beyond the minimum standards and to include safe, convenient facilities for cyclists."

In addition to the Secretary's policy statement on bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, the Department will also issue a new policy statement that is expected to go into effect this month that will allow the FTA to provide federal funding for bicycle improvements that have a relationship to public transportation if they are within three miles of a transit stop or station.

"I'm here to say that bicycling and public transit are perfect partners in our cause to clean up our air and improve public health," Rogoff said to riders gathered at the Freedom Center. "The Obama Administration will keep supporting cycle-friendly policies because they help



connect communities in ways that are beneficial to everyone at very little cost." Rogoff added.

Rogoff noted that increasing the levels of both cycling and public transportation use meant greater potential for bike-transit coordination, adding that the percentage of buses with bike racks has nearly tripled in the U.S. in only eight years, from 27 percent in 2000 to 71 percent in 2008. In some cities, bike-and-ride has been so successful that the demand for facilities exceeds the available supply.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), he said, is a leader in promoting bike-and-ride, accommodating bicycle riders at most of its 86 Metrorail stations.

In Fiscal Year 2010, the FTA will provide \$10.4 billion in federal funding for public transportation to states and local communities across the U.S.

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## **Administrator Rogoff Delivers Remarks at CTAA Conference - Long Beach, CA**

**05-26-10**

I noticed that Dale didn't say, it's not that you haven't heard negative words about us on some other issues you just haven't heard any negative words about us as it relates to the Recovery Act.

And I think that is appropriate.

I will say, it is very, very good to be here. Particularly because this is my first full lap.

As Dale pointed out, I did my first public speaking address, just a week after being confirmed by the Senate, and it was at this annual meeting in Providence.

And I begged your indulgence on what I was on top of and what I wasn't, as it relates to what the goings on of FTA, since I think I was only on the job either 5 or 6 days when I came to Providence to join you.

But you welcomed me warmly. I got a chance to sit with the board last year, as I did this morning and really talked through a lot of the issues that are present.

I could tell you, more than most organizations, I really found your board to represent the full diversity of the CTAA membership and give great voice to the concerns that is that are out there.

I do want to thank you. You know, when I first took the position, as FTA Administrator, the biggest concern we had on our plate at the time was meeting all the statutory deadlines for obligating the Recovery Act funds.

It was an extraordinary challenge when you consider that the Recovery Act gave the FTA an 80 percent funding increase in a single year.

Well, we did meet those deadlines and it's all because of the hard work of people like you. And the hard work of a great many FTA staff, spread in the regions and at headquarters, and a large number of them are sitting among you out in the audience. So I'd ask you to give them a round of applause.

(Applause)

Just as we should applaud you, because, it is a partnership. It only happens when we have a grantee that steps up to the plate and works just as hard as we do, if not harder to make all this happen.

You're the one who turned these grants into real service to the American people. That's who our customers are. You are a critical and essential intermediary to reach all of those customers and we thank you for all your efforts in doing that every day.

On the topic of FTA staff, this has been a difficult month for us at the FTA. Really for two reasons.

One is that we lost the services of our regional administrator in region one, Dick Doyle. Dick Doyle had served with the FTA for 463 years. (laughter) Or something like that.

But literally, Dick, is one of the veterans that date back well before the name was changed from UMTA to FTA. He was a real leader and a great mentor and I just want to commend the CTAA for immediately upon his departure, putting him on the CTAA board. It was great and warm to see him at the board discussion this morning.

The other piece of bad news, that we have as it relates to staff, is after many, many great years of service to the FTA, in a great many positions, Susan Schruth has announced her retirement at the end of July.

And she has been particularly involved in a lot of the programs that are essential to the CTAA membership. So I just want to take this moment, as I will I think many times between now and the end of July, to thank Susan for her contributions to everything that you execute for us out in the field.

Both were instrumental in helping us make everything happen that needed to happen with the Recovery Act. As a result of our efforts, we've now obligated 100 percent of our formula funds.

We've made just over a thousand grants; the Vice-President joined us in announcing the other day, the awarding of our one thousandth grant to the Choctaw Indian Nation in Oklahoma.

(Applause)

That was a great milestone for us. Our efforts have included the purchase of over 11,000 vehicles, both buses and para transit vans. And as of today, one out of every three Recovery Act dollars left the treasury. But even before we know that they've been awarded in contracts and being used to manufacture vehicles in creating and saving thousands and thousands of jobs.

One of the things I said, when I spoke to the CTAA last year, is that our success in putting the Recovery Act moneys to work will be a critical precursor on how we will be judged as we enter the debate on reauthorization. Given the record that we've shown together, I think we could make no better statement about our ability to use the taxpayer funds wisely and effectively and efficiently as we've made under the Recovery Act.

Now, that said, it is certainly not lost on us, that we are facing extremely difficult economic times. Every agency in this room is dealing with it. Even with a historic single year 80 percent federal funding boost, those additional federal dollars cannot fully offset for the challenges presented by reduced sales tax and property tax revenues, cuts in municipal support. Farebox reduction brought about by unemployment and rising fuel prices. I want you to know that FTA is mindful of the struggles that so many of our transit agencies are facing today. As I've told my senior staff we are going to face these issues with our eyes wide open.

One of the things that I discovered over the last year, is while we collect a great deal of data on operating conditions at our transit agencies, the data isn't necessarily current. We had a very good fix on what the operating conditions was of our transit agencies two years prior. As a policy maker and someone who is advising the Secretary and the President on what's going on as it relates to the availability of transit services, I do not know how much value we get out of knowing what was going on two years ago. So I have instructed my research arm, it's known as TRI, to do a quick survey of conditions right now.

And it's something that I think is going to be emerging as a continuing effort for us; I can assure you that Barack Obama and Ray LaHood and I for that matter are far more interested in knowing where we are now, and what we are facing in our future, than knowing what happened two or three years ago. When it comes to the operating needs of our agency, what service you can provide and what service you can't, we want to know what's going on right now and that's how not just FTA surveys but our regular dialogue as an agency between the CTAA and FTA at the all levels, region and headquarters is critically important.

I also want to point out and I was really glad that CTAA wisely distributed it in your conference materials. The Department under Secretary LaHood just put out a new strategic plan and this strategic plan is really going to guide our efforts going forward as an Administration. It has been a long time in the making and a subject of great deal of discussion within the building. And I really, really want to urge members of the CTAA to review the plan and comment on it. We're in kind of a public comment period right now.

And frankly as the FTA Administrator, I'm not interested in having all the comments and input come from state highway departments and the nation's largest airports, and freight railroads, their input is important, so is yours, so I really want to encourage you, not just as CTAA, though I encourage CTAA to do it, but even as individuals, at all levels of the service chain. To comment on our strategic plan and where you think it speaks to what you need and what you do and where it doesn't.

One of the strategic goals that we have pointed out, and have chartered for our future is the State of Good Repair. This isn't just about the State of

Good Repair of transit systems, but it's about airports, runways, highway bridges, rail bridges, even the air traffic control system.

But, the State of Good Repair, I believe is something that you know, when I was first brought before the Senate banking committee...

Thanks.

When I was first brought before the Senate banking committee for my confirmation hearing, I made the point that, deferred maintenance, if deferred long enough can become a critical safety problem.

And it's always been our view that the issue of State of Good Repair and maintain and deferred maintenance and the issue of safety is inextricably linked. Safety has been a top priority at DOT, but I think no more so than under Ray LaHood's leadership. There is not one event that he does not go and talk about the challenge that we're facing, as it relates to distracted driving. Texting while driving. Cell phone use while driving. It doesn't matter what topic he's talking about, he's going to spend some portion of that speech talking about safety issues.

Back in December, Secretary LaHood transmitted a comprehensive safety bill in the house of the senate on behalf of the President, that bill is largely about rail transit safety.

Importantly, and this came to me as a surprise, it was the first time that any President of the United States formally transmitted to Congress a legislative bill solely about public transportation.

(Applause)

And appropriately, it's about transit safety. Because that has to be our number one priority.

And like I said, while our safety bill is principally about rail transit safety, the bill highlights important issues that pertains to all transit operators, the need for good asset management, the need to stay on top of the State of Good Repair. We're also very concerned not just about the safety of passengers; we're concerned about the safety of transit workers as well. The drivers, the mechanics, the folks that are the backbone behind the delivery of our service each day.

(Applause)

You know, I I'm one of those Administrators that is tied to my blackberry each day and one of the grimmer responsibilities of the Transit Administrator is to receive emails on accidents and fatalities.

They're all heartbreaking. Among the most heartbreaking has to be the violence that is sometimes executed against bus drivers in America. And it's



something that is also part of the transit safety challenge. And something that we need to attend to.

So, if safety and State of Good Repair are inextricably linked what is the FTA doing about addressing the issue about the State of Good Repair? First and foremost, we're continuing to invest. In our 2011 budget that's currently pending before Congress. The total budget for FTA only grows by one percent. Just as the total budget for DOT grows by one percent.

We're doing a little bit better than the funding freeze that President Obama has charted for spending given our current economic circumstances. As many of you know, it's going to be very difficult to do much better than steady state budgets until we solve the conundrum of financing a new authorization bill.

But even within that one percent growth, for our budget of 2011 we have been able to boost our new State of Good Repair initiative by 8 percent. It's the largest percentage growth of any formula program within the FTA. I believe it may be the largest percentage growth within the DOT budget. This new State of Good Repair issue, combined the rail mod program or the fixed guideway modern station program. With the discretionary bus program.

I know this proposal, this idea of taking discretionary bus and merging it with rail mod is a source of a lot of concern by a lot of bus operators. So I want to specifically point out to you here, this is not a concept intended to short change bus operations. To the contrary, it is our full intent that buses share of the program will be no less than it is right now. And importantly, we are equally focused on the State of Good Repair issues in the bus and rail space.

Importantly, also, putting together a formula program for bus, and sending it to bus operators on a formula basis, specifically for the State of Good Repair, will provide a predictable formula amount that every bus operator can count on going forward. It's a very different approach from the discretionary bus program, whether it's done by earmarks or done by competition.

It is inevitably unpredictable as a bus operator. And that's why we're seeking to formalize this program. We're also going to continue to invest through discretionary grants and I think many of you've been and stayed on top of the discretionary grant competitions we put out.

Back in December we announced \$280 million dollars for urban circulator bus project but also for bus livability projects. We received over 300 applications totaling \$3.1 billion for that \$280 million. That's the way transit competitions go these days. It's not unlike that TIGER program that we had a hundred million and got \$200 million in applications. It's also indicative of what the challenges are for transit finance these days.

But we look forward to getting that money out soon.

For 2010, we have just over a billion dollars in discretionary funding to award before October 1st.

So, if you're not staying on top of your Federal Register, I hope you will and you'll also use our regional staff at FTA to find out what particular programs you're eligible for and what you're not.

We just announced, on April 13th a Notice of Funding Availability in the area of sustainability, including \$75 million dollars in additional funding.

It includes \$81.3 million in the clean fuel bus program, but there's a change that I made in that, and I want to particularly call it to the attention of CTAA because I think it would apply to a number of the operators here.

The clean fuel bus program, by law, we were having interesting discussions this morning with the board about the restrictions that are put in by legal mandates on certain programs.

The clean full bus program by law can only go to bus operators in non-attainment. So what I've done with this particular Notice of Funding Availability is to take some discretionary bus fund areas and pool it with the clean fuel bus program.

The idea is given the President's goals for greenhouse gas reduction and reducing our dependence on foreign oil. I want to make sure there's a federal funding source for clean fuel buses, for smaller operators that are perhaps not in non-attainment areas.

So, I'd like people to read that one carefully, because it's my hope that we'll be able to do some grants there, in all parts of the country and not just in the largest non-attainment urban areas of the country.

And then, perhaps most importantly, in the bus area, we just announced a competition of more than \$775 million dollars just for the State of Good Repair, in the bus area.

It's a big chunk of money. I expect there to be a lot of demand but I think it points out the seriousness with which we take State of Good Repair, in specifically in the bus area.

The applications are due June 18th.

Many of you will remember that, the last time there was thought to be a very large discretionary bus competition the last administration ended up sending it to five specific cities. We're sending it to all of America's bus operators. I can't promise all but we want to have good geographic and urban and rural distribution of our funds under that notice of funding availability, so I strongly encourage many of you to participate in that as well.

We also are putting out a new round of money for Transit in the Parks and another \$15 million in Tribal Transit funding and those applications are due June 29th. So a lot of activity. A lot of grant making activity. Summarized in what are we doing about State of Good Repair. We're taking the dollars that Congress is giving us and putting them out as rapidly as we can. We're putting them out rapidly, because as anyone can tell you, the economic recovery is not done yet. And that is a reality that you face every day.

So we are going to try to get these dollars out the door in record speed just as we did on the Recovery Act. Needless to say, some of my staff would like to take a breather, and we're not taking any breathers.

I also want to take a minute to talk about the TIGER program, because that was one that was truly multi-modal in nature.

That's another area we're continuing to invest. That's a multi-modal program that was put out to address surface solutions intermodal fashion, and I was really pleased at the \$1.5 billion dollars that was competed, Secretary LaHood awarded fully a third of it to public transportation projects.

And it really speaks to his commitment to our enterprise and his putting his money where his mouth is when it comes to the importance of public transportation.

We are about to compete another \$600 million dollars of that program, and I encourage those of you to take a look and perhaps partner with other agencies, because we are looking for innovative things to do there.

We continue to make progress in achieving our goals for United We Ride. I know a great many of you have contributed in that area. Our goal is to better coordinate human service transportation, in order to improve mobility services to persons with disabilities, senior citizens and low income persons.

The progress we are making is in part because of our partnership with CTAA partner and your efforts with job links and national resource center on human service transportation coordination.

We have many great initiatives, reaching countless persons and communities across the country.

Just to name a few you have CTAA Institute of Transportation coordination, the new transportation solutions course that was developed by the Easter Seals Project Action, which we also fund and the highly successful United We Ride Ambassadors Program. And a number of those ambassadors are here in the room and I want to thank you for your efforts.

(Applause)

We're really building a transportation coordinated infrastructure across the United States. It's one thing to build out the infrastructure that we normally think of: the roads, vehicle, but coordination is sort of an infrastructure you know to itself, and that is the personal connections that people make.

Let me talk a about a few of the signs of progress that we're seeing out there. (NCSL) National Council on Conference of State Legislators reports that 26 states have established Transportation Coordination Counselors, excuse me. Transportation Coordination Councils, similar to the Federal Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility. Twenty-eight states have passed coordination legislation and 14 states have established executive orders on transportation coordination.

There have been over 700 public transit human service coordination plans developed across the U.S.

The United We Ride Ambassadors have identified over 300 mobility managers that have sprung up across the country and are serving as community transportation coordinators in the communities. Most of the activities are being funded under our New Freedom & JARC programs.

The ambassadors also found that over 60 percent of states are planning or developing one call transportation coordination centers to serve their communities and make transportation access a less complex matter for consumers.

More recently, Dale Marsico pointed out to me the important strides we made under the Medicaid program. There has been a change that is guaranteed non-emergency transportation access to health care that will be included in Medicaid funding.

So as a result the law has greatly expanded those now eligible for such assistance and ended the so-called client shedding to public transit without adequate compensation. That's great news for those of us seeking to provide public transportation access.

But it's even greater news for the clients we're trying to serve the disabled, the senior citizens, the low-income families that really benefit from these efforts.

Well, there's been significant progress, we're developing an expanded agenda for the new members of the Federal Coordination Council on Access & Mobility CCAM and that will support, we're looking for new areas of effort that will support key priorities that are articulated by President Obama. We're considering four major priorities for the coming years that will be supportive of the President's agenda. One - health wellness and transportation. This is especially important as we seek to drive down costs through the new health care reform law.

If this is to be effective, we must simply be able to get our transportation disadvantaged populations to routine and preventive medical care, while avoiding expensive in hospital acute health care costs.

For those of you who followed the health care debate, the whole issue of preventive care was one of those things that everyone agreed on. It was all a matter of getting to the finish line. It really is a huge driver in getting health care costs under control.

But there's not going to be preventive health care for the people who need it most if they can't get to the doctor. And that's what we're about. And that's what all of these coalitions are about and that's why we need to stay focused on that.

Another is job access. This is very important as the Administration seeks to advance the economic recovery.

A third area that we're working with is how to better serve our returning veterans. America has an obligation to make a special effort to help heal, reintegrate and support the huge number of returning veterans that are coming home from service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And I know this is something very close to the heart of CTAA effort as well. We want to work together, to make sure that human service transportation plans address these needs.

And fourth, we want to make government more open. And we want to make this process more open.

That means that getting more people to take place, and take part in the public decision making process.

Last November we took a major step in implementing the President's policy on open government. We conducted for the first time a two week interagency electronic town hall meeting with stakeholders to get their views on what we should be doing to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, and persons with low income.

Many of the ideas that came out of that meeting will inform CCAM actions in the future.

You know, we were talking this morning about this board meeting, and I want to emphasize to all of you, the Obama administration is really quite serious about improving the pace of dialogue, the directness of dialogue, there are a lot of very earnest, very skilled young people in the White House, who are looking at new ways, especially through new media, to communicate, with not just voters, they did some historic work during the election on voters. But now the challenge is about communicating with the American people and using those tools to serve them better through their government.

I'm committed to that as well.

We've been able to see the strength of some of it and in some early efforts of FTA but I hope you'll see a lot more in the future.

One of the things I also want to do as FTA Administrator, now that I've been there for a full year, you know, I arrived there and the Recovery Act, if you will, was burning the house down. We had a lot of other issues we want to turn our attention to - a lot of new initiatives that we're looking at. But we did not want to cease in our efforts to improve our baseline of business, our core efforts at executing grants our transit providers does so they can serve the public.

One of the ways I want to do that is to improve just the basic level of clarity that the FTA provides to all of our customer groups.

It's clarity as it relates to the issues like Title VI compliance. It's clarity and consistency on what we mean under the Buy America Act; clarity and consistency on what is required under ADA; clarity and consistency on what is required to help disadvantage business enterprises participate in our grants. This Administration and I personally take these laws and initiatives very seriously and we want and expect you to do the same.

But an important part of our job is to communicate clearly. An important part of our job is to attend to these issues. Many of you - who are true professionals in our industry - you know that FTA does not always articulate our positions with great clarity.

You also know, if you've moved in your career from one FTA region to the next, that we may not give a consistent answer one region to the next.

We are working on that.

As I said this morning, I do not want to stifle ingenuity. Stifle good ideas and to do things different and better in the regions. But I also don't want ten methods of doing business. I think we owe America better than that.

The Office of Program Management under the leadership of Susan Schruth developed standard operating procedures over the course of the last year for our grant making function. I'm hoping that will help.

It's going to hopefully eliminate what is sometimes referred to as the oral culture at the FTA.

It is, what we mean by that, is not in the highest most prized visions of an oral culture in the area of folklore, but really, the oral culture by which a new FTA employee comes in and learns our processes.

That's why, when you've got ten different ways of doing business in ten different regions and each of their own oral culture, you've got their descendants learning the different way of doing it. I frankly want not only

for there to be consistency in how we communicate with the public with our procedures and our guidance for users groups, but I also want to be able to present opportunities where somebody can move from region four in Atlanta, to region ten in Seattle overnight, and fit right in and know what we're doing because the processes and the rules are the same.

When we went about the business of developing the standard operating procedures for the grant making function, we discovered between two of our regions for the same singular grant making activity, one region had a questionnaire that was four pages long. Another had a questionnaire that was 24 pages long.

I'm not here to say whether the four page one was right and the 24 page one was wrong or vice versa. It's probably somewhere in the middle. But I know that they both can't be right. So, this all won't be fixed tomorrow. But it will be fixed. It's a simple sign of professionalism that we owe to all of our partners and all of our grantees and frankly to the transit riding public out there.

So I ask for your assistance in helping us get there. We talked this morning, with your board, about how we can improve communication to get a better fix on how CTAA can inform our processes earlier.

Those that are, by which we're not constrained by law, by which we can have a dialogue on not just figuring out a way to make it most consistent and useful to the FTA, but also critically important to our grant recipients and to our other partners who perform the function.

So, in summary, I want to say thanks to all of you for let me take my first full lap and inviting me back. We don't say it enough. But I just want to thank you for the job you do for the riding public every day.

In my first series of speeches when I took this job, I made the point that this President has expectations and aspirations for public transportation that his predecessor did not. Whether it's the President's goal to reduce greenhouse gases, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, make our communities more livable, improve the quality of life for elderly so they can age at home, help get people to preventive health care, public transportation is at the middle of his vision. It requires all of us to step up our game, even when financial times are hard. We need to do things harder and smarter.

And we at the FTA are determined to step up our game and we look forward to being a full partner with you, as you do the same. So, thanks for having me.

(Applause)

## **Administrator Rogoff Remarks at APTA Rail Conference, Vancouver, Canada**

**06-07-10**

When I first started—I've now been on the job for a year, and in fact the APTA Rail Conference was one of my first public engagements, right after my confirmation last year.

When I first came on, we faced the great challenge of obligating all of our Recovery Act resources in time for the statutory deadline. We succeeded in doing that, and we did it ahead of time, and we did it really through the hard working folks in this room—the transit agencies across America and the hard working FTA staff and in our regions across the country and in our headquarters that stood up to a challenge of obligating an 80 percent spike in federal funding in a single year. We've now obligated 100 percent of all of our formula funds.

One out of every three dollars has actually been outlaid from the Treasury. But even the other two-thirds of the money is already being awarded into contracts, is being used to manufacture vehicles, and is creating and saving jobs throughout the transit industry and our manufacturers, which is the core purpose of the Recovery Act.

I said in my speech last year that how we performed in executing the Recovery Act will be an important precursor and an important statement leading into reauthorization and I have to say I can't imagine us putting a better foot forward that we have as an industry and an agency in showing that we can get the job done as we have with the Recovery Act.

FTA as you know saw an 80% spike in funding in a single year—the only other federal agency to see under President Obama's leadership the kind of funding increase of a percentage that high was our sister agency the Federal Railroad Administration and their high speed rail initiative, another public transportation investment.

So we've got a lot to be proud of but we're not sitting idly by. We all understand, and please know the FTA understands, that you are facing very difficult and tough economic times. Even with an historic federal funding boost provided through the Recovery Act, these additional federal dollars have not been enough to fully offset the challenge presented by reduced sales and property tax revenues, cuts in municipal support, fare box reductions brought about by unemployment; and rising fuel prices. FTA is mindful of the struggles that you are going through.



And as I've told my staff a number of times, we're going to look at this situation, we're going to be a player in this situation and we're going to do it with our eyes open.

I have to admit one of the things that I'm working on internally is to get FTA's research function to focus on questions that are more relevant to the here and now—more relevant to the challenges that you all face every day.

I discovered to my dismay that we actually collect as an agency quite a lot of information about operating expenses, operating challenges and we put it together in a very voluminous report; however, by the time we report the data it's already over two years old.

I can assure you that President Obama, Ray LaHood and I are much more interested in what's going on in the here and now and what we are facing in our future than knowing what happened two or three years ago.

I've now served with Secretary LaHood for over a year. It's been a great pleasure, and I can tell you he is the type of Transportation Secretary who wants to deal with facts and not fluff. He wants to deal with the realities of the here and now.

Just a few weeks ago, Secretary LaHood issued a draft strategic plan for the entire Department of Transportation. That plan has five clear and explicit strategic goals for the Department.

In my discussion this morning, I want to focus on just two of them, namely the overarching importance of safety, and our quite related strategic focus on the State of Good Repair.

The State of Good Repair goal in the Secretary's plan is not just related to transit. It also applies to highway bridges, to runways, to freight connections, and even to our air traffic control system.

But in some important respects, I think this State of Good Repair goal calls out to us in a way that must be louder, more urgent, and more compelling than it does to our modal partners.

As many of you know, last year we conducted a study at the request of a number of legislators who asked us to look specifically at the conditions and maintenance backlog of our largest rail operators. One of the legislators who requested that study was the then-Junior Senator from Illinois, Barack Obama. So we focused on it. (Laughter.)

The initial report took a look at the seven largest transit systems and concluded that they were facing a staggering state-of-good-repair shortfall of at least \$50 billion.

When I briefed Secretary LaHood on those results, he insisted that we expand the report beyond the seven largest rail operators to the entire national transit network -- fully 690 separate rail and bus systems.

Well, obviously we weren't able to survey each and every one of them, but we've done some modeling based on a sampling of data, and our study indicates now that the wider universe of transit providers is facing an estimated funding shortfall of \$78 billion.

Please keep in mind that that estimate is not about bringing the assets in the transit industry to a new, pristine condition. For the purposes of this study, assets that are defined as being in a state of good repair are those that are brought to what we called a "marginal" range. They were brought to a score of 2.5, with a score of 1 reflecting assets in poor condition and a score of 5 reflecting assets that are in excellent condition.

Indeed, the study revealed that fully 29 percent of all transit asset—almost a third—of rail, bus and paratransit assets—are in poor or marginal condition.

I first revealed these figures publicly during a speech I gave on the State of Good Repair at the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston a few weeks ago. I discuss them today, just as I discussed them in Boston, not to draw some hysterical conclusion that the sky is falling. The sky is not falling.

Thanks to your skill and professionalism and that of your employees, our rail transit systems continue to provide the safest form of surface transportation available for millions of citizens each and every day.

In fact, as I said during my speech in Boston, the general managers of our transit systems are truly the unsung miracle workers in the enterprise. So are their employees.

You're engaged in a daily, monthly and yearly balancing act. You're balancing the service needs of the riding public, the maintenance and capital needs of existing infrastructure, the political enthusiasm for further expansion and the legitimate rights of your workers to earn a decent wage.

You're balancing how you use federal capital dollars, whether they're for true capital investments or whether they're needed more immediately for preventive maintenance. You perform this balancing act in an economic environment that is truly uncertain. And you, along with your dedicated employees, still turn out service for millions of citizens each and every morning, evening, and afternoon, and through the night.

It's precisely because of the challenges presented by this balancing act that you do every day that we all must keep our eyes constantly focused on the state of good repair of our systems.

You know when I gave this speech in Boston, "Focusing on the State of Good Repair," I was critiqued by some out in the blogosphere. It raised a lot of questions. For one thing, I learned not everyone in the blogosphere reads an entire speech. (Laughter.)

But importantly, part of that critique stemmed from the fact that focusing on the state-of-good-repair backlog numbers that some of our communities that consider rail systems might more readily and more effectively consider bus rapid transit systems. I was looking not just at the cost differential of deploying those systems now, but the repair, restoration and eventual capital replacement costs of restoring those systems during the next generation. I was accused of being anti-rail, and that FTA was turning its back on rail investment. It was interesting to read, given the fact that I'd spent most of that week trying to move a \$5.5 billion rail project forward in Honolulu and a \$9 billion to \$10 billion rail tunnel under the Hudson River forward between New Jersey and New York. A critical part of the President's agenda for high-speed rail includes the rail links that will feed that system, as well as bus links.

As we've said repeatedly, the President's vision for high speed rail does not include 50 decks of parking at each rail stop.

So please know that we are not abandoning new investment, and to be concerned about the state of good repair must not mean a choice between state of good repair and investment. The fact, is we need both.

As I've said many times, growing the universe of transit riders is at the very center of President Obama's goals to reduce our dependence on oil and make meaningful cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. But we run the very real risk of slowing our progress, if we stay focused just on expanding service to new communities. One simple truth that we all know and we all must face: if we ignore deteriorating conditions in our existing transit systems, we run the very real risk of losing riders. Discomfort, inefficiency, unreliability and worries about safety drive people away.

Ironically, every study ever conducted will show that from a safety perspective, passengers are far safer riding our most fragile systems than driving the highway. But that doesn't necessarily influence the choices that commuters make.

And then, there is the fact that some riders don't have a choice. They don't own a car—most can't afford one—and they are completely dependent on the transit system to get to work, to shopping, to school, to day care.

What does deteriorating transit conditions mean to them? It means risking the loss of a job because they can't get to work on time.

It means risking their spot at the day care center because they can't pick their kid up on time.

For some parents, reliable transit service is the difference between seeing their kids awake—or not.

It's the difference between the ability to supervise homework—or not.

For some people, reliable transit is what makes it possible to work a full day and then go to school at night.

Who are these transit dependent riders?

Well, every one of you knows who they are in your own systems, but it is worth looking at nationally.

Nationally about 40 percent of transit riders have incomes of less than \$25,000 a year. But in some areas like Indianapolis, that number is in upwards of 70 percent.

More than 50 percent of IndyGo riders in Indianapolis are transit-dependent. Of those riders, 78 percent do not have a vehicle available to them. 60 percent of IndyGO riders don't even have a driver's license.

The RTD's ridership in Denver is 49 percent transit dependent. In Atlanta, it's 46 percent.

These are the passengers that have absolutely no choice but to endure whatever service we serve up, clean or dirty, convenient or inconvenient, reliable or unreliable.

This is just one of many reasons why Secretary LaHood's strategic goal to address the state of good repair of our transportation system must have special resonance with us and our transit mission.

The prevalence of transit-dependent riders in our urban centers was a central rationale behind the initiation of federal subsidies during the birthing days of UMTA. It remains to this day a critical reason to adequately fund our enterprise. This Administration will continue to make that point.

Put simply, when it comes to transit-dependent populations, the reliability of our transit systems is a central measure of whether our society truly respects and honors the contributions of all citizens.

It goes to the center of what President Obama talks about when calling for a society based on fairness and respect.

As part of my confirmation hearing a little bit more than a year ago, I expressed the concern that deferred maintenance, if deferred long enough, can become a critical safety issue.

Safety is the number one strategic goal for the entire DOT as reiterated by Secretary LaHood recently, and obviously is the top priority for the FTA as well.

In December 2009, Secretary LaHood transmitted a comprehensive transit safety bill to the House and Senate on behalf of the President. It was the first time in the history of UMTA or the FTA that any President has formally transmitted a bill to Congress solely about public transportation.

While the Administration's Safety bill is principally about rail transit safety, the bill highlights important issues that pertain to all transit operators; the need for good asset management, the need to stay on top of the state of good repair.

And we are concerned not just about passenger safety, but the safety of all transit workers as well—the operators, the mechanics, the folks who are the backbone behind the delivery of service each day.

There is no question that the tragic deadly rail accident on Washington, DC's Red Line was an important catalyst that prompted us to transmit our safety bill back in December. But at the time we were also focused on other accidents—at the MBTA in Boston, the CTA in Chicago, MUNI in San Francisco, and elsewhere.

We forwarded a very thoughtful and measured safety bill that took into consideration the outreach that Secretary LaHood had done with the entire transit community including APTA.

It is a bill that is focused on better deploying safety management systems so that each rail operator can be informed and focused on their own unique safety challenges.

Earlier I talked about the balancing act that each general manager must manage each day. Our safety bill wants to promote safety management systems and asset management practices precisely so that general managers can balance those priorities in the best informed and safest way possible.

This bill is not about substituting FTA's judgment for the judgment of the transit professionals on the ground. It's about giving those professionals the best information to make the best safety decisions, especially when money is tight.

It is not a bill designed to impose the one-size-fits-all FRA regime across all rail transit operators.

It's a bill focused on establishing reasonable minimum safety standards based on the guidance of a Transit Rail Safety Advisory Committee that will have robust representation from rail operators like those in this room.

Secretary LaHood transmitted our bill to Congress in December of last year. The ball has been in their court since then. The Congress is holding the pen.

We are now two weeks and a day away from the anniversary of the tragic Washington Metro crash. And next month, we expect to receive the final NTSB findings on that tragedy. It is time for Congress to pick up that pen and move a safety bill forward.

Every professional in this room knows that safety and the state of good repair are inextricably linked. So, with Safety as our highest priority, what is FTA doing to address the state of good repair?

Well, first and foremost, we're continuing to invest. Our 2011 budget, currently pending before Congress only increases spending by one percent over the prior's year's bill. That's not counting the Recovery Act. But importantly even in that environment of one percent growth, we have found a way to leverage eight percent growth in our funding of our new formula state-of-good-repair initiative for both rail and bus operators.

This new initiative combines both the "rail mod" and the discretionary bus program. We are also continuing to invest through our discretionary grants, and we're going to do it in record time!

We recently announced our competition for over \$750 million in SOGR discretionary bus grants. Now most of the rail operators in this room also operate bus systems.

These funds are limited to state of good repair for bus systems because they come from the bus discretionary program. But a great many of you should be participating in this competition and please know that applications are due June 18th.

Importantly, with our focus on the state of good repair, eligible projects will include acquisition of asset management systems—tools you can use to improve the management of your own capital stock.

We have other competitions going on. I'm not going to go into them in great detail, but the bottom line is FTA is putting a billion dollars in discretionary dollars on the street. That will also include a small five million dollar initiative on asset management plans that Congress specifically fenced off last year out of our research budget, because they too want us to make advances on asset management and the SOGR. We're going to put that money to work in record time.

We are doing it in part, frankly because we know the financial conditions you are setting. We did heroic work as did you in getting a record amount of money on the street through the Recovery Act—80-percent increase in a single year.

We will also set records for how quickly we will get this discretionary money on the street precisely because you need it, and need it now.

Over and above what we're doing in the FTA, we also have the Secretary's TIGER program. The DOT—this is run out of the Secretary's Office—issued a request for proposals for TIGER II. We want strong transit applications to compete for that \$600 million.

We're very pleased with the winners of the first round of TIGER grant that Secretary LaHood announced. FTA and the Secretary together were able to leverage nearly a third of that \$1.5 billion directly for transit projects. And here again, we are seeing the fruits of the confidence that Ray LaHood is showing the transit industry and the FTA.

I'd like to talk about one other issue not necessarily specific to recovery and that is the issue of FTA's obligation to deal with our grantees with clarity.

As I end my first year on this job, one thing I intend to focus on more is the overarching need to provide our grantees with clarity and consistency on what we expect.

- Clarity and consistency on what Title VI compliance really means
- Clarity and consistency on what is required under Buy America
- Clarity and consistency on what is required under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Clarity and consistency on what is required in helping Disadvantaged Business Enterprises.

This Administration and I personally, take these laws very seriously. We want and expect you to do the same.

An important part of our job is to communicate clearly. An important part of our job is to attend to these issues.

I appreciate fully that the FTA has ten regional offices. We are trying to work assiduously to not have ten different answers as to what these laws mean. Ten different interpretations on what our regulations mean. I will say that on the grant making function we have made progress in trying to establish standard operating procedures. In the future we will be working on that also for our civil rights compliance issues so that there is standardization. I should also mention that a lot of the brain power and elbow grease that went into developing the standard operating procedures so that we get consistency between our regions was brought on by Susan Schruth.

Unfortunately for us, Susan announced that she intends to retire at the end of next month, so I do want to take a moment to just thank her for her many years of service, as I will many times between now and the end of July. (Applause).

One other issue that sort of flies in the face of this notion that we are abandoning the New Starts program or giving up rail transportation: a few months ago, FTA rescinded the practice established by the former Administration that restricted funding recommendations to the President's Budget for New Starts and Small Starts projects to only those projects that received a medium or better cost-effectiveness rating.

We stated at the time that we wanted to develop a more holistic view of a prospective project's total benefits. While maintaining the importance of cost and travel times, we want to examine the environmental, economic development and other benefits of a project the very benefits that under the old regime frankly were ignored.

This past Thursday, June 3rd, FTA published in the Federal Register an ANPRM on Major Capital Investment Projects. The whole purpose of doing this as an announced proposed rulemaking was to ensure that your voices and those of all interested stakeholders are heard as we develop our new policies.

At this APTA conference, we are embarking on an intensive ANPRM outreach effort that will include about ten outreach meetings and webinars around the country. If your schedule permits it, please make sure to attend the first of these sessions tomorrow afternoon. That session will be at 1:30 tomorrow afternoon in the Georgia Room, right here in this hotel. If you can't make that session, I would encourage you to attend one of the later sessions. We will announce those on our website and in the Federal Register.

So in summary, I want to thank all of you for the service to the public that you do every day. Thanks for showing the public that the President's historic Recovery Act investment in transit has been money well spent.

In my first series of speeches when I took this job, I made the point that this President has expectation and aspirations for public transportation that his predecessor did not.

Whether it's the President's goal to reduce Greenhouse Gases, reduce our dependence on oil, make our communities more livable and improve the quality of life for the elderly so they can age at home, public transportation is at the middle of his vision.

It requires us to step up our game, it requires FTA to step up its game and it requires all of us transit providers to step up their game, even when financial times are hard. We need to do things harder and smarter. We at the FTA are determined to do so. And we look forward to partnering with you as you do the same.

So thanks for having me here today.



## **Administrator Peter Rogoff Delivers Remarks at WMATA Memorial Service - Washington, DC**

**06-22-10**

My name is Peter Rogoff, and I am President Obama's Federal Transit Administrator.

To the families, I want to express the condolences, not just of me and my family, but that of President Obama, Secretary Ray LaHood and the entire Department of Transportation family.

To the first responders we cannot say enough about the heroic response a year ago today but importantly it mirrors the heroic response that we get from them every day to keep us safe.

Each day, knowing that tens of millions of Americans are boarding our nation's buses and trains to go to work, to go to church, to go to school, I awake with the hope that it will be a safe day for our riders—a day free of injury, a day free of fear.

Tragically, for Washington's Red Line commuters, one year ago it was anything but.

To the families, I want to say, please know that we know there are days when you wake up that you can barely catch your breath knowing that your mother, your lover, your baby is not going to wake up with you.

Please know that we know. I want to assure you in the face of this tragedy that we are taking action. The President, the Secretary, the entire Department of Transportation is taking action.

I also want to say to the young Mr. McMillan , if it were not for your mother's heroic acts one tent would not be enough for this ceremony. We would need three tents, four tents, five tents to take in all of the victims' families, all of the people that want to grieve with them.

You can't say enough and we can't say enough about the heroic act of your mother and all of the family that supported her up until that moment.

The Administration is working with Congress, including members sitting right here on the dais to implement a bill calling for national rail transit safety standards—safety standards to prevent the kind of tragedy that we experienced a year ago today from ever happening again.

When President Obama transmitted this bill to Congress back in December, it was the first time a president, any president of any party, ever formally transmitted a bill to Congress solely about public transportation.

And appropriately, this first-ever initiative was about establishing national safety standards, which currently, and astonishingly, do not exist for public transit.

We all want to have a safe and worry-free commute when we travel to work, to school, to church, to the grocery store, to the doctor, to wherever we want to go.

And, importantly, we want to make sure that the workers on the front lines—our conductors, our right-of-way workers, and others—are safe as they deliver us to where we want to go and as they deliver us back home.

We all share these common goals. And if we are to truly honor those who were lost or injured—if we are truly to honor those who never came home—we must work together to bring about a safer system and a safer world.

I assure you that, at the Federal Transit Administration, we will work as hard as we can to make sure that we do not have to replicate this beautiful memorial plaque here in the Washington metro area or anywhere in the country.

We can always do better. The President is demanding that we do better, and we must do better and we will do it together.

Thank you and God bless you.

## **Grant Annoucement for Phase II of the Stamford Urban Transitway**

**7/8/2010**

### **Remarks as Prepared for Delivery**

Thank you Congressman Himes.

I am here as President Obama's Transit Administrator to announce that Stamford will be receiving \$16 million in FTA funds for the second phase of the Stamford Urban Transitway.

On behalf of the President and on behalf of Secretary Ray LaHood I want to congratulate everyone who's been involved with this project.

You've heard from many of them here this morning.

There are many people spread around the crowd who have been working on Phase I of this project, and I can tell you that there is a reason that this project is getting 10% of America's money.

We only gave away \$160 million through this particular competition, for this particular type of program.

And Stamford is getting 10% of it.

First and foremost, it's been the steady advocacy of people like Jim Hines and Chris Dodd and Joe Lieberman who have been reminding us of what a success the first phase of Stamford's Urban Transitway appears to be.

The other reality is that we are still very focused on the need to create desperately needed jobs to advance our recovery.

As folks were just telling me here on the street corner, the first phase of the Stamford Urban Transitway is almost complete and our principle goal among many is to keep these people on the job to keep them working to improve Stamford, to improve the economy of Stamford and the economy of Connecticut.

Now, this project is really emblematic; it really embodies so much of what President Obama means when he talks about economic recovery.

This is a project that is going to create hundreds of jobs right now, but is going to improve the lives of millions of people for generations to come.

These are the kind of investments that insure that folks from all parts of the spectrum of this community have a better quality of life.

There are elements about the redevelopment plans of this project that ensure the availability of affordable housing.

There are also aspects that are just about making sure that we are doing these things in an environmentally friendly way and there's aspects about this about this of improving the punishing congestion that we sometimes experience on these streets mirrored by the congestion that we see on I-95.

None of these problems are going to get solved tomorrow, certainly the congestion that we see on I-95 is not going to be solved tomorrow, but we need to continue to take steps forward to address those problems even in tough economic times.

That's what this grant program is about and because this project so embodies those goals in such a comprehensive way, that's why its getting 10% of America's money right here in Stamford.

One of the things I want to emphasize is that this project was not the Obama Administration's idea.

This project was the idea of the fathers and mothers of the City of Stamford.

It was not done not only by the elected officials sitting behind me now, but their predecessors.

What the Obama Administration did was listen.

Listen to people like Jim Himes, who has been talking to us about this project since he took office.

So I really, more than anything else, want to congratulate the people of Stamford for doing it right on Phase I.

It's doing it right on Phase I that has gotten you this money for Phase II.

The Obama Administration stands behind you in these efforts.

It's a great day for Stamford, it's a great day for Fairfield County and I just want to say congratulations to everyone.

Thank You.

###

## **Funding Announcement for Transit Hub in Syracuse, NY**

**7/8/2010**

### **Remarks as Prepared for Delivery**

Well thank you congressman.

Let me say a warm and hearty congratulations from President Obama and Secretary LaHood on this \$8.5 million announcement.

This, actually, is one of the largest grants we are making out of \$300 million in grants today and we're making it here for the transit hub in Syracuse, because you all have really gotten your work done.

As was pointed out this project has had a number of stutter steps.

But today's announcement is good news for Syracuse.

It's good news for transit riders all across Onondaga County and surrounding areas.

It's good news for the people of Centro who have worked so hard on this. It's really good news just for job creation in downtown Syracuse.

The development that you are going to see here as a result of this transit hub is going to be a more prosperous downtown that is going to yield even more jobs in the future.

Let me just say, this project is one that we've heard a lot about. But this was not a project that was a creation of the Obama administration.

It was the creation of the leaders of Greater Syracuse and Onondaga County and Centro.

This is not our idea.

This is your idea.

What the Obama administration has done is listen.

We've been listening to people like Mayor Miner, we've been listening to people like Senator Chuck Schumer, we've been listening seemingly repeatedly to Dan Muffei.

Dan Muffei has been talking to us about this project, since maybe his third day in office.

I'm not sure he even had office space before he started calling the White House and the Department of Transportation about this project --about the need to get it over the finish line --about the fact that it had money, then it lost some money, it made some steps forward, it took some steps back.

Finally with today's announcement this project takes one final step forward.  
The talk is over.

The stutter steps are over.

We're going to start building this project in the fall.

It's going to bring needed jobs to Downtown, it's going to bring needed jobs to the county and its going to leave a more prosperous Downtown when it's done.

One thing I want to emphasize is that Centro did a lot of things right.

I was talking to your executive director.

He told me that people had been debating the location of this project for a great many months and years.

Maybe even a dozen years.

I think if we chart back to the very first time that paperwork came into the Federal Transit Administration about this project, it may have been as many as a dozen years ago.

One of the things that Centro has done right, among many, is when they put in their application, they talked about inclement weather.

Now, many of you know this, but, DC just had the most snow-bound inclement winter that it has had in decades.

Centro took the extra effort to put in its application, pictures of every uncovered, unsheltered bus stop and bus passengers waiting in line in driving snowstorms.

That means a lot more to people in Washington, DC this year than it ever has before.

###

## **Grant Announcement - Mansfield, CT**

### ***Transcript of Remarks for Peter Rogoff, FTA Prepared As Delivered Grant Announcement***

**7/10/2010**

Thank you, Joe. I'm Peter and I'm President Obama's FTA Administrator and it's a great day to be in Mansfield—not just because of the weather but because it's my pleasure to bring to you the good news of the \$4.9 million grant for the Mansfield Town Center and the Intermodal Hub that's going to be a central part of that vision.

As Congressman Courtney said, folks have been working on this project for a very long time. It was part of a competition that President Obama had us put together for the DOT within the Department of Housing and Urban Development and with the Environmental Protection Agency for the purpose of trying to unify communities like this, that have a vision of transportation choices for its people.

The best part about this project is that it comes at a time where communities really need to put money to work, not just to improve the quality of life for folks but to put people to work in jobs that are desperately needed.

So this is a good day for jobs in Mansfield and it was also pointed out that this was a very very competitive procurement for about \$160 million in what we call bus livability grants.

We had over \$2 billion in applications. Connecticut did extraordinarily well in this competition.

The other day I was down in Stamford announcing a \$16 million grant for their urban transitway and now I'm sort of at the other bookend of the state announcing almost \$5 million for Mansfield.

It's because of the vision of the folks in the state and it's because of leadership from people like Congressman Courtney.

The congressman pointed out how hard the Mayor has been riding him on this project.

I can assure you that the Congressman has not let us forget about this project either.

He is right. It's a competitive process but it also helps us a great deal to have friends reminding the department of the importance of this part of the state of Connecticut.

The other thing we really like about this project is the integration with the business community.

Knowing that our dollars and the investments that the taxpayers make will yield further investments by the private sector for the greater vision for Mansfield.

This was not a project that we created down in Washington, DC. It wasn't a project created by Secretary LaHood or me.

It was a project created and envisioned by the people of this community.

What the Obama Administration has done is listened to this community and responded with the kind of seed money that will put this project over the top and get it built.

So again I want to not only commend the Congressman -- I want to thank him for his leadership on this.

Thanks to Senator Dodd and Senator Lieberman, who have also been strong advocates.

But I also want to commend the folks who really brought this vision and struggled when there was no money and it was all just a concept, and how everything's coming together, such that we're really going to see dirt being moved and we're going to see improvements for the community and we're going to see them soon.

And it's all because of their leadership that we've gotten to this point today.

So, thank you very much.

###



## **Secretary Ray LaHood Remarks: Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety**

**09-09-10**

Thank you, Peter.

Welcome, everyone, to this inaugural meeting of the Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety.

And on behalf of President Obama, thank you for lending your energy, experience, and expertise to this important group.

We're all proud that transit remains among the safest modes of transportation.

Yet it's experiencing a disturbing rise in the frequency of accidents like last June's Washington DC Metro crash.

The simple fact is that the current system with 28 separate state safety organizations - is ill-suited to manage its increasing ridership and aging trains, tracks, and ties.

So, we're working for legislative reform to ensure that transit's 10 billion passengers a year are as safe as is humanly possible.

Ten months ago, the administration sent proposed legislation to the Hill.

Unfortunately, it hasn't moved as far as we would have liked.

But we're grateful for Senators Dodd, Shelby, Menendez, and others, who unanimously passed their own version of the administration's bill out of the banking committee.

And, today, I am sending Senators Reid and McConnell a letter that urges them to bring this legislation - S. 3638 - to the floor.

We look forward to resuming our work with them soon and eventually to bringing a bill to the House.

But in the interim, we have a job to do here - and a big one at that.

Look around the room.

Some of you are safety experts.

Others are labor leaders.

Still others are executives and managers.

You hail from all across America.

Together, your charge is to draft the blueprint for the transit safety standards we will enact once Congress grants the authority.

It's a crucially important role.

So, please share your ideas.

Tell us how we can foster a culture of safety that reaches from senior managers all the way to workers on the tracks.

I've said it over and over:

Safety is our number one priority at the Department of Transportation.

Thank you again for your service in support of that mission.

## **Administrator Peter Rogoff Delivers Remarks at Dakota Transit Association - Rapid City, Dakota**

**09-28-10**

### **Remarks As Prepared for Delivery; Actual Presentations May Differ**

I am truly honored to be the first FTA Administrator in history to meet with transit industry leaders from the Dakotas at a Dakota Transit event.

One of the privileges of my job is that I get to travel to parts of the country I've never visited before.

So it really is a great treat for me to spend some time in Rapid City, however briefly.

I have two goals here today: First, to convey my deep appreciation for everything you're doing to provide safe, reliable, affordable transportation options for the citizens who proudly make their home in hundreds of small cities and towns and reservations across the Dakotas – from Williston, Bismarck, and Standing Rock in the North. . . to Mitchell, Pierre, and Pine Ridge in the South.

All of you do an incredible job under very challenging conditions and with limited resources.

I know you're ably assisted by Darin Berquist, the Secretary of South Dakota's DOT, and Francis Ziegler, North Dakota's DOT Director.

We're grateful for their leadership.

My second goal is to share with you the steps we're taking in the Obama Administration to help all of you do an even better job serving the rural communities in your jurisdictions.

You know, my boss, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, has a word he uses to describe parts of the country that people sometimes overlook.

He calls these places "Forgottonia."

I'm here to tell you today, in no uncertain terms, that Secretary LaHood and I have not forgotten the good people of North and South Dakota.

We have not forgotten that access to transportation is absolutely essential to the economic and social health of every one of your communities.

And we have not forgotten that the federal government—and especially the FTA—have an obligation to understand the challenges you face, and to work with you to provide the resources you need to overcome them.

Barb Cline tells a story about her son, Clint, that I think illustrates what so many of you and your customers are up against.

Barb's given us permission to share some of the details.

Clint is 33 and lives in Spearfish, about 50 miles north of here along I-90.

He's a husband and a father of two young children, with a third on the way.

Clint had a pretty good job with a car dealership here in Rapid City. But we all know selling cars is a tough gig these days, and understandably, Clint didn't feel he had the job security or the benefits his family needed.

So he looked around and found a new job operating heavy equipment in the coal fields in Gillette, Wyoming.

It's a good job—but he has to travel 90 miles each way, every day.

This lengthy commute not only takes Clint away from his family for long stretches.

It's enormously draining and puts tremendous wear and tear on a car that he's got to maintain.

And of course, he's not the only guy doing this. There are hundreds, maybe thousands, like him. I'm sure you know some of them.

A transit-run minivan that scoops up several workers heading from the Spearfish area to Gillette might lighten the load for people like Clint Cline.

But that takes money and equipment that Prairie Hills Transit, and other transit operators, don't have to spare right now.

My point in telling this story is that I get it.

I get that the conditions on the ground in rural America, the challenges of getting from point A to point B, are different from other places.

And I get that many of your customers are living on a fixed income, on Medicaid, and they look to all of you for a transit lifeline to bring them to the doctor's, or the dialysis center, or the hospital.

You've got a lot of ground to cover, a lot of demand-response service to organize, a lot of driver training and education to perform—and all the while, you're chasing resources so that you don't let your friends, and neighbors, and customers down.

You're in a tough business. There's no question about that.

You're also in an essential business.

Fortunately, the Obama Administration is more focused on strengthening transportation for all Americans—including rural Americans—than any other in our history.

Just last week, we awarded our last Recovery Act grant.

That's \$8.78 billion for 1,072 grants.

We met the challenge of putting every dollar to use, creating good-paying jobs now, with long-term benefits that will outlast many of us in the room.

This included \$25 million to help all the transit operators in North and South Dakota expand and modernize their service.

I know your agencies are already putting these funds to good use.

For example, River City Transit in Pierre just put South Dakota's first hybrid bus into service. They're already saving money on fuel.

Grand Forks is replacing a third of its fixed-route fleet with brand new buses.

Fargo and Sioux Falls are getting new fare collection equipment.

In Eureka, a new bus barn means transit agency staff no longer need to park in a neighbor's driveway.

And Prairie Transit is leveraging \$1.5 million in Recovery Act funds to build a new multi-purpose facility in Spearfish that will shelter buses; provide a home for maintenance, scheduling, and dispatch services; and offer on-site day care and training facilities for the community to use.

It's no accident this new building is smack in the middle of a 40-acre development offering affordable housing.

This is a very big win for the community—and a great example of the investments we're making to support livable, walkable, and sustainable communities in rural America.

You know, FTA's mission isn't too complicated. It's to understand the critical role that public transportation plays in our lives and in our communities.

Our goal is to protect it, and the people who ride it.

And that's why getting these investments out the door as quickly and efficiently as possible has been one of my top priorities.

But the Recovery Act isn't an end point—it's a down payment on your future.

Last year, FTA awarded a record-breaking \$391 million to rural transit through our regular formula-based programs.

The question now is, "What do we do from this point forward?"

The answer is, we continue to invest, and re-invest, in transit and infrastructure.

And we do it more quickly, and responsibly, than ever.

FTA is putting \$1 billion in discretionary money on the street. And we'll set records for how quickly we get it out there because we share your sense of financial urgency.

As I've said time and again, we at FTA want to take your local vision and make it real whenever, and wherever, possible.

But I want to emphasize that as we continue to invest, one of DOT's top strategic priorities going forward is to bring our current transit systems into a state of good repair.

I hardly have to tell you that keep aging, rusting buses and vans on the street long past their expiration date doesn't make for a comfortable, or necessarily safe, ride.

As you probably heard, our research on the conditions of 700 of the nation's rail and bus systems—including rural systems—indicates we need nearly \$80 billion to bring all of it into a state of good repair.

That doesn't mean we should all panic. Far from it.

Thanks to the skill and professionalism of all the transit general managers here today, and your employees, you're great at balancing the service needs of your riders against the maintenance and capital needs of your infrastructure.

That said, I'm well aware that even though our investments in rural transit are at an all-time high, your operating and capital needs are also at an all-time high.

And that's why, in the near future, we'll make \$775 million available for our State of Good Repair Bus initiative.

These funds will finance capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment, as well as the construction or rehab of bus-related facilities.

In addition, we've found a way to boost our formula state-of-good-repair funding for bus and rail operators by 8 percent in our proposed 2011 budget that's before Congress.

My bottom line is, it's our business to help all of you succeed in your business.

It's our business to invest our limited resources in the projects that help you and your customers to create and sustain livable, walkable, communities.

In closing, I want to again thank all of you for working so hard to provide a transportation lifeline that meets the needs of North and South Dakota's hard-working rural families.

Everything I've discussed today sets the stage for our future. . . a future where efficient, sustainable, integrated transportation choices are a driving force in our economy. . .a catalyst for developing vital, livable rural communities. . . and a lifeline for everyone who, by necessity or choice, does not have access to a car.

I know that times are still hard, and difficult challenges lie ahead for all of us.

But as always, if we work together to fulfill this Administration's belief in the power of transportation, then we will make a brighter future for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you.

## **Administrator Peter Rogoff Delivers Remarks at APTA Conference - San Antonio, TX**

**10-03-10**

Good morning everybody. M.P. is so adamant that everyone has this book that she's left it up here for all of us to see as she comes around.

Let me just say that it is a particularly great pleasure to be here in San Antonio.

I want to thank M.P. Carter for all of her service to APTA over the course over the last year. I will always remember quite fondly the very public debate we had at the rail conference over how you appropriately pronounce the word Cuyahoga.(applause)

I also want to congratulate Mike. I want to thank him for having the wisdom for using the name 'Subway' for his dog and not one of his children. (applause) I think everyone is better off for that.

You know over the last sixteen months I've had the great privilege as serving as the Transit Administrator, and in that time I've visited every region, of my ten regions, as well as seen transit operations and agencies all over the country. This has been the first trip that I've been able to take and bring my wife and children with me. So it's been a particularly pleasurable and exciting time for us to be down here. So, I want to thank APTA for being such a welcoming family for my family.

I also want to take a moment before I plow into my remarks to make quick mention of a member of the broader APTA family who it isn't here. That is Dr. Beverly Scott.

As many of you know, Beverly's husband Arthur had a bad stroke last week. He is recovering, but recovering slowly. Bev and Arthur are going to be going through a long haul over the next several months, and I want to ask you to keep Beverly and Arthur in your prayers for the time to come. Thank you.

It's been exactly 363 days since I first came before you as FTA Administrator at an APTA meeting.

In that time, I think it's fair to say, we've all lived through Charles Dickens' famous opening lines, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair. . ."



On the one hand, the Obama Administration has demonstrated a greater commitment to strengthening and modernizing America's transportation systems than any Administration, really, in decades.

Who could have imagined, at the tail end of the Bush years, that revitalizing transportation and infrastructure would become a true centerpiece of the national economic recovery effort?

The last time this played out on such a scale, Dwight Eisenhower was in the White House, the interstate highway system was just on the drawing board. I was in diapers, and Rich Steinmann was in his 23rd year of Federal Service. (applause and laughter)

So, who could have imagined, just a few short years ago, the transit providers around this country would get their hands on close to \$8.8 billion in supplemental funds?

The FTA's share of Recovery Act dollars was a whopping 80 percent funding boost over our usual annual funding level—nearly two years of funding rolled into one.

That 80 percent figure is, really, larger than any other mode received within DOT. It's an extraordinary statement I believe on the importance that President Obama attaches to our public transit mission. Really, the only other element of any Federal agency that came close to getting a percentage of that kind was the Federal Railroad Administration's new high-speed rail initiative, another form of public transportation.

On top of that, Secretary LaHood's new TIGER program awarded fully one-third of its \$1.5 billion dollars to transit-related projects. And we're very proud of that.

Just last week, FTA awarded its last Recovery Act grant.

We met the challenge of putting every dollar to work. Using it creatively for creating good-paying jobs with long-term benefits that are going to improve the quality of life in a great many communities for many generations to come.

You, the nation's public transit agencies, are the key conduit through which we at the FTA reach our customers - the transit riders of America. I hope by now that you all know how much we at the FTA appreciate your help in making the Recovery Act such a success, but I think it's important, to just once again, on behalf of the President and the Secretary and all of the FTA, thank you, for making this all work so successfully in such a short period of

time.

While the good news regarding the Recovery Act is hard to beat, exactly four weeks ago today we received even better news, in my view.

On Labor Day, President Obama stood up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and reminded all of us who care deeply about transportation why this is—and will be—the best of times for all the families and businesses that want America to invest in modern bus and rail systems for the 21st Century.

President Obama proposed a \$50 billion-dollar up-front investment as part of a six-year plan to rebuild 150,000 miles of road, build and maintain 4,000 additional miles of rail, and restore 150 miles of runways, and invest in bus systems all across America.

Mike pointed out that I served in the Senate for 22 years, and in that time I've had the benefit of working on every surface transportation reauthorization bill since ISTEA in 1991. So I would like to take a few minutes and, just, in my view, unpack what I think the President's Labor Day announcement means for us. Not just us at the FTA, but all of us, collectively, in advancing public transportation.

First, his announcement, as you dig into the details, not only of what he said, but the material that the White House released on that day his commitment is truly to a multimodal intermodal surface transportation bill. This is not an effort to reauthorize a highway bill with just a few tangential sections way in the back pertaining to public transportation. To the contrary, the Administration views this new commitment as an opportunity to address head on the goals that President Obama has been articulating since day one. Goals like reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing our dependence on oil, and improving Americans' quality of life through investments built around livability principles. Our public transit mission is at the very heart of each of those goals, and you should expect public transit to be at the very heart of the Administration's new authorization bill.

Second, the commitment is for a predictable funding source. The President articulated his commitment to a six year authorization bill. That means we're committed to nailing down predictable funding streams over the next six years so all of you can go to bed at night knowing you can keep the lights on the next day. You can rest easy knowing that buses, trolleys, and rail cars will keep moving. Workers will still be on the job. Passengers will get the service they need and deserve. Routes will stay open.

It's a commitment that returns us to the days when you can plan more than a year in advance based on a predictable Federal funding stream.

Third, and, I think, very importantly the President committed the Administration to working with Congress to find the necessary financing so this authorization will be fully paid for.

Given the tough economic times were in, you cannot overstate the importance of this commitment. Both the Administration and Congress have some very good ideas on how to improve and modernize our surface transportation programs. We at DOT have been in an ongoing dialogue with Chairman Oberstar, Mr. Mica about the details of their draft. I think, as many of you recognize, the real challenge in reauthorization moving forward has been the collective political will to talk about how we're going to pay for it.

And that is something the President has committed this Administration to engaging in -- in a much more meaningful way.

With both the highway account and the transit account of the trust fund requiring continuing transfers of general funds just to cover its monthly bills it will be essential for us to reach consensus on how we are going to finance our future. And if we don't succeed in financing our future and we don't succeed in getting consensus in this area we're not going to be able to put all of those good ideas for the next authorization bill in place.

Fourth, and importantly, we're talking about an infusion of an additional \$50 billion dollars up front. The President is focused fully on our current economic and employment challenges that we face, not just in the public transit area but also in highway construction. He's asked the Congress to jumpstart this six year bill with a \$50 billion dollar infusion of funding over and above current funding levels. And he's asking for that infusion now.

This is really a statement about addressing the concern that many of us have, and that is with the economy in its current circumstance, where are we going to be when the Recovery Act dollars run out? The President's answer is a \$50 billion dollar infusion as part of this reauthorization package, and I look forward to APTA joining with us in marching on Congress for getting a successful outcome. [Applause]

Last year when I spoke at this meeting I said that I believed our performance in obligating Recovery Act dollars would strongly influence how Congress views public transportation in the Reauthorization debate. Thankfully, your record has been exemplary. You've put these dollars to excellent use, and done so quickly. So now as the

President puts forward his reauthorization proposal he's asking for another infusion of dollars to maintain our progress and keep workers on the job.

Fifth, and finally, and I think very importantly, we're committed to tackling long deferred investments. The Administration's plan includes, as many of you know, the establishment of a multi-modal infrastructure bank to leverage federal dollars and focus on investments of national and regional significance.

Here again, public transit is in the middle of the thinking on that proposal. The model for this bank really is derived from the Secretary's TIGER program. As I mentioned before, fully one third of the first round of TIGER grants went to public transit purposes. It's an opportunity to really produce major investments. It is a vision for an infrastructure bank that includes exciting opportunities for some of the largest and most important transit investment needs. The kind of investments that have had to be deferred year after year after year because of inadequate funding.

This obviously gets to the very important issue of the state of good repair of our systems. It's an issue that, I think, many of you know is one of the Secretary's five strategic goals for the entire Department not just for transit, really, but for all modes.

Today, I'm pleased to say, we're announcing the recipients of \$776 million dollars in State-of-Good-Repair Bus grants, or SGR for short.

The Secretary and I will be holding a conference call in a couple of hours with the press announcing those grants.

You've all done a heroic job balancing the service needs of your riders against the maintenance and capital needs of our systems.

But we can't ignore the deteriorating conditions in many cases of our existing transit systems.

And these grants that we are making today are a down-payment on the industry's long standing fix-it list.

Importantly, these grants are also a source of jobs for skilled workers and suppliers around the country.

Bill spoke earlier about concerns about the order book at many of our suppliers and we share that concern.

These grants will help transit providers also learn how put together realistic long-term asset management plans. Something we highlighted as a priority in this solicitation and we're pleased to have a good number of applications for that function.

Most importantly, these grants will enable millions of riders to fully enjoy clean, modern, comfortable buses—many with free Internet access.

With these grants, you'll see transit providers get funds they need to replace 90-year-old maintenance facilities – some of them are even older than that. There going to buy new buses for under-served rural areas. They're going to put clean, fuel-efficient hybrid buses on the street in some of our most polluted cities.

In total today we are announcing 152 projects in 45 states. [Applause]

And it's very welcome news for all the transit-dependent bus riders who sometimes have to endure delays caused by break-downs, or spend time in stations or shelters constructed before they were born.

Whenever you have winners in a discretionary grant program, you're going to have losers, but I would point out that our budget for 2011 boosts our state of good repair funding by 8 percent. That budget is currently pending before Congress, but that's an 8 percent boost in an overall budget that just boosts annual funding one percent.

This is the kind of priority that I think you can expect to see out of our Administration on the state of good repair challenge both in annual appropriations requests but also in our upcoming reauthorization proposal.

I also just want to take a moment to talk about safety which as you all know is DOT's number one priority. I have obviously, in my many years observing policy making in transportation, I've heard many Administrations talk about safety as their number one priority, but I could tell you that under Secretary LaHood's leadership we live and breathe it every day.

Deputy Secretary Porcari has headed up the revived safety council for the Department. It really has been a great exercise in bringing all of the modes together to help inform each other's safety decisions. And, also address some of those issues, related to safety, that are really cross cutting across DOT modes. Issues like fatigue, hours of service, sleep apnea, some of the broader challenges that the NTSB has put before us that really, there is no modal solution, there is no modal answer. It's an issue that all of us need to tackle together.

As many of you know, back in December, Secretary LaHood transmitted to Congress, for the first time ever, really, a legislation that would establish national rail transit safety standards and come up with long-term approaches for measuring and evaluating good asset management.

We're very proud of that accomplishment. It was the first piece of

legislation that any president, in any administration, transmitted to Congress that was solely about public transportation, and appropriately, it was about safety.

We're also very pleased that the Senate Banking Committee unanimously passed a safety bill back in June. While it differed in some respects from the Administration's proposal, it includes the core components that will put us all on a better path for improved safety.

In the current poisonous political environment, which I am sure you've read about, the fact that we had a unanimous bipartisan vote and committee to report that bill, we take, as not only, a very strong sign of the importance that Congress attaches to this function, but also an important sign of confidence in the FTA that we are up to the task.

I want to thank Chairman Dodd, Ranking Member Shelby, Subcommittee Chairman Menendez, and all the other members that have worked on that legislation.

I can promise you, we are going to continue to work with the leadership in Congress until this bill gets done, and I know that we can count on APTA, and I'm very grateful for, not only, the recommendations that APTA has forwarded to us on how to improve that legislation, but also for their support of the legislation as it continues to move through the process.

So, I think I've made the case as to why this is the best of times for public transportation.

But Secretary LaHood and I understand why, for many of you—and for hard-working Americans everywhere—it's also, in some cases, the worst of times.

Nationwide, unemployment rates are still way too high. Too many families are struggling to put food on the table.

Poverty rates are way too high.

And we know full well that every public transit agency in this country continues to face an array of cutbacks as tax revenues falls.

I think, more than anything else, what I'm trying to tell you is that we do understand what is going on out there. It is very easy for me to get up here and make a very optimistic speech, but we do know what is going on with municipal revenues, we do know what is going on with sales tax revenues.

We have agencies out here in the audience that actually depend, in part, on property transfer tax revenues. And we all know what's happened in that

market.

So we are not living with our head in the sand on these factors. It's a large part of what lies behind that \$50 billion dollar infusion that the President is calling for.

And, unfortunately, as I mentioned poverty rates are now unfortunately at historic highs over the last decade. We all know that transit-dependent riders suffer the most, and have the most to lose at times, under these very difficult circumstances.

I know, for example, that right here in San Antonio, VIA was forced to eliminate its overnight Starlight bus service last year.

It's no secret why such cuts were necessary.

But that doesn't make them any less painful.

Cuts like that are especially hard on those who don't own a car and must depend on overnight service to get to a 4 a.m. shift at the hotel, the diner, or the hospital.

Even with that I remain optimistic.

VIA will be one of the agencies that we'll be giving a state of good repair grant to this afternoon. (applause)

I should point out that that is strictly coincidental, that the meeting is here and that VIA is getting a grant. (laughter) Justin Augustine, since he's hosting the conference next year thinks that I'm arriving with a check next year for him. It's not true.

But my real message is that we fully understand what is going on out there and our solution is to continue to invest, continuing to work with you on policies that work for the current day, for the current economic circumstance. And not get caught in a paradigm based on old realities in public transit.

When Mike talked about me going around and visiting the committee meetings, as part of the APTA meetings, as I have in the past, it is in part to have that dialogue. I always find that it's always great to get up here and give a speech but what is most important, frankly, is our conversations in the hallway about what 's going on. I am grateful to each and every one of you for informing us as to what life is like and how you can help us best reach our customers.

So together, we'll continue building on the forward-looking policies, programs, and legislative agenda that this Administration, this Congress, and Secretary LaHood, have all put in motion.

I do want to say that I am very grateful that we still have 13 more months of Bill Millar. We're going to need his leadership and his enthusiasm.  
[Applause]

These are going to be an extraordinarily challenging 13 months for all of us as we go through an authorization that will set the stage for really the next 6 years, if not beyond.

So, like I said, as Dickens noted in that famous opening passage of *A Tale of Two Cities*, "we had everything before us."

Under President Obama's and Secretary LaHood's leadership, I believe that we still do have everything before us.

The FTA's mission—to protect and invest in public transit for all Americans—will continue to thrive.

Again I want to thank you for hosting me. I want to thank you for hosting my family.

I look forward to spending some time with all of you in the next couple days.

Be well. [Applause]



## **Administrator Peter Rogoff Delivers Remarks at VIA Transit - San Antonio, TX**

**10-04-10**

Administrator Peter Rogoff Remarks at  
VIA Transit for Grant Announcement - \$7 Million  
State of Good Repair Grants - San Antonio, TX  
October 4, 2010

Thank you Congressmen, good afternoon everybody.

This truly is a great day for transit in Bexar County in San Antonio.

It's a great day for cleaner air for the children of Bexar County in San Antonio. It's a great day for the workers of VIA and the riders of VIA.

I'm pleased on behalf of President Obama and Secretary LaHood to announce the award of \$7.1 million to VIA, the largest federal grant that they've ever received (applause).

VIA and the people of San Antonio are receiving this money because they deserve it. They deserve it because as the Congressman pointed out they've been doing a lot with very little in keeping their buses on the road, on servicing the people of the community and that in an area of growth such as this there's a lot more that needs to be done. It all can't happen on the backs of the workers of VIA as hard as they work. President Obama and Secretary LaHood...the President was a regular transit rider...he knows the importance of regular reliable bus service to the quality of life of everyday Americans.

The transit riders of America want bus service that is clean and safe but more than anything else they need bus service that is reliable.

Reliable bus service means getting to work on time, it means picking up your kid at daycare on time, it means being able to get home on time and supervise homework and having a family life. It's real essential to the quality of life for people of the community. That can't happen out of thin air.

It requires resources, it requires the resources that are put together by the rate payers of San Antonio and Bexar County, it's required through public grants whether they're federal grants, state grants, local grants, it's a partnership.

And we're just very pleased to be here to be an essential partner today to help move transit in San Antonio forward.

As I pointed out we have a great challenge as a nation when it comes to the state of good repair of our transit systems.

We did a study last year that revealed that nationwide when you include both rail systems and bus systems we've got a deferred maintenance backlog of \$78 billion and as the workers of VIA and almost any transit agency in America will tell you, some of these maintenance type investments are the ones that often get put aside year after year after year. They're expensive, they're not just something that the passengers see on a daily basis but they are essential for us to turn out service that's reliable and safe. That's what these investments are going to do.

That's what this \$7.1 million is going to do for transit riders in San Antonio.

So on behalf of the President, on behalf of Secretary LaHood I again want to commend the leadership of the workers and the leadership of VIA. I also want to point that these are the very kinds of investments that we're also making through our Recovery Act.

Public transit, also part of the recovery act, saw an 80% increase in funding in a single year. That came as a result of the leadership that the President has shown, the importance that the President has attached to public transportation - it's also a function of the importance that the Appropriations Committees of the House and Senate of which Mr. Rodriguez is a member, attached to our programs.

I want to commend both Congressman Gonzalez and Congressman Rodriguez for their courageous vote in providing this funding and providing funding under the recovery act so we can continue to move public transit forward in Bexar County in San Antonio.

Thanks very much (applause).

## **Administrator Peter Rogoff Delivers Remarks at Bonneville Transit Center Grand Opening - Las Vegas, NV**

**10-25-10**

### **Remarks As Prepared for Delivery; Actual Presentations May Differ**

I'm delighted to be here in Las Vegas, a legendary city with an enviable knack for reinventing itself to meet the needs and challenges of every generation.

Today we're celebrating a new chapter in Southern Nevada's evolution as a transit-friendly Sun Belt community.

The Bonneville Transit Center plays a starring role in the redevelopment and revitalization of downtown Las Vegas. This thoughtfully designed, environmentally sustainable

facility is a magnet for commuters, tourists, and bicyclists who'd like to be able to get around without having to drive everywhere. It will go a long way to help Las Vegas become a more walkable, livable city—one with less traffic congestion and cleaner air for all of us to breathe.

The center is also a lynchpin in the effort to bring more convenient and accessible bus rapid transit service into downtown Las Vegas—making it easier than ever to reach the Strip and other major employment centers without a car.

And it's a great example of the Obama Administration's commitment to creating the jobs America's workers need today, while building the new transportation infrastructure our cities need for tomorrow.

The Department of Transportation was proud to provide a 5.5 million-dollar boost from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, on top of the nearly \$12 million my agency, FTA, had already provided, to send this project over the finish line.

These investments helped create many, many good construction jobs in Las Vegas at a time when construction workers were especially hard hit by the sharp economic downturn.

Everyone in Las Vegas should take great pride in this modern transportation hub. It may not be as flashy as the casinos up the road, but it goes a long way to improve the quality of life for millions of Valley residents.

And I'd like to note that our commitment here is part of a series of strategic investments we've made over the last year to help bring more good

transportation choices to Nevadans, create new jobs, and spur this region's economy recovery.

Just recently, we provided \$8 million dollars to replace many of the aging buses serving the Valley, and bring local transit systems into a state of good repair. In July, we delivered \$2.7 million for a transit center at the state university's Las Vegas campus.

And last February, we delivered \$34 million to develop the Sahara Avenue bus rapid transit corridor.

Thank you, Senator Reid, Representative Berkley and Representative Titus, and all the transportation and business leaders here today for your great support for all these initiatives.

You share our view that transportation is a major driver in our economy—and Nevada needs to continue to modernize and enhance its transportation systems for the 21st century and keep its economy growing.

And there's still much more to come.

President Obama has laid out a bold new vision for the future of America's infrastructure – starting with a \$50 billion upfront investment in better transit, roads, rails, and airports – which we hope Congress will adopt when it gets back to business.

Ultimately, everything we do reflects a fundamental recognition: Americans can still build great things not just in spite of enormous economic challenges, but as the means of overcoming them.

Las Vegas lives by this principle, every day, and will continue to do so for years to come.

Thank you for all your hard work, and we'll continue to be your partners as we build the sustainable infrastructure America needs to thrive and compete in the 21st century.

## **Administrator Peter Rogoff Delivers Remarks for the Dallas Green Line Opening - Dallas, TX**

**12-03-10**

### **Remarks As Prepared for Delivery; Actual Presentations May Differ**

Congratulations on the grand opening of the DART Green Line extension.

It's great to be here to witness first-hand the transformation that's now under way across Dallas.

Obviously, this city and its suburbs were designed to accommodate the automobile. The car has been king here for nearly a century.

And yet today, Dallas is fast becoming one of the most transit-oriented major cities in America.

And while cars and pick-up trucks will always be a way of life here, there's no question that adding more transit makes life better for millions of residents.

More transit makes it possible for commuters to spend less time stuck in traffic on the freeway, and more time with their families at home.

More transit makes it easier for families on a budget, and young people just starting out, to go looking for work without a car—and when they land jobs, they know there's a guaranteed ride available to get them there and back.

And more transit means more jobs and economic opportunity for Dallas.

Expanding this light rail line to the northwest and southeast of the central business district opens the door to new commercial and residential development in abandoned freight corridors and other under-used parcels that are ripe for public and private investments.

In fact, the DART Rail System estimates it's responsible for roughly \$7 billion in current, planned and projected transit-oriented development.

The Green Line expansion alone includes major projects such as Ambrose at Baylor University Medical Center Station and Cityville at Southwestern Medical District/Parkland Station.

And the city has wisely established development zones to spur new commercial activity near the brand new Carrollton and Farmers Branch stations.

We're confident this is just the beginning—and it's a sure sign that Dallas' investment in public transportation today will pay dividends for decades to

come, as businesses, entrepreneurs, and residents take advantage of the access transit provides.

As the DART website proclaims, “The Green Line changes everything.”

FTA is tremendously proud to be your partner in this project.

Four years ago, we delivered \$700 million dollars to help DART break ground on this light rail expansion.

Last year, as part of this package, we accelerated the delivery of over \$78 million to help move this project toward completion as quickly as possible, thanks to a boost from the Recovery Act.

And it’s good to see that DART has really delivered—completing the work on time and under budget.

I want to thank all the elected officials, business leaders, and transit advocates here today for helping to make this project such a success—and for keeping public transportation growing along with Dallas itself.

We continue to believe the federal government has an important role to play in making resources available so that major metropolitan regions like Dallas can provide safe, clean, reliable transportation options.

That’s why, in addition to our substantial commitment to light rail here, we’ve also recently provided \$5 million dollars to enable DART to put new clean-fuel buses on city streets and bring its vehicles into a state of good repair.

And it’s why DOT has invested millions of dollars not only to repair and improve area roadways, but also to build three new bicycle and pedestrian paths in and around Dallas, so families can get out of their cars and enjoy the fresh air, sunshine, and parklands that help make this city so livable.

In closing, you can be sure that FTA and the DOT will work closely with President Obama and the leadership in Congress to address our transportation challenges in a bipartisan way—so we may continue to invest, and re-invest, in the transportation systems our country needs to move forward and compete with the rest of the world.

Thank you.

## **Administrator Peter Rogoff Delivers Remarks at the Interlink T.F. Green Airport - Warwick, Rhode Island**

**12-06-10**

### **Remarks As Prepared for Delivery; Actual Presentations May Differ**

It's great to be back in Rhode Island.

This is the latest in a series of trips I've made to the state in the year-and-a-half since I was confirmed as FTA Administrator. I keep returning because I'm excited to see the tremendous impact public transportation has on the quality of life in this region.

Last year, I joined Secretary LaHood in Providence to preview plans for the region's public transportation projects.

I was also here last August to the ground-breaking of the Wickford Junction/North Kingston Station, extending commuter rail service by 20 miles into southern Rhode Island. FTA provided \$18 million toward that project, including a boost from the Recovery Act.

I didn't personally attend the opening of the InterLink inter-modal transit facility, but we do have a stake, since the U.S. Department of Transportation funded more than half the project, with over \$166 million in direct investments and loans.

Today, I'm back again to celebrate the culmination of those earlier investments—an extension of the MBTA's existing commuter rail service, which now brings you from Boston or Providence directly to the InterLink facility.

Taken together, these projects add up to an integrated passenger rail system that connects millions of residents with jobs and opportunities in two major New England cities. . . a system that offers travelers a seamless way to move from trains to buses to planes to automobiles. . . a system that takes more cars off the congested I-95 corridor and Rhode Island's Route 4.

These carefully planned investments make southern New England more livable than ever, while generating hundreds and hundreds of good-paying construction industry jobs that are helping many families make it through the recession.

This is also a great example of two neighboring states working together to benefit millions of travelers and workers who cross their borders every day.

There's no question, this is a big win for the region, and we're very proud to be a part of it.

It's also a clear reflection of the Obama Administration's commitment to strengthening passenger rail service and other forms of public transportation across the country, including New England.

Over the last 22 months, FTA has awarded Rhode Island more than \$39 million dollars in Recovery Act funds to modernize transit facilities around the state. And earlier this year, FTA awarded over \$700,000 to help the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority put more brand new clean-fuel buses on the streets of Providence, linking major employment centers and schools throughout the city.

And there's still more to come. For instance, FTA recently approved funds for preliminary engineering toward construction of a new commuter rail station in Pawtucket, with a request for additional funding still under consideration.

I want to thank all the elected officials, business leaders, and transit advocates here today for helping to make all these projects such a success.

Working together, we'll keep public transportation growing in Rhode Island, and keep New Englanders connected.

Thank you.