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Transit Update from Washington, DC

01-21-10

[Transit Update Presentation in Washington, DC \(PowerPoint\)](#)

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Listening Session

03-08-10

Deputy Administrator Therese McMillan
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Listening Session
Hartford, CT

Thank you for that introduction, and thank you for being here today to provide your input on Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program.

On behalf of Secretary Ray LaHood, it is truly my pleasure to be here today. I am eager to hear your thoughts on the structure of the new Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program.

As, the Deputy Administrator for the Federal Transit Administration, I know that transit plays a vital role in enhancing community livability and environmental and energy sustainability. Having spoken at numerous events around the country on this subject, I am keenly aware that it resonates with all corners of America—urban, suburban and rural. In developing a truly national policy on livability and sustainability we need to be mindful that it must be relevant across that full spectrum.

I'd like to take a few moments to update you on the progress that we have made in these and other areas in recent months. Specifically, I would like to address the DOT's TIGER program, Livability and Sustainability initiative; our revised New Starts criteria; and how those support regional planning.

TIGER Program

In February 2010 on the anniversary of the Recovery Act, President Obama and Secretary LaHood announced the award of \$1.5 billion to 51 projects across the country. As a flagship, truly multi-modal discretionary program, DOT received \$60 billion dollars in requests for only \$15.billion available—indicative of the pent-up demand for creative projects, and a new way of evaluating them.

There was a cross-section of modes represented:

- 26.5 % for Highways
- 34.0% for Transit
- 33.0% for Freight
- 3.5% for Bike and Pedestrian improvements
- 2.0% for Intermodal projects

This wide mix reflects, in part, that Livability was a core criterion in the evaluation process, and EPA and HUD were partners in assessing that factor among the candidates. In all, DOT estimates that 22 of the 51 projects selected have some direct bearing on improving the nature of the communities where they are located.

With the FY 2010 appropriations providing another \$600 million for “TIGER 2”, we have a chance to extend the good work that was initiated with this new program.

Livability

Livability really has been a core objective of many FTA programs for years!

Recent adoption of the FY 2010 budget advances FTA’s core existing programs that support community livability and environmental sustainability.

Formula programs are the bread and butter of FTA, but they generally get short shrift in the public limelight.

Beyond getting our formula funds out the door, helping transit agencies maintain existing capital , and keep it in a State of Good Repair so it is reliable and safe, is one of the KEY things we can do to SUSTAIN the ridership that we already have, and ATTRACT new riders.

We can also sustain and increase ridership, and create more livable communities, by providing targeted technical assistance for transit-oriented and joint development, which I’ll talk about later.

New Starts

New Starts is another key program that supports livability, as well as many other mobility objectives (like congestion reduction), by helping communities increase their transit options.

For the FY 2011 New Starts recommendations, we have recommended a full funding grant agreement for the Hartford/new Britain Busway. The overall cost of the project is \$573 million, with \$275 million recommended as the federal share.

As you might imagine for this extremely competitive program, the basis for selecting these New Starts projects is the subject of on-going interest and debate! As you know, in January 2010, we announced a significant policy shift in our New Starts program. With President Obama’s and Secretary LaHood’s leadership, we effectively rescinded the cost-effectiveness pass/fail threshold instituted in 2005. That threshold severely limited FTA’s ability to adequately consider the full range of benefits New Start candidate projects would provide, particularly as they pertain to transit-related growth and economic development, as part of the project selection process.

We will be pursuing rule-making to reframe cost-effectiveness in a much broader way, and we welcome your input and comments in that effort.

Other FTA livability programs

There's always a lot of emphasis on New Starts...so I want to take a moment to draw your attention to some other programs that support livable communities.

For example, in December 2009 we issued a NOFA for two types of transit projects: Urban Circulator Livability projects, and Bus Livability projects.

- \$130 million for Urban Circulator Livability projects, including streetcars.
- \$150 million for Bus Livability projects.

Proposals have been received, and we are targeting spring 2010 for award of these grants.

The project selection criteria for both programs focus on livability, environmental sustainability, and leveraging of other federal funding from HUD and EPA (our Sustainable Community Partners).

Finally, we are continuing a long tradition of working with our local partners to advance livability concepts within our existing programs.

Recent actions and new information

Bike and pedestrian policy

We issued proposed policy statement in FR on Nov. 13th to expand the catchment area around transit stations and stops - to 3 miles for bikes and ½ mile for pedestrians - for eligible projects. Comments were due Jan. 12th. We are now reviewing them.

TOD

We are continuing our work with the Center for Transit Oriented Development (CTOD) to provide technical assistance resources for communities and regions implementing TOD.

Given our focus on preserving and increasing affordable/mixed income housing near transit, we worked with the CTOD to publish a guide book for local government on developing mixed-income housing around transit stations and along transit corridors.

We are also working with CTOD to develop two interactive, web based tools: the TOD Database AND the Mixed Income TOD Action Guide. Both will debut soon!

In addition, we've updated FTA's livability website with helpful case studies and resources.

FTA wants to help you plan and implement Smart Growth and TOD in regional settings....and we've got great technical assistance and training programs that you can tap into, such as:

The joint FTA/FHWA Transportation Planning Capacity Building (TPCB) Program, which features our peer exchange program.

Training courses offered by the National Transit Institute (NTI) and the National Highway Institute (NHI), including:

1. Transit Oriented Development,
2. Coordinated Transportation and Land Use Planning,
3. Context Sensitive Solutions in a Multi-Modal Environment

Federal Support for Regional Planning

FTA is at the forefront of supporting livable, sustainable communities. We are role models for intermodal partnership. Our Transportation Planning program is jointly funded by FHWA and FTA. We enable local leadership. Through a new partnership with EPA, we provide technical assistance to locals through the Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program.

We encourage development around transit investments, and recognize that complementary transportation modes support access to stations.

Just as we have partnered here today to hear your thoughts and ideas, the USDOT is committed to working with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency to support cooperative regional planning efforts that integrate housing, transportation, environmental impact and economic development.

Opening Remarks at the Kansas City Training Meeting

03-23-10

Deputy Administrator Therese McMillan Opening Remarks at the Kansas City Region VII Training Meeting

Thank you for that introduction Mokhtee.

And I want to thank the FTA Region VII staff and Pat Weaver of the Kansas University Training Center for their hard work in putting this event together.

I'm delighted to be here in the Midwest or as Mokhtee likes to refer to it as the "MINK" (Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas) Region" on behalf of President Obama and Secretary LaHood.

This tri-annual meeting provides you, our urban and rural grantees the opportunity to have face-to-face training on FTA programs and initiatives. It is also an opportunity for you to meet, network and exchange ideas with one other.

Before I began I want to recognize Ron Straight, Transportation Manager, for the Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas, Inc.

He is retiring after 20 years in the trucking industry and over 19 years in public transportation. In addition, I understand that he also serves as his State's representative for the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA).

Ron, I know you probably have plans to take a little time off to relax and enjoy your family, but if you get bored I know we could use your 30+ years of transportation experience at the USDOT headquarters in Washington, DC.

Speaking of USDOT, I want to begin by saying what an exciting time it is to be in the world of transportation, especially those of you here in the Midwest.

Many of you opened your mailbox last Monday hoping to find your federal income tax return (pause for laughter) but instead, found an envelope from the U.S. Census Bureau.

As much as we all could use a little extra money right now, the census survey is just as important as any refund you may get and you will actually see the return on this investment for years and years to come.

In addition to determining the number of seats Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas will occupy in the U.S. House of Representatives, the data

collected will assist determining where to build schools, hospitals and other community services.

But for those of us in the business of moving people, the census is even more important.

It will influence how more than \$400 billion dollars of federal funding each year will be spent on infrastructure and essential services like public transportation, bridges, tunnels, and other public emergency services.

When you do the math, it's easy to see what an accurate count of residents can do for your community.

BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE.

MORE SERVICES.

A BRIGHTER TOMORROW.

Speaking of tomorrow...let me share the vision for transportation in the coming years.

The USDOT's FY2011 Budget requests a total of \$79 million, a nearly \$2 billion or 2% increase in funding.

The requests target the Administration's three key priorities:

1. improving transportation safety
2. investing for the future and
3. promoting livable communities.

In FY2011, FTA proposes to restructure its programs and accounts to reflect the Administration's commitment to strengthen public transportation safety oversight, bring bus and rail transportation infrastructure to a state of good repair, provide increased mobility and livability in local communities and protect the environment.

Tomorrow, FTA's resident Budget and Policy "guru" Bob Tuccillo will be your luncheon speaker. He will provide a more in-depth look into the proposed budget and what the future of transit programs may look like as a result of the new budget.

As I said earlier, fostering "livable communities" is a key aspect of President Obama's budget, an aspect that we see is alive and well in America's heartland.

Livability Lives in the Midwest

Over the past 50 years, public officials and urban planners developed our communities around the automobile at the expense of pedestrians, cyclists, and most importantly the environment.

Now, the agenda has shifted and new policies and initiatives govern the direction of growth of our rural and urban communities.

This Administration is about ACTION and taking action is exactly what Secretary LaHood did when he arrived in Kansas City last month to announce \$1.5 billion in TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grants, including \$50 million for the Kansas City region alone.

The grants were funded by federal stimulus dollars as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

There is no better project that highlights the positive effect that ARRA is making here on Main Street than the Green Impact Zone in Kansas City, Missouri.

What a phenomenal demonstration of the possibilities becoming reality when government officials and stakeholders partner with the community in an effort to concentrate resources for the greater good.

This project has become a national model of how a federal investment will assist a community in an economic decline and transform the same 150 square blocks into a thriving, sustainable neighborhood.

The \$26.2 million economic investment in the Green Impact Zone will pay for improvements to sidewalks, curbs, streets, streetscapes and transit facilities.

Funding will also be used for housing rehabilitation, weatherization programs, job training and placement and health and wellness programs.

This is a clear indication of how transit is playing a key role in livability in the Nation and specifically here in the MINK region.

However, the one thing this Administration has learned is that transit is just one piece to a much larger puzzle and by itself, cannot effectively change and reshape people's lives.

Sustainable Communities Partnership

That is why in 2009 Secretaries of DOT, HUD, and EPA announced a Sustainable Communities Partnership agreement to help American families in all communities—urban and rural—by better coordinating Federal investments for transportation, housing, economic development and environmental protection.

The departments are committed to six guiding principles:

1. Providing more transportation choices that decrease household costs, reduce dependency on foreign oil, improve the environment;
2. Promoting equitable affordable housing that expand housing location choices to increase mobility and lower housing and transportation costs;
3. Enhancing economic competitiveness through reliable access to employment, education & services;

4. Supporting existing communities by targeting Federal funding to revitalization efforts in those communities;
5. Coordinating policies and investments to remove Federal barriers to effective programs at the local level; and
6. Valuing the uniqueness of communities and neighborhoods by investing in safe, healthy, and walkable neighborhoods—urban and rural.

The Partnership is intended to align HUD, DOT, and EPA programs to:

- Encourage integrated planning that addresses livability, affordability, and environmental excellence;
- Engage in joint research and outreach efforts that directly support local communities;
- Knock down government and interdepartmental barriers;
- And most importantly, maximize the benefits of their combined Federal investments in our communities.

As a result of this partnership, EPA, HUD, and DOT selected Iowa City, Iowa to be one of five sustainable community pilot projects in the United States.

EPA awarded the grant for this project to ensure that housing and transportation goals are met while simultaneously protecting the environment, promoting equitable development, and helping to address the challenges of climate change

In Region VII, the FTA Regional Office, HUD and EPA have already begun working together to move forward this most important initiative.

On Thursday, there will be a plenary session led by FTA's Regional Administrator and regional representatives of HUD and EPA.

I hope that many of you will be able to attend this session. It will provide an in-depth overview of the partnership and allow you to see the new levels of Federal cooperation that have will help deliver the integrated transportation solutions that is needed.

So, the planning and community engagement that the Administration is encouraging throughout the U.S. is already happening here in the Midwest...

These examples in Iowa and Kansas City demonstrate that livability must incorporate the concept of collaborative community decision-making, which:

Gets better results; more community support; and faster and lower cost projects and programs.

Encourages all of you to become even more engaged with your communities—transit is at the heart of improving livability through mobility.

Gives new consideration how DOT, HUD, and EPA programs can work together to achieve your communities vision/dream/needs

The role that each of us plays in ensuring the concept continues will make a huge difference in the success or failure of the streets and neighborhoods in our own back yards. Together we are making a difference.

And this Administration wants to do everything we can to help you make that difference.

Whether it's coordinating livability efforts or providing additional funding in the form of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

ARRA

With the on-set of ARRA my agency - the FTA - saw an 80 percent spike in our annual funding level - a far higher percentage for transit than was directed to highways or aviation.

The only percentage growth that was higher was the new historic investment in another public transportation investment - the President's new High Speed Rail program.

ARRA has helped change the look and feel of transportation across the nation.

To date stimulus funds have allowed for the purchase of 12,000 buses, vans and rail vehicles; helped construct or renovate more than 850 transit facilities and provided more than \$620 million in preventive maintenance.

And two weeks ago, FTA reached our goal of 100% ARRA obligation.

For us, that means we have awarded over 933 grants totaling \$8.3 billion. Those projects, in turn, have created enough work to keep 9,838 people employed for a year. (Note: This is based on money expended as of the 1201 report due in February - and not the total obligations amount).

In Region VII, ARRA provided funding for over 201 buses in urban systems and 569 buses and vans in rural areas in the four state regions. This funding is going to build 3 urban and 16 rural transit facilities. Rural operators in Nebraska for the first time are building 9 facilities and will now be able to store their vehicles indoors outside of the elements.

In rural Missouri, ARRA funding will allow Bill Osborne and his team at the Southeast Missouri Transportation Service (SMTS) to build a new facility in Poplar Bluff.

This project will create 30-40 jobs alone in an economically distressed area.

ARRA Tribal funds are also being used to build a facility for the Winnebago Tribe in Nebraska.

On the urban side we have new facilities being built in Wichita, Kansas and Joplin, Missouri.

In Iowa, a state with extreme bus replacement needs, the ARRA funds, coupled with FFY09's 5309 funds for bus replacement, allowed the Iowa DOT to procure 268 vehicles reducing the percentage of vehicles which have exceeded their useful life from 60% to 41%.

ARRA TIGER funds will also be used to build a new intermodal transportation facility in Ames, Iowa.

Another \$20.8 million will be used to fund transit corridors in four counties in the Kansas City metropolitan area including the State Avenue Corridor, North Oak, U.S. 24, U.S. 40 and the Metcalf/Shawnee Mission Parkway corridors which will greatly enhance the mobility of transit riders in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

As I stated before, FTA is committed to the principals of creating a more livable and sustainable environment.

ARRA TIGGER will assist CY-RIDE in Ames, Iowa to upgrade their fleet to hybrid buses

In Rock Island Metropolitan Mass Transit District in Rock Island, Illinois, they will now be able to install solar thermal panels on their new facility.

Now, as excited as this all sounds, you don't think Uncle Sam was going to hand over a check without making sure the American citizens know where their money is going do you.

Of course not, and as many of you know from our reporting process, all of this ARRA funding comes with a big responsibility.

As grantees, you are expected to deliver your projects on time, on budget and on schedule.

How we spend and administer these funds is under scrutiny from the American public and public interest and political groups everywhere. With this amount of funding also comes the opportunity for waste, fraud and abuse.

And at tomorrow's session you will hear from Mark Peters from the U.S. Department of Transportation Inspector General's Office in Chicago on this very subject.

The Recovery Act is not the only bright spot for transit funding: FTA received an annual appropriation of \$512 million which is the largest annual appropriation for rural transit ever under SAFETEA-LU.

FTA is also continuing its efforts to improve timely administration of the Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom programs. David Schneider of my staff will be speaking more on this subject Thursday.

As you can tell from my remarks, the Region VII office has put together a dynamic program that includes speakers and topics from a variety of new initiatives.

New Starts

Speaking of the new initiatives, you talked and we listened.

Peter and I have decided to take a very good look at the New Starts/Small Starts Program to determine areas where we can improve.

On this front, FTA plans on seeking additional input from the transit industry regarding the New Starts project rating process.

We will want to hear from you, our grantees so soon we will be seeking your input on certain New Starts and Small Starts project rating process.

Authorization

Before closing, let me touch on Authorization. . .

One week ago today, Congress passed an extension to FTA's authorizing legislation, SAFETEA-LU, through December 31, 2010.

The good news is that with this passage FTA will be able to make the full amount of your FY2010 formula funds available for application.

There has been talk of new funds for transportation infrastructure as part of a "jobs" bill to further stimulate the economy, and momentum has been building for Congress to enact a "jobs" bill in response to the unemployment numbers.

Thank you for submitting your applications for our Bus Livability and Urban Circulators discretionary funding.

My team is reviewing your applications and will be making announcements in the near future. In addition, FTA has over \$1 billion in bus discretionary funds and we will soon be publishing a Notice of Funding Availability for capital projects.

We know there are many unmet capital needs and we encourage you to submit an application.

The FTA is committed to working with transit operators across the country to improve your fleets and facilities to a State of Good Repair.

This brings me to another major FTA initiative.

As you know, in December 2009 Secretary LaHood put before Congress the Administration's Public Transportation Safety Program Act of 2009, a new transit safety bill to ensure a high and standard level of safety across all rail transit systems and an option to establish a safety program for public transportation bus systems.

FTA will continue to work with Congress and our FTA grantees in the MINK region to ensure transportation needs across the nation are met and residents of your communities enjoy a high quality of life.

For us to succeed in these dynamic times it's crucial that our programs and policies are informed by you - the individuals those programs and policies are meant to serve.

I look forward to working with you in the future and seeing what other innovative ideas come out of the great Midwest!

Thank you!

WTS in San Francisco, CA

05-26-10



*Left to right: Alix Bockelman,
Therese McMillan,
Kate Miller*

On May 26, 2010, FTA Deputy Administrator Therese McMillan was awarded “Woman of the Year” by the San Francisco Chapter of Women’s Transportation Seminar (WTS) International. WTS promotes the professional development and advancement of women in the transportation industry.

Addressing a diverse crowd of professionals and students from all corners of the transportation spectrum, Deputy Administrator McMillan spoke to the challenge of tackling the national transportation agenda amidst the myriad issues facing the country, and some of the accomplishments the Administration and Secretary LaHood have achieved to date.

As a San Francisco Bay Area resident who temporarily resides in Washington, DC, McMillan offered a unique glimpse into the personal struggles inherent to pursuing a bicoastal career and lifestyle, while being separated from her husband and children for long periods of time.

McMillan said, “I’m in Washington, DC, because [my family] said ‘yes—go.’ But that was a very hard yes. There are layers of sacrifice we never realized would be so hard. This ‘yes’ meant shifting overnight from double duty parenting, to a single parent household. It meant my daughter’s kisses goodnight, every night, turning into a nightly phone call trying to bridge 3,000 miles. And it meant many, many red eye flights to wring as much out of a weekend visit as humanly possible; and afterwards showering in the DOT exercise room before heading to the inevitable Monday meetings.

The Deputy Administrator also discussed one of her leading interests and goals. McMillan discussed her priority of helping to implement the Obama Administration’s, “new multi-federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities initiative,” which “brings together DOT, HUD and EPA to identify and coordinate planning and investment opportunities across our

agencies, to support the common goal of more vibrant neighborhoods throughout the country.

Please read Deputy Administrator McMillan's full speech (as prepared for delivery) below.

2010 WTS Award- Woman of the Year

Thank you so much, Alix and Kate, for the wonderful introduction. And thank you, San Francisco WTS, for this incredible honor. There are so many deserving women that could stand at the podium, and I am humbled to be the one here today—and very proud.

I have always maintained that the greatest rewards in your work, and in your life, are the relationships of family and friends that are forged throughout that life. That's what remains, that's what is remembered, and that's what inspires going forward. There are many people in this room who have made that reality for me.

In my view, this award is as much or more about the 25 years of professional work here in the Bay Area that brought me to this remarkable (almost) year, serving as our nation's capital as Deputy Administrator of FTA.

Let me first start by thanking the most important people that made that year happen—my family. My wonderful husband Rod and daughter Nadine are here tonight. My daughter Madeline is studying for finals after her first year at UC Irvine. Their support means so much.

I'm in Washington DC, because they said "yes—go." But that was a very hard yes. There are layers of sacrifice we never realized would be so hard.

- This "YES" meant shifting overnight from double duty parenting, to a single parent household.
- It meant my daughter's kisses goodnight, every night, turning into a nightly phone call trying to bridge 3,000 miles.
- And it meant many, many red eye flights to wring as much out of a weekend visit as humanly possible; and afterwards showering in the DOT exercise room before heading to the inevitable Monday meetings.

So you need to applaud them, and the supporting cast of family and friends who make this a little bit easier—not least of which is the FTA team led by Administrator Peter Rogoff; and Region IX Administrator Leslie Rogers who is here today, and gives me a home office in San Francisco. They have supported my bi-coastal craziness with amazing grace, and been staunchly in my corner. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

So I want to share a bit of my perspective on what I have been able to do, what I have learned, and what I hope to accomplish during my DC experience—to leave with you as committed women and men in transportation. I especially want to acknowledge our scholarship winners

tonight, and the other young women who want to make this wonderful profession their own.

I'll start with an apt analogy of work at the DOT, at least as I have experienced it. On my honeymoon, Rod and I went to Hawaii. It is one of the most beautiful places on earth, and one of the most daunting in its beauty. I vividly recall going to a secluded beach on Kauai, I believe, where the waves were just pounding the shore. Now I'm a strong swimmer, but I've always had a healthy respect for Mother Ocean, and that day, I was ready to just lie well back on the sand and read a book.

My more adventuresome husband however, said "You can do this. The trick is to dive INTO the wave before it knocks you down." And that's what I did—though it took a healthy bit of courage and belief. But if you timed it right, and plunged straight into this wall of water, you did emerge onto the calmer face of the ocean.

Much of the time in Washington it feels like that—plunging head first into wave, after wave, after wave before it knocks you down. Let me tell you—national policy is HARD. There is nothing easy about it. Advancing anything in Washington is Herculean, and no Department has the luxury of isolating itself within its own box.

- It is bemusing (on good days) and intensely annoying (on bad days) hearing the lament "Why haven't you guys done anything about Reauthorization???"
- Well let me see—with President Obama not yet 18 months in office, his Administration has had to tackle a drowning economy and launch a massive Recovery act to help prop it up, relentlessly pursue and achieve ground-breaking Health Care legislation, deal with controversial Financial Reform, and address the huge oil spill in the Gulf that could be one of the great environmental crises in years. Oh, and let's not forget Afghanistan, Haiti and North Korea. Perhaps state donor/donee percentage splits might have to wait in line a bit.

But we aren't sitting on our collective DOT hands by any means. Secretary LaHood has been committed from the beginning to all manner of transportation initiatives that are breaking new ground. In the time available after juggling crises that fall out of the sky-- like Toyota--, we have been busy

- delivering over \$40 billion in transportation related Recovery Act funds
- standing up an entirely new High Speed Rail program from scratch
- advancing safety initiatives for transit, and the Eliminate Distracted Driving campaign,
- and developing a completely new DOT strategic plan (which you can access on the web, and comment on, mind you) which features, among other things, a strong "state of good repair" goal in addition to

supporting more—and more strategic—investment in new transportation infrastructure.

Reauthorization will happen. This Administration will be there. But it must happen at the right time, because we only have one chance to do it right.

Let me delve a bit more into one particular effort that I have been closely connected with—the new multi-federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities initiative. As you know, this effort brings together DOT, HUD and EPA to identify and coordinate planning and investment opportunities across our agencies, to support the common goal of more vibrant neighborhoods throughout the country.

As the FTA Leadership point for this initiative, I and the DOT team working with HUD and EPA are committed to make this a viable initiative for all parts of the American landscape—urban, suburban and rural. There are incredible things happening in Boston, AND in Fargo, North Dakota. Re-visioning is happening in Phoenix and Tucson—well known suburban areas, as well as “traditional” hot beds of sustainable thinking, like Portland and Minneapolis.

- The San Francisco Bay Area is to be lauded for advancing these “livability” concepts for many years, and I appreciate my past contributions to that. What is it is most gratifying for me, however, is not to preen on those past laurels, but to REALLY listen with an educated ear to other areas and their lessons—many just starting out, and swimming against a sea of cynicism.

In these continuing times of economic stress, this Partnership program has consistently been a source of fresh thinking, and – dare I say—HOPE for a different kind of future. It embodies what this Administration is all about.

- Our hope with this and many other initiatives is to plant the seeds and grow roots deep enough to carry on after we the political appointees are gone.

Because it’s not about the efforts of any single individual—it’s about a collective” us”. I do believe I am a leader, but one that serves a purpose and goal much bigger than me.

I’ll close with a story that weaves all of these themes together. I was in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area in April on a Partnership Livability tour of the city, but was desperate to get home early because my daughter was sick.

- Nancy Homas, assistant to St. Paul’s Mayor, tagged along the entire tour in her own car to make sure I could get to the airport in time to catch the only direct afternoon flight to San Francisco.
- On the way, we talked about FTA’s work, what the City was trying to do to remake its neighborhoods, and our respective paths as professional

women that, in a fashion, had brought us together in her car that afternoon.

During the next couple days I received the following e-mail:

“Dear Therese,
I was thinking about you over the weekend and hoping that all with your daughter was resolved by the time you had to return to DC. Your story prompted my husband and I to talk at dinner about how fortunate our country is that so many bright and committed people are willing to make such significant personal sacrifices in order to serve the greater good. Thank you....”

I have not yet met the President, or the First Lady. Maybe I never will.

- But I met Nancy Homans.
- Those moments make everything worth it. I wish such moments to you—in your career, and in your life.

Thank you for this award.

Tubbs-Jones Transit Center - Cleveland, OH

10-19-10

Remarks As Prepared for Delivery; Actual Presentations May Differ

Thank you, GEORGE [DIXON, RTA], for that kind introduction.

On behalf of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff, I am honored to join you today to celebrate the life of a true champion for the people of Ohio who left us too soon, STEPHANIE TUBBS-JONES.

What better way to honor her memory, than to celebrate the grand opening of a project that symbolizes her core values.

The late Congresswoman believed in the power of investing in a more livable and sustainable Cleveland that's ready to thrive and compete in the 21st century.

And she worked tirelessly to win Federal, state, and local support for a modern transportation facility that's going to make life better for commuters, for city residents that depend on transit, and for CSU students eager to explore all that this city has to offer.

How proud she would be to witness the transformation of a plain old parking lot into a new and much-needed destination that meets the highest standards for energy conservation.

FTA is pleased to contribute to this flagship project that will keep Cleveland moving forward by attracting more people, more employers, and more shops to this downtown neighborhood.

Our commitment to provide 88 percent of the Center's funds—with a boost from the Recovery Act—made it possible for this dream to become a reality.

I want to thank Governor STRICKLAND and Congresswoman FUDGE for picking up where Congresswoman TUBBS-JONES left off.

You've worked hard to bring better transportation and more jobs to Cleveland and the rest of Ohio, and we appreciate your efforts.

With your help, more than 870 high-priority transportation projects are under way throughout the Buckeye State, funded by the Recovery Act. These projects have saved or created roughly 117,000 good-paying jobs for local residents during the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.

I also want to thank RON BERKMAN of Cleveland State University for agreeing that we could find a better use for the parking lot you once owned.

And of course, RTA has done a terrific job taking on this massive project and seeing it through to completion.

And finally, I want to acknowledge the TUBBS-JONES family members here today, for showing their support for a woman they loved dearly—and for showing their support for the city they love as well.

Thank you all very much.

National Rural & Intercity Bus Conference - Burlington, VT

10-26-10

Remarks As Prepared for Delivery; Actual Presentations May Differ

Thank you, RANDY [ISAACS], for that kind introduction.

I'm delighted to join all of you here in Burlington and the beautiful Lake Champlain Valley.

This is a very fitting location for this year's conference because New England has shown real leadership in finding new ways to meet the transit needs of rural residents, persons with disabilities, seniors, and others who need a helping hand.

I applaud all six New England states for working together to streamline and coordinate transportation services.

For example, Maine, Connecticut, and Rhode Island have expanded accessible taxi cab and taxi voucher programs, they're recruiting volunteer drivers for persons with disabilities, and they're addressing the door-to-door travel needs of rural residents.

FTA's New Freedom grants helped these initiatives get off the ground, and we're proud to make a difference here in New England and in many rural communities across the country.

We're also tremendously proud to co-sponsor this conference and to support TRB's mission. This extraordinary group of experts and visionaries provides the leadership, innovation, and research we need to propel the transportation industry forward—and provide solutions that improve our mobility, our safety, and our quality of life, from coast to coast.

We at FTA simply could not get so much done without all the resources TRB's members bring to the table.

I'm also honored to be here today to present the FTA Administrator's Awards for Outstanding Rural Transit System.

ARRA

But first, I'd like to take a few minutes to highlight DOT's and FTA's efforts to address some of the challenges facing rural and intercity bus operators today.

The good news is, the Obama Administration is more committed to investing in and revitalizing public transportation in this country—including rural communities long under-served by transit—than any Administration in recent memory.

Who could have imagined, just a few short years ago, that transit providers around the country would receive close to 8.8 billion dollars?

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

Over \$882 million of this money goes to much-needed transportation projects in rural districts around the U.S.—creating many, many good-paying jobs in communities that have been hit hard by the recession.

These funds bought over 12,000 new buses, paratransit vans, and rail vehicles—giving transit providers a real boost at a time when budgets have been squeezed tight.

Livability

Of course, the stimulus program isn't a silver bullet.

We know that many families, seniors, and others here in New England and in your communities are still struggling to find work or pay their bills at the end of the month.

If we truly believe in helping Americans get back on their feet financially, then we need to provide transportation choices to fit every budget.

And we need to come up with solutions that reflect real-life conditions for people living in smaller, rural communities where there's no easy way to get from home to the doctor's, the community center, or the nearest mall.

That's where our livability agenda comes in.

It's all about tailoring our transportation systems to help improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the United States.

When we talk about livability, we're talking about improving mobility and access to jobs and vital services, encouraging more affordable housing near transit hubs, and better coordinating transportation, housing, and commercial investments.

Enhancing rural transportation is central to our livability agenda, which has been one of FTA's core missions for some time—and one of DOT's signature priorities in this Administration.

Our commitment to livability has been particularly evident with investments made through our sustainability partnership with HUD and the EPA.

For example, DOT teamed up with HUD recently to jointly award nearly \$68 million to help local communities, large and small, to address local challenges related to integrating transportation and housing.

And FTA brought \$160 million under the livability tent with our bus livability grants awarded last July. Several of these grants went to small bus operators serving rural areas.

As you well know, half the battle you face is trying to close the distance between where your riders live, and where they work, shop, or go to school.

We aim to help communities bridge that gap by encouraging better planning and land-use development practices that foster—rather than hinder—economic opportunities.

SGR

We also recognize that many rural transit providers face a challenging backlog of maintenance and repairs. And we know you've worked very hard to keep your older buses on the road as long as possible.

But you shouldn't have to go it alone.

We believe all riders deserve safe, comfortable, modern equipment, whether it's a bus or a minivan.

That's why FTA recently awarded an unprecedented \$775 million to help rural urban and transit bus operators around the nation bring their fleets and facilities into a state of good repair.

Looking Ahead

I think this Administration has come a long way, but we know there's still a great deal of work to do. So looking ahead, I want to outline three ways this Administration is working to keep the momentum going.

FIRST, we're continuing to study the impact of the new landmark health-care law on transit-dependent communities. The good news is that the law says transportation access to health care is now included in Medicaid funding—and eligibility has been expanded. We're taking a close look at FTA's affected programs to make sure we keep up with all the changes.

SECOND, we're very focused on improving the link between transportation and access to jobs. Secretary LaHood has made this a priority for all states and coalitions that competed for a share of DOT's discretionary TIGER grants.

Just last week, Secretary LaHood announced nearly \$600 million for a second round of TIGER grants. Over a quarter of this money goes directly to transit projects.

And a good portion of the TIGER II planning grant funds will help small cities and rural regions lay the groundwork to better connect transportation and housing.

And THIRD, as President Obama travels the country, he's put transportation at the top of his agenda.

In a nutshell, the President has proposed a 50 billion-dollar up-front investment in a six-year plan to build and rebuild thousands and thousands of miles of roads, rails, runways, and – of course – public transit systems, including bus systems all across America.

This is a big deal that will help level the playing field for Americans seeking better access to transportation, including rural America.

It's a down payment on a much larger transportation program, and it's a profound commitment that sets us on course to create a truly multi-modal society.

Thankfully, public transit is at the heart of this historic effort.

Closing

Everything I've discussed today points to an exciting new 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.

Awards Remarks

I'm pleased and proud to recognize the winners of the 2010 FTA Administrator's Awards for Outstanding Rural Transit System.

I want to thank our FTA staff at headquarters and our regional offices, and our friends in the National Rural Transit Assistance Program, for taking great care to evaluate this year's award candidates.

As you may know, this year's awards are based on how successfully the providers accomplished three goals:

1. implementing coordinated services that demonstrate rural and urban synergies;
2. employing partnerships that improved the quality of service and enhanced livability in rural communities; and
3. using bold ideas to meet their goals.

I'm tremendously proud of all this year's winners. On behalf of Secretary LaHood and FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff, we applaud your dedication and commitment to enhancing mobility and making life better for all your riders, especially those who depend on transit the most.

(1) SPECIAL TRANSIT (Boulder, CO)

FTA is pleased to recognize your innovative approach to meeting the needs of rural and elderly customers with a multi-faceted strategy that includes a call-and-ride program; an access-a-ride program; and combined funding, dispatch, scheduling and training services. Your approach enables you to fill service gaps so you may continue helping elderly residents age, and help small-town families to access jobs and other opportunities.

(2) RURAL COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION (St. Johnsbury, VT)

Congratulations on your success in creating a nonprofit Kingdom Express provider that generates additional revenues to meet local match requirements while creating services for your special-needs population. In addition, your cost-allocation plan, which fosters cost-sharing among your core programs on a monthly basis, has proven an effective management tool.

(3) CITYLINK PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM (Worley, ID)

We're proud to recognize your system as the first in the nation that brought tribal and local governments together to jointly create a free public transportation service for both county residents and members of the Coeur D'Alene Tribe. All your fare-free routes link the City of Coeur D'Alene with rural residents, the reservation, and the tribal casino. And ridership has tripled over the past four years.

(4) UPPER CUMBERLAND HUMAN RESOURCE AGENCY (Cookeville, TN)

You've clearly demonstrated the valuable role technology plays in improving local transportation. In partnership with your partner—the UCHRA Rural Transit ITS Program—you've installed an automatic vehicle local system that allows dispatchers to monitor transit vehicles' locations using GPS. The result is dramatic improvements in safety, mobility, and roadway and fleet operations within your system.

(5) FLINT HILLS AREA TRANSPORTATION AGENCY (Manhattan, KS)

We're recognizing your outstanding efforts to improve connections between rural and urban service in a jurisdiction that includes both rapidly

urbanizing communities and those that are still very rural. You're developing regionally based rural transit modes that provide greater access to transit, while also maximizing scarce resources statewide. Additionally, you've played a leading role on a shared one-call dispatching project for all the rural transit providers in your area.

(6) SOUTH CENTRAL ADULT SERVICES COUNCIL (Valley City, ND)

Given that you operate in one of the most rural and least densely population states in the nation, your success in serving 9 counties and 25 communities across a wide territory is vital to all those who depend on you to reach hospitals, nursing homes, the dialysis center, and other crucial facilities. You provide trips that often span 100 miles, yet distance has not deterred you from creating a one-stop center where clients may access a respite program, a senior citizen food pantry, and prescription assistance.