

# **National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board**

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290, (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202

December 30, 2008

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen  
United States House of Representatives  
1707 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Van Hollen:

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Washington Region, is very pleased that current plans for an economic stimulus package include significant funding for transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and transit systems. Transportation infrastructure investments provide an excellent opportunity to maximize near term job creation while laying a strong foundation for the nation's future economic growth and competitiveness.

Recognizing the importance of directing stimulus funding to projects that can be implemented quickly, the TPB anticipates that stimulus funding for highway and transit projects will be provided through the existing programs of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation. As the transportation planning agency for a major metropolitan area with significant unmet highway and transit maintenance, rehabilitation, and capacity needs, the TPB believes that the transportation stimulus package must ensure that a fair and equitable share of the funding is directed to addressing the pressing needs of major metropolitan areas, reflecting their critical contribution to the nation's economy. This could be accomplished by distributing at least 35 percent of the funds to major metropolitan areas through the FHWA Surface Transportation Program and the FTA Urbanized Area Formula Program.

In addition to stimulus funding to address pressing near-term economic challenges, the TPB believes that fundamental changes are needed in the structure and funding of ongoing federal surface transportation programs. The TPB recently approved a set of policy principles (copy attached) to help guide the next federal authorization of surface transportation programs, following the expiration of the SAFETEA-LU authorization on September 30, 2009. These policy principles call for a substantial increase in federal transportation funding; an explicit focus on the repair and efficient operation of existing highway and transit systems; uniform evaluation procedures and criteria for assessing all new modal and intermodal capacity increases; and increased funding focused on metropolitan transportation challenges. The TPB hopes you will find these policy principles a useful resource as deliberations proceed on the next transportation authorization bill over the coming year.

Thank you for considering the TPB's views on these important initiatives for the nation's economy and transportation infrastructure. For further information, please contact the Director of Transportation Planning for the TPB, Ronald Kirby, at (202) 962-3310 or [rkirby@mwcoq.org](mailto:rkirby@mwcoq.org).

Sincerely,



Phil Mendelson  
Chairman  
National Capital Region  
Transportation Planning Board