

\$59 million TIGER Grant Awarded to the National Capital Region

Background / Intro

On February 17, 2010, U.S. Transportation Secretary, Ray LaHood, announced the award of a \$59 million grant in stimulus transportation funding for a network of priority bus corridors and a transit center in the Washington, DC, region. The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region, submitted the application in one of the largest regional transportation efforts since the launch of Metrorail. More than \$26 million of the funding will go to improving bus transportation along priority corridors in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. Improvements to these corridors include dedicated bus lanes, transit signal priority, limited stop service, enhanced pedestrian access, real-time passenger information, and enhanced bus stops to increase bus ridership and reliability in these busy corridors.

More than \$19.9 million will fund multimodal improvements for priority bus transit connecting portions of Northern Virginia with the District of Columbia. These improvements will provide high quality transit options for commuters and relieve pressure on the regional Metrorail system.

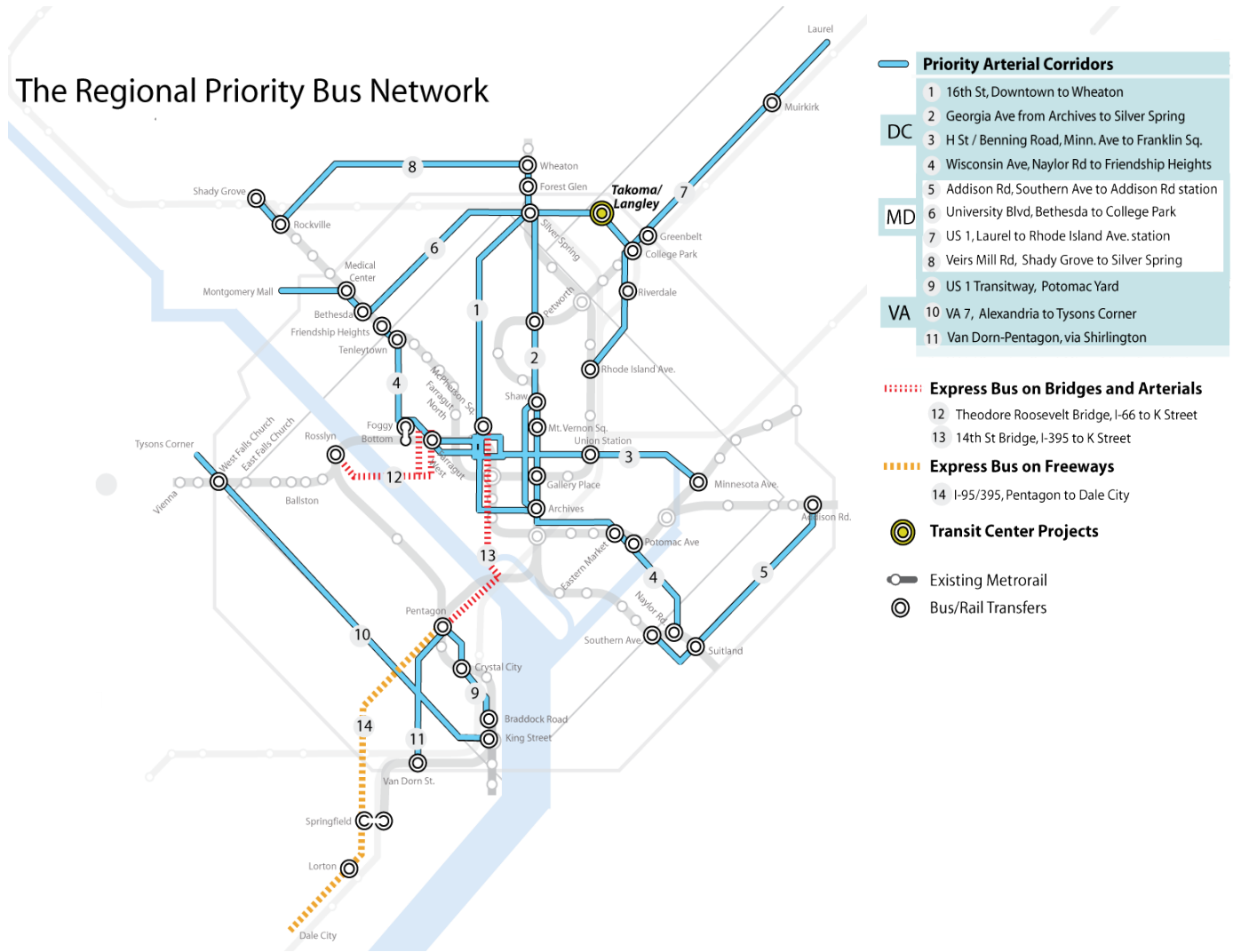
Finally, more than \$12.3 million will be used for a new multimodal transit center in Prince George's County, Maryland, to improve safety and intermodal access to priority bus corridors. In addition to providing connections to several highly-used bus routes, the center will serve the planned Purple Line, a 16-mile intra-suburban light rail line connecting Bethesda in Montgomery County to New Carrollton in Prince George's County in Suburban Maryland.

A different way of doing things

Known as TIGER, the Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery discretionary grant program made \$1.5 billion available for award through a competitive application process. The U.S. Department of Transportation received 1,400 applications totaling nearly \$60 billion, from which 51 awards were made. The extreme level of competition demonstrated nationwide for these TIGER funds underscores the significance of the Washington region's success in this effort.

The competitive application process for TIGER differed markedly from the traditional formula-based transportation funding programs authorized under federal transportation funding laws. Under these traditional programs, funds are distributed largely by formula on a modal basis. State highway departments receive money from the Federal Highway Administration and transit agencies receive money from the Federal Transit Administration. Not only are highway and transit projects not compared, but the funding streams to each mode are not at all equal.

The Regional Priority Bus Network



In contrast, TIGER grant awards were made using a criteria-based approach for selecting projects with demonstrated benefits to the nation and/or metropolitan areas and without any consideration to a specific mode. This arrangement put the TPB in a competitive position to lead the development of a TIGER grant application though the assistance of its partner agencies, and submit a robust proposal on behalf of the region. Under TIGER, the TPB played a large role by hosting and facilitating the regional process to develop and propose the project through the application effort. The application process infused innovation into regional transportation planning in a way that complemented traditional regional processes in the Washington region.

TIGER funding enables the region to look forward to faster and more reliable bus service along with safer, faster, and more convenient bus transfers at one of the busiest transfer points in the region. In a difficult economy where many jurisdictions have been forced to cut vital transit services, the TIGER award allows the region to improve the efficiency

and functionality of its existing transportation system without imposing higher operating costs on local and regional providers.

TIGER Project Components	Location	TIGER Grant Award
16th Street Bus Priority Corridor Enhancements	DC	\$1,295,000
Georgia Avenue Bus Priority Corridor Enhancements	DC	\$4,111,000
H Street/Benning Road Bus Priority Corridor Enhancements	DC	\$415,000
Wisconsin Avenue Bus Priority Corridor Enhancements	DC	\$745,000
Addison Road Bus Priority Corridor Enhancements	MD	\$200,000
University Boulevard Bus Priority Corridor Enhancements	MD	\$1,262,000
US 1 (MD) Bus Priority Corridor Enhancements	MD	\$805,000
Veirs Mill Road Bus Priority Corridor Enhancements	MD	\$265,000
US 1 (VA) Transitway	VA	\$8,500,000
VA 7 (Leesburg Pike) Bus Priority Corridor Enhancements	VA	\$1,340,000
Van Dorn - Pentagon Bus Priority Corridor Enhancements	VA	\$670,000
T. Roosevelt Bridge to K Street Bus Priority Corridor Enhancements	DC	\$1,800,000
14th Street Bridge to K Street Bus Priority Corridor Enhancements	DC	\$5,200,000
Pentagon -- Franconia Springfield Station Improvements	VA	\$9,930,000
PRTC Buses and ITS Technology	VA	\$10,000,000
Takoma/Langley Transit Center	MD	\$12,300,000
TOTAL		\$58,838,000

The proposal focused heavily on the concept of making the existing system work better, rather than implementing new transit services that could put unrealistic capital and operating burdens on cash-strapped public transit providers. As a result, the project will make efficient use of federal money to squeeze the most value out of the existing transit system by creating capacity without requiring new operating expenditures. In many cases, the same number of buses can be operated to achieve faster, more reliable service because the project will produce higher bus speeds. There is also potential for operating savings in cases where the buses adhere better to schedules and shave off daily operating time previously spent in congestion.

The bus priority corridor improvements will decrease travel time and improve quality of bus service on approximately 75 bus lines throughout the region. This will provide benefit to more than 260,000 current daily riders, and more than 400,000 riders by 2030. Some of these riders will be former private auto riders who switched to the bus because of newly-found convenience and reliability. Ultimately, this project will result in air quality and climate change benefits, reduced congestion and even reduced accident costs, which will all contribute to improved livability and sustainability of the region.

PROJECT COMPONENT DESCRIPTION

The sixteen approved components of the TIGER Priority Bus Transit project are as follows:

Table 1: Project Component Descriptions

#	Project Components
1	16th Street Bus Priority Improvements (DDOT): Capital improvements include a queue jump lane, NextBus real time passenger information displays at 17 stop locations, and transit signal priority/traffic system management (left turn phase for bus) at a number of intersections.
2	Georgia Avenue Bus Priority Improvements (DDOT): Improvements include completing TSP implementation at several intersections, bulb-outs, and nearly 30 stop locations enhanced with NextBus real time arrival technology. Additionally, a bus only lane will be constructed on Georgia Avenue for a short span to alleviate current exorbitant bus delays.
3	H Street/Benning Road Bus Priority Improvements (DDOT): This project will implement running way improvements along the existing corridor of a major local bus route, including a left turn phase for buses at a busy intersection, a queue jump lane, and NextBus real time arrival technology displays at 22 bus stop locations.
4	Wisconsin Avenue Bus Priority Improvements (DDOT): A WMATA Priority Corridor with the highest ridership in the region, capital improvements include transit signal priority and/or traffic signal management at a number of intersections and NextBus real time arrival technology deployed to a number of express service stop locations.
5	Addison Road Improvements (WMATA): A WMATA priority corridor that connects the eastern ends of the Blue and Green Metrorail lines, bus shelters along the existing P12 bus route will be upgraded with NextBus real-time arrival prediction displays.
6	University Boulevard Bus Priority Improvements (MDOT): A WMATA Priority Corridor, improvements include four queue jump lanes, transit signal priority at around 20 intersections, and a number of bus stop enhancements, such as the deployment of NextBus technology.
7	U.S. Route 1 Bus Priority Improvements (MDOT): A WMATA Priority Corridor, capital improvements include queue jump lanes and transit signal priority at several intersections.
8	Veirs Mill Bus Priority Improvements (MDOT): A WMATA Priority Corridor that connects the commercial centers of Silver Spring and Rockville, capital improvements include a queue jump lane and NextBus real time bus arrival displays at several stations along the route.
9	US 1 Transitway (City of Alexandria): A bus transitway in the median of US 1 within the city limits will provide exclusive right of way for buses.
10	VA 7 (Leesburg Pike) Bus Priority Improvements (WMATA): A WMATA Priority Corridor that connects the Cities of Alexandria and Falls Church with the commercial center of Tysons Corner, improvements include NextBus displays at several express service bus stops and transit signal priority at a number of intersections along the corridor.

#	Project Components
11	<p>Van Dorn-Pentagon Rapid Bus (City of Alexandria): The project will provide a new rapid bus service in the City of Alexandria from the Van Dorn Metrorail Station in the City of Alexandria to the Pentagon. It will incorporate limited stop service, signal prioritization, super stops, and queue jump lanes.</p>
12	<p>Theodore Roosevelt Bridge to K Street Bus Priority Improvements (DDOT): This major regional corridor will receive complimentary transit signal priority and bus mounted enforcement cameras along E Street, northbound 18th Street, and southbound 19th Street.</p>
13	<p>14th Street Bus Priority Improvements (DDOT): This project includes complimentary transit signal priority and bus mounted enforcement cameras along 14th Street from the bridge to K Street.</p>
14a	<p>Pentagon -- Franconia Springfield Station Improvements (WMATA): Station improvements at Pentagon Station and Franconia/Springfield Station, including bus bays, real time bus information, and traffic circulation/access/security improvements. Major technology improvements include a mobile web application for real-time bus information and bus information displays.</p>
14b	<p>PRTC Buses and ITS Technology (PRTC) Project includes cameras outfitted on 15 buses, computer-aided dispatch and automatic vehicle location technology. Finally, this component includes the retirement of 13 buses, replacing them with state-of-the-art clean-fuel technology.</p>
TC	<p>Takoma/Langley Transit Center (MDOT): This transit center will be located at the intersection of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue, consolidating all the bus stops at the intersection into one facility. Through new bus bays, pedestrian walkways, a full canopy, restrooms, lighting, and bus information, the transit center will provide a safe, attractive, comfortable and efficient facility for passengers and for bus transfer activities, and will also improve pedestrian safety, accessibility, and connections to bus services.</p>