

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

Item #5

MEMORANDUM

December 15, 2011

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

RE: Letters Sent/Received Since the November 16th TPB Meeting

The attached letters were sent/received since the November 16th TPB meeting. The letters will be reviewed under Agenda #5 of the December 21st TPB agenda.

Attachments

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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November 16, 2011

Honorable Andrea Harrison
Chair, Board of Directors
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4290

Dear Chair Harrison:

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is pleased to support the recommendation of the COG Budget and Finance Committee to incorporate \$63,000 in contributions for the Street Smart program into the FY 2013 COG dues, rather than keeping them as a separately requested item. Street Smart is a valuable program, which the TPB has managed since 2002. A modest level of local contribution matches over \$400,000 in federal funding. Moreover, the program leverages earned media and PSA's worth in excess of \$1 million annually, or nearly four times its paid media budget.

Under the Budget and Finance Committee proposal, Street Smart will be planned and executed with a greater level of certainty, with a reliable source of local match for federal funds. Opportunities for focus on and participation in the program will be extended to all the jurisdictions in the region. The program will be administratively simpler, both for the TPB and for the member jurisdictions.

The TPB appreciates your support for incorporating the local funding for this important regional program into the COG annual dues.

Sincerely,



Muriel Bowser
Chair, National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 15, 2011

For more information, contact:

Merni Fitzgerald, Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs, 703-324-3189; 571-238-7437 (cell)

National Capital Region Unveils New Web Portal and Winter Preparedness Campaign

New Web Portal

The jurisdictions of the National Capital Region have a new communications tool to communicate emergency information to residents of the NCR – it's a Web portal, www.CapitalRegionUpdates.gov. The site was unveiled today at a meeting of regional communicators, public safety officials and FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. Through this online resource, residents can stay connected to local jurisdictional news (through a combined RSS feed of local news releases), localized weather from the National Weather Service, traffic and transit alerts, tips on how to prepare for emergencies and much more.

Capital Region Updates features day-to-day news from the jurisdictions of the National Capital Region. During a regional emergency or major weather event across the NCR, the site will feature incident updates and life-safety news and instructions. It will serve as an online "one stop shop" for information and guidance during major emergencies.

Residents that live or work in the National Capital Region are encouraged to bookmark www.CapitalRegionUpdates.gov for news and information updates.

Winter Preparedness

"Get Where You Need to be Before the Weather Gets Bad"

The National Capital Region has a common message this winter – stay off the roads when it snows!

Overall, most winter storm deaths result from vehicle or other transportation accidents caused by ice and snow. People should avoid driving when conditions include sleet, freezing rain or drizzle, snow, or dense fog. These are serious conditions that are often underestimated, and they make driving – and even walking outside – very hazardous.

“We are coordinating public messaging this year with Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia and the federal government,” said Merni Fitzgerald, director of the Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs and chair of the region’s communicators. “Some already have logos/slogans – such as Maryland’s ‘Ice and Snow: Take it Slow,’ DC’s ‘Plan Today, Plow Tomorrow’ and the federal government’s Office of Personnel Management’s new option of ‘Staggered Early Departure/with Final Departure Time.’ Current campaigns and messages will be continued; this regional campaign is an effort to extend those messages and remind NCR residents and visitors of the dangers and consequences of being on area roads during winter weather,” Fitzgerald added.

The primary message for residents to remember in the “**SNOW – Stay off the roads, Not Out in the Weather,**” campaign during the upcoming winter weather is:

Get Where You Need to Be Before the Weather Gets Bad!

Winter storms are deceptive killers because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm:

- People die in traffic accidents on icy roads.
- People die of hypothermia from prolonged exposure to cold.

The winter message, “Get Where You Need to Be Before the Weather Gets Bad,” further reinforces the theme that it is safer for everyone if people will stay put – and not travel during inclement weather – whether they be at home, work or school.

By staying off the roads during the worst of the weather, departments of transportation are more easily able to access roads that need treatment; snow plows can more freely clear roads and get to areas needing plowing; and public safety officials can respond more quickly to persons in need of emergency services.

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About the National Capital Region

The National Capital Region — which is composed of 11 local jurisdictions, two states and the District of Columbia — prepares for disasters collaboratively. These preparations involve the region’s elected officials, emergency management, law enforcement, fire and public health personnel, along with the nonprofit and private sectors.

The NCR encompasses the District of Columbia and parts of Maryland and Virginia, including the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William in Virginia and Montgomery and Prince George’s in Maryland, which include the municipalities of Bowie, College Park, Gaithersburg, Greenbelt, Rockville and Takoma Park.

* Editor’s Note: Public service announcements and a campaign logo are available for media use. Contact Merni Fitzgerald for copies.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby, Director
Department of Transportation Planning

DATE: December 21, 2011

SUBJECT: Launch of Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program Public Website for Traveler Information

After over two years of providing transportation incident information exchange among the National Capital Region's transportation and public safety agencies, the MATOC Program has now added the capability of providing real-time information to the public through its program website. Information on the region's traffic and transit incidents and conditions is now available by visiting www.matoc.org and selecting the "Traveler Information" tab at the top of the page.

MATOC's information is compiled from the region's individual transportation agencies through its "data engine", the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS). RITIS has been developed on behalf of the region by the University of Maryland Center for Advanced Transportation Technology, and is one of the most advanced systems of its kind in the nation. The MATOC website "traffic view" now makes RITIS's extensive real-time transportation information available through a user-friendly interface. Users can select an area of interest and options for what information to display on a live map, including traffic speeds, incident locations, and weather. Information and alerts for individual incidents can also be viewed.

Also featured on www.matoc.org are links to other transportation information around the region, including the [Maryland 511](#) and [Virginia 511](#) statewide systems, the [District of Columbia's live traffic alerts](#), and [Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority](#) information. MATOC is also now providing transportation incident information for the region's new public safety web portal for emergency information, www.CapitalRegionUpdates.gov.

This launch represents an initial version of the MATOC public website, to enhance the amount of information available to the public, and also to receive comments and feedback on potential improvements. Being an initial launch, some features that are desired are not yet available, or perhaps are available for only a portion of the region. For example, Maryland State Highway Administration traffic cameras can be viewed through the site, but cameras from other agencies are not yet available (others are anticipated to become available in the near future). Developers are continuing to work on adding features to the site. Users are encouraged to visit the site, try its features, and provide feedback through the "contact us" button on the website.

Attached to this memorandum are sample "screen shots" of the new website.



 NewsRoom



AAA Study Finds Costs Associated With Traffic Crashes Are More than Three Times Greater than Congestion Costs

WASHINGTON, D.C., November 3, 2011

Traffic crashes cost U.S. motorists almost \$300 billion per year

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



Troy Green
Manager,
AAA Public Relations
(202) 942-2082

tgreen@national.aaa.com

The annual societal cost of traffic crashes is \$299.5 billion, more than three times the \$97.7 billion cost of congestion, according to a report released today by AAA.

AAA's "Crashes vs. Congestion – What's the Cost to Society?" report highlights the overwhelming and far-reaching economic impacts traffic safety crashes have on our nation and encourages policymakers at all levels of government to ensure safety is a top priority.

"The burdens associated with congestion are top of mind for many Americans as they travel to and from work each day," said AAA President and CEO Robert L. Darbelnet. "However, at \$300 billion annually, crashes cost our society more than three times the amount of congestion. This report further underscores the importance of a long-term, multi-year federal transportation bill that will provide the necessary and sustained investments that lead to better and safer roads for all Americans."

Additional Resources

2011 Crashes vs. Congestion Report

Just One Thing: Tell your elected officials one thing you'd like to change to make your transportation experience safer and better

According to the study conducted for AAA by Cambridge Systematics, the overall cost of crashes (\$299.5 billion) equates to an annual per person cost of \$1,522, compared to \$590 per person annually for congestion (\$97.7 billion overall). The cost of crashes are based on the Federal Highway Administration's comprehensive costs for traffic fatalities and injuries that assign a dollar value to a variety of components, including medical and emergency services, lost earnings and household production, property damage, and lost quality of life, among other things.

The report calculates the costs of crashes for the same metropolitan areas covered by the annual *Urban Mobility Report* conducted by the Texas Transportation Institute. The results showed crash costs exceeded congestion in every metropolitan area studied, from very large to small. For very large urban areas (populations of more than three million), crash costs are nearly double those of congestion. Those costs rise to nearly six times congestion costs in small urban areas (populations less than 500,000) where motorists face less congested conditions.

"Almost 33,000 people – 635 per week – die on U.S. roadways each year and that's unacceptable," said Darbelnet. "While the decline in traffic fatalities in recent years signifies a positive trend, our work is far from over. Continued progress will require active and focused leadership, improved communication and collaboration, and an investment in data collection and evaluation to make sure we're addressing the nation's most serious safety challenges."

As North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA provides more than 52 million members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding in 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax-paying AAA has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. AAA clubs can be visited on the Internet at AAA.com.

Related Articles



December 9, 2011

Mr. Patrick Wojahn, Chairman
Access for All Committee Transportation Planning Board
777 N. Capitol Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Re: AFA Recommendations for MetroAccess Cost Containment

Dear Chairman Wojahn:

During my tenure last year as Chair of the Access for All Committee (AFA), I submitted a letter to the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) offering recommendations on how to respond to budget concerns related to Metro's paratransit service. During budget discussions, receipt of the AFA letter was acknowledged and recommendations were weighed and some were implemented; however, Metro did not respond directly to the letter.

In a recent meeting of Metro's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), an AFA member inquired about the status of the recommendations. Since AFA now has direct representation on the AAC, I have asked the AAC to review the matter and respond. A letter from the AAC Chair is attached.

Sincerely,

Catherine Hudgins
Chair

C: Richard R. Sarles, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer
Christian T. Kent, Assistant General Manager, Access Services
Patrick Sheehan, Chairman, Accessibility Advisory Committee

Washington
Metropolitan Area
Transit Authority

600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202/962-1234

By Metrorail:
Judiciary Square—Red Line
Gallery Place-Chinatown—
Red, Green and
Yellow Lines
By Metrobus:
Routes D1, D3, D6, P6,
70, 71, 80, X2



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-962-6060

December 9, 2011

Mr. Patrick Wojahn, Chairman
Access for All Committee
Transportation Planning Board
777 N. Capitol Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Re: AFA Recommendations for MetroAccess Cost Containment

Dear Chairman Wojahn:

In April 2010, the Access for All Committee (AFA) transmitted a letter to the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) offering recommendations on how to reduce the cost of our MetroAccess paratransit service. Metro Board Chair Catherine Hudgins has asked the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to respond. The recommendations were sent as alternatives to potential service reductions or fare increases that were being evaluated as part of our annual budget process, during which a budget gap of nearly \$200 million was being addressed. While all of the recommendations were reviewed, a formal response to AFA was not provided. The AAC recently reviewed these recommendations in the context of the current year's budget discussion, and the disposition of each is as follows:

1. **Increase taxi usage by 10 to 20 percent.** Projected savings was based on pricing that is no longer valid. Taxi rates are now mileage based (and charged by the meter) and are comparable to the cost of service performed by Metro's dedicated service providers. Also, taxi is best leveraged for spontaneous response, and with only two taxi companies in the program capable of meeting our service requirements (and with limited coverage across the service area), there is a significant limitation on our ability to use taxi service at the recommended volume.
2. **Self-insure the MetroAccess fleet.** Pursuit of this option was approved by Metro's Board in November 2011.
3. **Improve the capacity of the MetroAccess eligibility certification process to reduce the number of people being given presumptive eligibility, and after public vetting, introduce conditional eligibility.** Completed. Additionally, our eligibility certification office is offering reduced (half) fare on fixed-route services for

nearly all applicants who are not eligible for MetroAccess, and our travel training function has been integrated into that office to enable customers to explore that option while they are on site.

4. **Increase the flat fare and premium fare for out-of-corridor service at a lower rate of increase than that proposed.** Fare increase was implemented in March 2011, indexing the paratransit fare to twice the equivalent fixed-route fare. Simpler fare structure alternatives are currently being reviewed, and the AAC is preparing its own recommendations for Board consideration.
5. **Restructure MetroAccess contract to lessen the concentration or responsibilities in a single company.** Currently being considered as business model being constructed with significant vetting with the AAC and the public. The next contract is scheduled to begin on July 1, 2013, and the procurement process will be conducted in 2012.
6. **Carefully review proposed Metrobus changes to ensure that low-income bus riders are the least affected by potential service reductions and/or fare increases.** A complete Title VI analysis was performed prior to the consideration of any service changes, and the analysis confirmed that there would be no inordinate impact on disadvantaged populations. Metro will continue to use that approach for any future changes that may be considered.

Now that AFA holds two seats on the AAC, it is our expectation that any further detail on these or other recommendations from AFA will be brought forward for review at our future meetings. Additionally, we welcome the participation of all members of the AFA at all AAC activities.

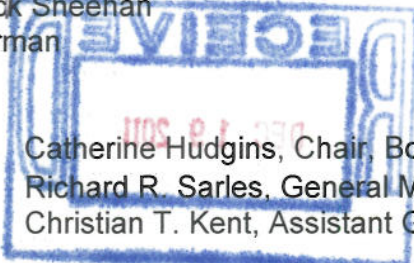
Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Patrick Sheehan
Chairman

cc: Catherine Hudgins, Chair, Board of Directors
Richard R. Sarles, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer
Christian T. Kent, Assistant General Manager, Access Services



DOT 165-11
Thursday, December 15, 2011

Secretary LaHood Announces Funding for 46 Innovative Transportation Projects Through Third Round of Popular TIGER Program

Job-Creating Grants Announced Months Ahead of Schedule as Part of the Obama Administration's "We Can't Wait" Initiative

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced today that 46 transportation projects in 33 states and Puerto Rico will receive a total of \$511 million from the third round of the U.S. Department of Transportation's popular TIGER program. The announcement comes months ahead of schedule, and will allow communities to move forward with critical, job-creating infrastructure projects including road and bridge improvements; transit upgrades; freight, port and rail expansions; and new options for bicyclists and pedestrians.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) received 848 project applications from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, DC, requesting a total of \$14.29 billion, far exceeding the \$511 million made available for grants under the TIGER III program.

"The overwhelming demand for these grants clearly shows that communities across the country can't afford to wait any longer for Congress to put Americans to work building the transportation projects that are critical to our economic future," said Secretary LaHood. "That's why we've taken action to get these grants out the door quickly, and that is why we will continue to ask Congress to make the targeted investments we need to create jobs, repair our nation's transportation systems, better serve the traveling public and our nation's businesses, factories and farms, and make sure our economy continues to grow."

In November, President Obama directed DOT to take common sense steps to expedite transportation projects by accelerating the process for review and approval and by leveraging private sector funding to promote growth and job creation. As part of that initiative, DOT accelerated the TIGER III application review process and has announced the awards before the end of 2011 – months ahead of the planned spring 2012 announcement.

The grants will fund a wide range of innovative transportation projects in urban and rural areas across the country:

- Of the \$511 million in TIGER III funds available for grants, more than \$150 million will go to critical projects in rural areas.

- Roughly 48% of the funding will go to road and bridge projects, including more than \$64 million for Complete Streets projects that will spur small business growth and benefit motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.

- 29% of the funding will support transit projects like the Westside Multimodal Transit Center in San Antonio.

- 12% will help build port projects like the Port of New Orleans Rail Yard Improvements.

- 10% will go to freight rail projects like the Muldraugh Bridge Replacement in Kentucky.

- Three grants were also directed to tribal governments to create jobs and address critical transportation needs in Indian country.

Three grants will provide better multimodal access to airports, including DFW in Texas.

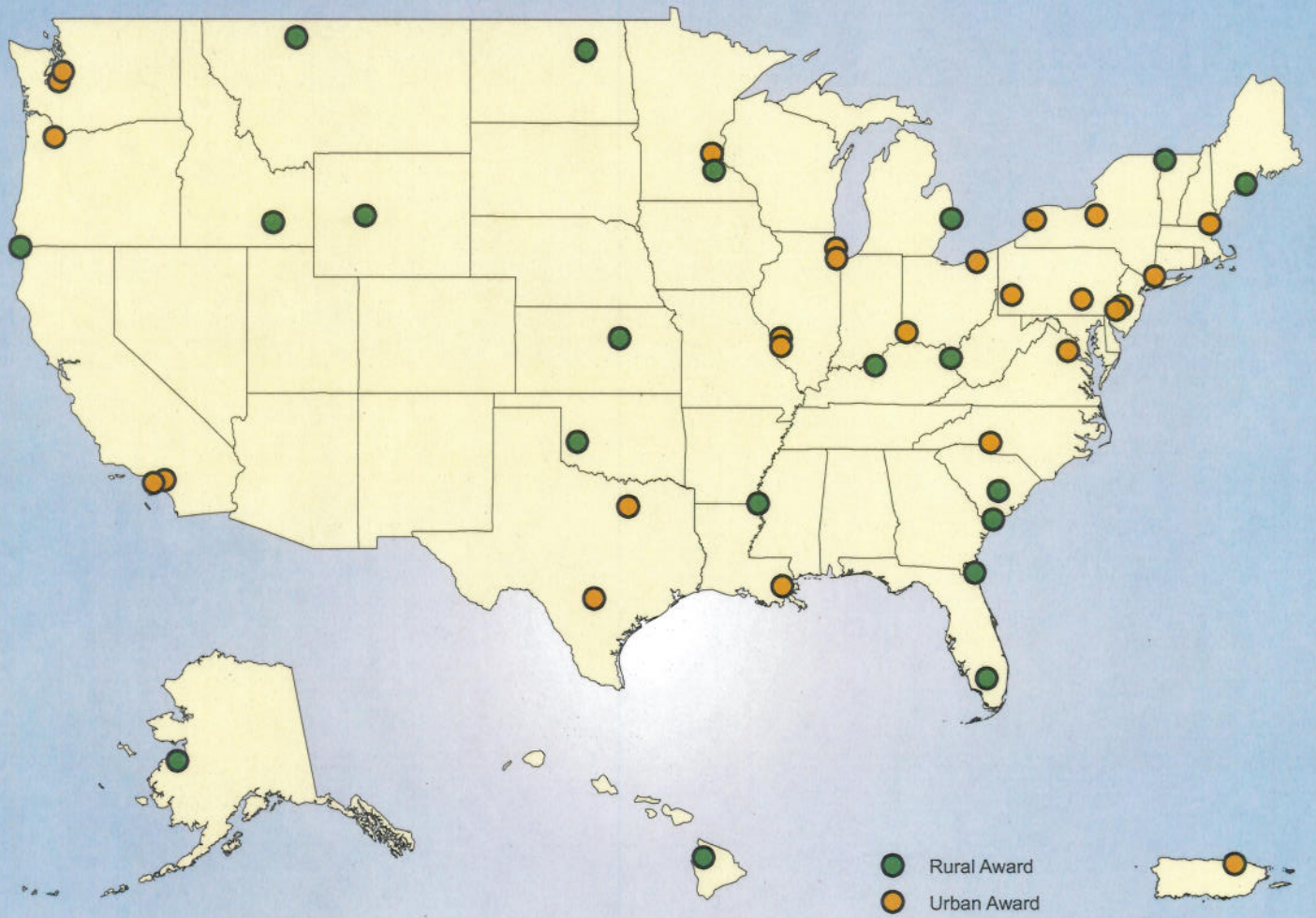
Work has already begun on 33 planning projects while 58 capital projects are under way across the country from the previous two rounds of TIGER, and an additional 13 projects are expected to break ground over the next six months.

In 2009 and 2010, the Department received a total of 2,400 applications requesting \$76 billion, greatly exceeding the \$2.1 billion available in the TIGER I and TIGER II grant programs. In the previous two rounds, the TIGER program awarded grants to 126 freight, highway, transit, port and bicycle/pedestrian projects in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

TIGER grants are awarded to transportation projects that have a significant national or regional impact. Projects are chosen for their ability to contribute to the long-term economic competitiveness of the nation, improve the condition of existing transportation facilities and systems, increase energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improve the safety of U.S. transportation facilities and enhance the quality of living and working environments of communities through increased transportation choices and connections. The Department also gives priority to projects that are expected to create and preserve jobs quickly and stimulate increases in economic activity.

The continuing demand for TIGER grants highlights the need for further investment in the nation's transportation infrastructure that could be provided by President Obama's American Jobs Act. The American Jobs Act would provide \$50 billion to improve 150,000 miles of road, replace 4,000 miles of track, and restore 150 miles of runways, creating jobs for American workers and building a safer, more efficient transportation network. It would also provide \$10 billion for the creation of a bipartisan National Infrastructure bank.

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FY2011 TIGER GRANTS

Project Name	State(s)	FY11 TIGER Grant
Chicago Blue Line Renewal & City Bike Share	IL	\$20,000,000
I-95 HOT Lanes	VA	\$20,000,000
St. Louis City ArchRiver Revitalization	MO	\$20,000,000
State Route 91 Corridor Improvements	CA	\$20,000,000
South Jersey Port Rail Improvements	NJ	\$18,500,000
LYNX Blue Line Capacity Expansion	NC	\$18,000,000
Sellwood Bridge Replacement	OR	\$17,700,000
Port of Long Beach Rail Realignment	CA	\$17,000,000
Port of New Orleans Rail Yard Improvements	LA	\$16,738,246
Buffalo Main Street Revitalization	NY	\$15,000,000
I-5 Lewis-McChord Area Congestion Management	WA	\$15,000,000
Rutherford Intermodal Facility Expansion	PA	\$15,000,000
Westside Multimodal Transit Center	TX	\$15,000,000
Alton Regional Multimodal Station	IL	\$13,850,000
Saddle Road Improvements	HI	\$13,500,000
Boundary Street Redevelopment	SC	\$12,635,000
Mayfield Transit Station	OH	\$12,503,200
I-95/US-301 Interchange Improvement	SC	\$12,100,000
Prichard Intermodal Facility	WV	\$12,000,000
Muldrough Bridges Replacement	KY	\$11,558,220
Cincinnati Streetcar Riverfront Loop	OH	\$10,920,000
Kennebec Bridge Replacement	ME	\$10,810,000
Stamford Intermodal Access	CT	\$10,500,000
IL 83 (147th Street) Reconstruction	IL	\$10,438,000
Caparra Interchange	PR	\$10,000,000
Carrie Furnace Flyover Bridge	PA	\$10,000,000
Dames Point Intermodal Container Facility	FL	\$10,000,000
Devils Lake Rail Improvements	ND	\$10,000,000
IMPACT Philadelphia	PA	\$10,000,000
Merrimack River Bridge Rehabilitation	MA	\$10,000,000
Minneapolis Transit Interchange Construction	MN	\$10,000,000
South Link: Sea-Tac Airport to South 200th Street	WA	\$10,000,000
Syracuse Connective Corridor	NY	\$10,000,000
Northern Montana Multimodal Hub	MT	\$9,998,910
Mississippi River Bridges ITS	MS/AR/LA	\$9,814,700
17 Mile Road	WY	\$8,233,700
Oklahoma Freight Rail Upgrade	OK	\$6,756,580
Solomon Rural Rail Upgrade	KS	\$6,568,095
DART Orange Line Extension	TX	\$5,000,000
Snake Road Improvement	FL	\$3,700,000
Smiths Creek Road & Bridge Reconstruction	MI	\$3,650,000
US 101 Smith River Safety Corridor	CA	\$2,500,000
City of American Falls Complete Streets	ID	\$2,300,000
St. Albans Main Street Reconstruction	VT	\$2,088,496
Northfield Multimodal Integration	MN	\$1,060,000
St. Michael Community Streets	AK	\$1,000,000

Source: Wall Street Journal (December 2, 2011 Issue)

Americans Embrace SUVs Again

The sport-utility vehicle is making a comeback.



After being largely shunned during the recession, high-riding SUVs and workhorse pickups are regaining favor as U.S. consumers grow more confident and fuel prices remain below the \$4 a gallon level that triggered a shift away from larger vehicles.

The rebound was clear Thursday as U.S. auto sales in November hit a 13.6 million annual pace, the strongest in more than two years, with sales of trucks and SUVs surpassing cars at many auto makers. The results are boosting Detroit auto makers that suffered when gas-guzzlers got the cold shoulder in 2008.

The demand is replenishing profits and restoring some of the market share losses suffered by the Detroit Three in recent decades. The average vehicle sold last month cost \$30,317, up 4% from a year ago. Chrysler, the last of the big auto makers to rebound, earlier this year turned its first profit since entering bankruptcy in April 2009.

The SUV and truck comeback has been building for the past two years, a reflection of the improving economy and greater consumer confidence. A preference for trucks and SUVs may have been suppressed during the downturn, but it never really went away.

Horace Dudley recently replaced his 2001 Ford Explorer, which had 250,000 miles on it and was starting to break down, with a new version of the same model. Mr. Dudley, who is six-foot-three-inches tall, said he still tries to conserve gas, but the extra space is worth the cost.

"A smaller car may have better fuel efficiency, but I want to be comfortable," said Mr. Dudley, of Warren, Mich. "I wouldn't fit very well in a Focus," he joked.

Results at [General Motors](#) Co., the largest U.S. auto maker, illustrate the strong lift from sport-utility vehicles and pickup trucks. Its SUV and truck sales climbed 10% while passenger cars rose 1%, both from a year ago.

"People like sitting up higher, [and] having seven or eight seats," said Alan Batey, head of marketing for Chevrolet. Better fuel efficiency in newer, large vehicles is helping demand, he said.

Big Iron Rebound

Better big-vehicle fuel economy, tamer gasoline prices and America's love of trucks and SUVs are lifting auto makers' sales. Change from year earlier in November sales.



Note: Trucks include pickup trucks, vans and SUVs.

Source: The companies; Associated Press; Bloomberg News (photos)

America appears to have renewed its love affair with the SUV, with the vehicles outselling passenger cars at many dealerships in November. WSJ's Sharon Terlep pulls up to Mean Street to explain.

"I travel a lot with my kids and my kids' friends. I can put all my friends and family in here and haul them

around but with reasonable fuel efficiency. I needed something big, something solid, something reliable," said Andrea Maggioni, a physician from Miami who recently bought a 2011 Honda Pilot. "I needed a car where I could envision myself and a bunch of kids driving around."

In part, last month's gain reflects end-of-year purchases by tradesmen who tend to favor bigger vehicles. But consumers are also embracing pickups and small SUVs such as Chevrolet's Equinox that can get up to 32 highway miles a gallon, one less than a Malibu sedan. [Ford Motor Co.](#)'s F-150 pickup boasts 23 highway miles using its turbocharged, six-cylinder engine.

"Our lifestyle is about the soccer family and the football family and camping and doing lots of activities, things that involve carrying lots of stuff around," said Joseph Phillippi, of Auto Trends Consulting. "You can't do that well in a [compact] Cruze or a Focus."

Overall, car and light-truck sales jumped 13.9% in November over a year ago to 994,721, according to market researcher Autodata Corp. That strong demand allowed Chrysler Group LLC, which has long sold more pickups than cars, to post a 45% unit gain. [Nissan Motor Co.](#)'s sales rose 19%, Ford's 13% and GM's nearly 7% over the same month a year ago.

At the end of 2009, SUVs and trucks made up 47.3% of the market, 50.2% in 2010, and through November this year, 50.8%. Auto makers and others also say the overall gains reflect businesses and consumers updating vehicles after months or years of deferring purchases due to economic worries.

"I was holding off, but I had to get a new truck because I knew the repair bills were going to start adding up. I had to have something I could rely on," said Tom LaClear, 41, of Jackson, Mich., who traded in his six-year-old pickup for a Ram pickup truck from Extreme Dodge in Jackson, Mich., last month.

"Consumers who delayed car purchases during the summer months when supply was tight and prices were higher for many models are now coming back to market," said Lacey Plache, economist for automotive information Website Edmunds.com.

Ford said its truck and SUV sales rose nearly 26% to 118,543 last month while passenger car sales dropped nearly 9% from a year ago, to 48,322. Its overall sales rose 13% to 166,441 vehicles.

The Dearborn, Mich., auto maker said it expects more customers replacing aging vehicles will keep demand high into the next year. It plans a 3% increase in North American production for the first quarter of 2012 over a year ago. More than two-thirds of its production plan is for light trucks.

"We are going to see more and more of this pent-up demand realized," said Ford economist Jenny Lin.

Chrysler, whose brands including Jeep and Dodge have benefited most of the year from demand for its SUVs and pickups, said its car sales more than doubled to 28,694 from a year ago. Its cars have newly restyled interiors. Sales of its trucks and SUVs rose 29% to 78,478. Both increases come against a relatively weak showing by the Auburn Hills, Mich., company in the same month last year.

Its November results also include 1,600 Fiat vehicles through its majority owner [FiatSpA](#). Fiats weren't sold in the U.S. a year ago.

Shares of the auto makers were little changed on Thursday after big advances a day earlier. GM shares fell 33 cents to \$20.96 while Ford was off a penny at \$10.59, both in 4 p.m. composite New York Stock Exchange trading.

Write to Mike Ramsey at michael.ramsey@wsj.com and Sharon Terlep at sharon.terlep@wsj.com