DOT TIGER Grants and Rural America: Eligible Projects that Support Strong Economies and Livable Communities

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At Reconnecting America, we help transform promising ideas into thriving communities – where transportation choices make it easy to get from place to place, where businesses flourish, and where people from all walks of life can afford to live, work and visit.
Transportation Challenges faced by Small Town/Rural Areas

- Growth pressures threaten small town character
- Limited economic growth
- Limited capacity – people and funding
- Political feasibility & public will

Photo: Flickr user Muffet
Transportation Opportunities for a Small Town/Rural Area

- Revitalize and promote existing rural towns
- Improve our roads and bridges
- Engage more stakeholders in planning
- Shift movement of goods from highways to freight rail
- Provide rural connectivity through multi-modal solutions
Project Types

• Intermodal Stations
• Passenger Rail Improvements
• Complete Streets & Greenways
• Transit Improvements
• Freight Rail Improvements
• Bridge Replacements
• Highway Improvements
• Port Projects
• Other
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Intermodal Stations

- Improve connectivity for travelers, support multimodal travel
- Serve as welcome centers, community gathering places
- Promote economic development

Photo: Meridian Union Station, Mississippi
Intermodal Stations

Example past TIGER projects:

- Normal Multimodal Transportation Center, Illinois - $22M in TIGER I
- Ames Intermodal Facility, Iowa - $8.4M in TIGER I
- Waterloo Station Improvements, Indiana - $1.8M in TIGER II
- Moscow Intermodal Transit Center, Idaho - $1.5M in TIGER II
Intermodal Station Example: Moscow Intermodal Transit Center, Idaho

- City population: 23,800
- Transit facility
  - Moscow Valley Transit, University of Idaho Shuttle, 2 intercity buses
- Secure parking for buses and bicycles, link to Paradise Path
- Access for taxis, vanpools and carpools
- Total project costs: $2.8M, TIGER grant: $1.5M

Photo: Flickr user jimmywayne

Photo from itd.idaho.gov
Passenger Rail Example: Fitchburg Commuter Rail

- 4.5 mile extension of existing commuter rail line
- New station at Wachusett, track improvements & layover facility
- Projected to serve 400+ new rail commuters in 2012 and divert 824 daily trips from SR2
- Will create 306 short-term and 855 long-term jobs
Complete Streets & Greenways

“Complete Streets will look different in rural communities than they do in more urban counterparts. For example, roads surrounded by agricultural use may be “complete” by simply providing wide shoulders to allow safe bicycling and walking and providing connections to regional trail and public transportation networks. Low-speed roads with on-street parking, well-marked crossings, and sidewalks with accessible curb cuts lining one side of the street may best meet the needs of a residential street.”

(www.completestreets.org)
Complete Streets & Greenways

- Complete Street policies in places as small as Manistique, Michigan (3,500 residents)
- Other street improvements might include streetscaping, traffic calming, adding sidewalks
- Greenways have not been common project types in rural areas – past funded greenway project in Arkansas (not a rural area)

Photo: Flickr user London Permaculture
Complete Streets & Greenways

Example past TIGER projects:
- US-93/2\textsuperscript{nd} Street Improvements, MT - $3.5M in TIGER I
- Route 10 Safety Improvements, WV - $17M in TIGER II
- Staples North/South Corridor, MN - $7.6M in TIGER II
- Woodside Boulevard Complete Street Initiative, Hailey ID - $3.5M in TIGER II

Photo: TIGER project area, Staples, MN
Complete Streets Example: Hailey, ID

- Rebuilding of a 35-year old 2.44 mile collector street
- Adding sidewalks, bike lanes, bus shelters, bike parking, a landscape buffer zone, a traffic signal and a roundabout
- Also adding transit pull-out lanes and bus shelters

Photo: Woodside Boulevard, from Google Maps
Transit Improvements

• 36% of TIGER grant funding has gone to transit projects

• Standalone transit projects have mostly been streetcars and BRT

• The challenge: small, dispersed population makes it difficult to support transit

• The opportunity: demand for more options is growing: rural and small urban public transportation systems experienced a 20% rise in ridership from 2002 to 2005.¹

¹ Completestreets.org, Rural Areas and Small Towns Fact Sheet
Transit Improvements

- ROW acquisition not competitive
- Operations and maintenance no eligible
- Purchasing new buses eligible but not competitive on its own
- Most likely rural transit project is going to be part of a streetscape or Complete Streets effort that includes bus pull-outs, shelters and transit/intermodal stations
Freight Improvements

• Shift movement of goods from highways to freight rail

• Support strong rural economies, less congestion and cleaner air

• Track improvements or construction, grade separation, rail yards, etc.
Freight Improvements

Examples of TIGER funded projects:

• Southwest Illinois Intermodal Freight Transportation Hub - $6M in TIGER I
• Auke Bay Loading Facility, AK - $3.6M in TIGER I
• Reconstruction of MRC Railroad, SD - $16M in TIGER II
• North Central Regional Economic Growth Intermodal Port Connector project, ND - $14.1 in TIGER II
• Coos Bay Rail Line (Coos, Douglas, Land Counties), OR - $13.6M in TIGER II
• Aroostook Rail Preservation, ME - $10.5 in TIGER II
• Great Plains Freight Rail, KS, OK - $10.2 in TIGER II
• Central Pennsylvania Rail and Road Expansion, PA - $10M in TIGER II
• Freight Rail Reactivation and Rehabilitation, NE - $4.9M in TIGER II
Freight Improvements Examples

Coos Bay, OR
- Rehabilitate track structure of the 133-mile rail link, including replacement of worn-out rails, fasteners, and wood ties; re-establishment of proper surface, line, and dress of the track; drainage improvement of the track bed; and enhancing the ballast bed
- Shifting freight to rail will decrease costs by 20%

Chadron, NE Freight Rail Reactivation & Rehab
- Upgrade 27 timber bridges, construct a new passing/storage track and reconstruct a mile of track to improving connections to the main line in the
- Remove ~15,000 truckloads from roads annually
Guiding Principles

• Enable cooperation between stakeholders

• If possible, engage a neutral entity to act as a convener and facilitator

• Identify your project “champions”

• Be smart about messaging: What matters in your community?

• Prioritize projects that use local contracting and fair wage labor
Resources

DOT’s TIGER site:
•  www.dot.gov/tiger/

Reconnecting America’s Resource Page:
•  www.reconnectingamerica.org/resource-center/livability-in-smaller-cities/

National Association of Development Organizations (NADO):
•  www.ruraltransportation.org
•  “Exploring the Role of Regional Transportation Projects as Rural Economy Drivers” (NADO, 2011)

Sustainable Communities Network
•  www.smartgrowthamerica.org/sustainable-communities-network
Timeline

Preapplication system open by August 23,

Preapplications due October 3, 5pm EDT

Application system open on October 5

Applications due October 31, 2011, 5pm EDT

Funds must be obligated by September 30, 2013
Thank you!

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