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Obama Administration’s Improved Screen for Transit Projects Will Help the Economy, Environment, and Local Communities

Smart Growth America and Transportation for America applaud repeal of rules that hampered communities seeking deserving rail and rapid bus projects

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Washington, DC – In response to Secretary LaHood’s announcement today that funding guidelines for major transit projects will be selected based on livability benefits, including economic development and the environment, James Corless, campaign director of Transportation for America, and Geoff Anderson, president and CEO of Smart Growth America, had the following reactions:

“We applaud the Obama Administration for recognizing that smart transportation projects can have a powerful effect on the livability of communities across America,” Anderson said. “For too long federal rules have taken a blinkered approach to the cost-benefit analysis of transit projects, deliberately ignoring benefits to communities looking to provide more options, shape growth, reduce environmental impacts and spur economic development. This policy change represents a significant shift that will ensure our federal investments contribute to greater economic development, protect the environment and improve the health of the American people.”

“As discussion around the federal transportation authorization bill continues,” Corless said, “there could not be a more important moment for forward-looking, innovative approaches to transforming our existing system. The next step is to ensure our entire transportation program addresses the essential issues of economic development, the environment and public health by focusing on livability and sustainability in the selection of all transportation projects.”

“We need to complete our transportation network by devoting a greater share of funds for public transportation. We also need to give state and local leaders the option of choosing the best solutions for their communities, by equalizing both the rules and required funding matches for transit and highways. It is clear that Americans are looking for a new era of leadership to provide the safer, cleaner, and smarter transportation options that will help them save money pump even as our communities become more energy-efficient, healthy and livable.”
Smart Growth America is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring smart growth practices to more communities nationwide. From providing more sidewalks to ensuring more homes are built near public transit or that productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth helps make sure people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods. For additional information, please visit www.smartgrowthamerica.org.

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