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Geoffrey Anderson Responds to President Obama's Plans for America's Infrastructure

Washington DC – The following is a statement from Smart Growth America President and CEO Geoffrey Anderson in response to President Obama's infrastructure policy proposals, unveiled February 20, 2013 to reporters at the White House:

The United States' network of highways, roads, bridges, transit systems, airplanes and seaports is the central nervous system for a strong national economy. Once the source of national pride and economic progress, today much of the country's transportation network is in dire need of upgrades, replacement and modernization.

Yesterday, President Obama put forth three main proposals meant to address our nation's ailing infrastructure. The most important of these is a 'fix-it-first' policy that calls for investing \$50 billion in transportation infrastructure, with \$40 billion dedicated to work on transit systems, highways and bridges in "most need of repair."

I was pleased to hear President Obama stress the urgency of repairing at-risk infrastructure. This approach mirrors policy reforms put forth by Smart Growth America and our program Transportation for America. Fix-it-first policies maintain existing infrastructure, make better use of taxpayer dollars and limit government waste by addressing vulnerable roads and bridges before they reach a point requiring even more costly repairs.

Strong communities require safe and modern infrastructure and the American people know it. Polls conducted by Transportation for America and others show that nearly 9 in 10 voters believe fixing infrastructure should be among the highest national priorities. A fix-it-first policy will point us in a more sustainable and fiscally responsible direction moving forward.

President Obama also proposed a plan to incorporate private investment for federal, state and local projects, including the creation of a national infrastructure bank. This would increase opportunities to bring public and private entities and funding together in the planning and financing of vital infrastructure projects and upgrades.

The nation's ailing infrastructure is an urgent issue that will only get worse without a strong, forward-thinking vision. Maintaining the country's roads and bridges is a key part of helping regions compete in a 21st century economy, and is a fiscally responsible path for all levels of government. We look forward to working with the Obama Administration in 2013 to continue making America a great place to live, work and do business.

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