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Smart Growth America supports American Jobs Act's proposal to revitalize vacant properties, build better transit

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Washington, DC – Smart Growth America supports President Obama's call for federal investment strategies that will create jobs, modernize America's transportation infrastructure and support the country's economy as part of the American Jobs Act. In particular, Smart Growth America supports the following proposals which use smart growth strategies:

- **Project Rebuild (\$15 billion)**

Project Rebuild will connect Americans looking for work in distressed communities with the work needed to repair and repurpose residential and commercial properties.

Project Rebuild includes support for land banking, empowering public-private partnerships to speed up the redevelopment process, and a focus on redeveloping distressed commercial properties. New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo recently signed a state-wide land banking bill into law, enabling New York communities to strategically and swiftly re-purpose abandoned and vacant properties and, in time, lessening blight and bringing revitalization to many New York neighborhoods.

- **Immediate Investments in Infrastructure (\$50 billion)**

Proposed infrastructure investments include repairing transit systems, improving rail, funding innovative transportation.

The plan includes \$9 billion to repair our nation's transit systems, many of which are desperately in need of modernization, as well as \$2 billion in funding to improve intercity passenger rail service. These funds will connect communities, reduce travel times and congestion, and create skilled manufacturing jobs. The plan also includes \$5 billion for the TIGER and TIFIA programs, which target competitive dollars to innovative, multi-modal transportation programs.

"America's towns and cities are worth investing in, and this bill recognizes that," said Geoff Anderson, President and CEO of Smart Growth America. "It's hard for any community to thrive when people are out of work. But it's even harder for a town to recover when, on top of unemployment, homes are boarded up or downtown is empty. This is exactly what smart growth helps communities overcome, and there are several of these strategies in the American Jobs Act.

"This bill's proposed investments in land banks and vacant property redevelopment, as well as rail projects, road repair, and the federal grant programs that support these strategies are exactly what many struggling communities have been waiting for. Congress should absolutely pass this bill to put thousands of Americans back to work now and rebuild the country's economy for years to come."

Public transit and road repair projects create more jobs per dollar invested

Smart Growth America's analysis of 2009's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act revealed that public transportation projects created 70% more job hours per dollar than highway projects. Even within highway spending, projects to repair existing roads create more jobs than building new roads: studies of transportation job creation show that on average, road repair produces 16% more jobs per dollar than new road construction.

The American Jobs Act's support for both these types of transportation infrastructure projects will enhance the benefits they provide to American communities.

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 transportation 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 visit www.smartgrowthamerica.org.

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