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American Jobs Act should use public transportation and road repair to achieve job creation goals

Public transportation projects create 31% more jobs per dollar than highway projects

CONTACT: Alex Goldschmidt, Smart Growth America, [202-679-6816](tel:202-679-6816),
agoldschmidt@smartgrowthamerica.org

Washington, DC – In his speech tonight before Congress, President Obama outlined the new American Jobs Act, which states among its goals putting construction workers back to work rebuilding the country's roads and bridges. In response to this call Geoff Anderson, President and CEO of Smart Growth America, issued the following statement:

Investments in smart growth infrastructure like public transportation and repairing deteriorating infrastructure in existing communities will best achieve the goals outlined in President Obama's America Jobs Act. Rather than spending millions on land and equipment and obligating taxpayers to additional maintenance, these investments will reduce future costs and put a larger proportion of funds directly into the pockets of American families.

These investment strategies will also create the jobs of the future the president recognizes are key to America's future economic health. Robust public transportation and roads and bridges in good condition are vital to keeping America competitive in a global 21st century economy, and the American Jobs Act is an excellent opportunity to begin building these important resources.

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. This was unusually high: most public transportation projects only create 31% 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. These disparities are due largely to the fact that new road construction projects require land to be acquired, an expense that usually takes considerable funds away from labor and salaries.

Investing in repair also protects states and the federal government from significant future liabilities. According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, spending \$1 spent to keep a road in good condition avoids \$6-14 needed later to rebuild that road once it has deteriorated significantly.

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 <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/>.

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