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Ride for Life - Transit is Essential to Livability and Sustainability

Public transportation provides mobility alternatives so that all members of a community may share access to key destinations and enjoy quality of life benefits. In 2009, people took more than 10.2 billion trips on public transportation, about 34 million trips each weekday.

Access and mobility – this is how transit connects the dots. It creates jobs and gets us to work every day. It contributes to the growth of a strong economy as every \$1 billion investment in public transportation supports 36,000 jobs and generates \$4 billion in business activity. It carries us back and forth to school, shopping, community services and leisure activities. It connects key destinations and brings them into the larger community. In so doing, transit makes that larger community more livable and environmentally sustainable.

Transit supports rural, suburban and urban communities, and touches each of the six core principles of the Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Public transportation systems must be a funding priority because without them, the nation's livability and sustainability goals will be difficult to achieve. Public transportation saves the U.S. 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline and 37 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually.

In metropolitan areas especially, quality of life is already improved because of existing transit systems. It saves Americans 646 million hours and \$13.7 billion in travel time on congested roads, delivers essential health and human services to people from all walks of life, and provides mobility options for our aging society. Transit's priority is to enhance the connectivity and accessibility of those systems and to ensure that they continue to provide safe and reliable mobility. In metropolitan areas where public transportation is available, the access and mobility provided are fundamental catalysts for accelerating achievement of *place-based* policy objectives. In order to maximize return on the comprehensive federal investment, transit needs to be a core element of all "un-siloed" federal place-based programs.

By leveraging the principles in the Sustainable Communities Partnership, transit can support funding from other federal programs and help to focus investment to create more livable and sustainable communities. It is most efficient and effective if other federal departments concentrate their sustainable community initiatives and funding in and around planned or existing transit investments.

Therefore, our nation must:

- place greater emphasis on transit in federal place-based policies and funding, especially as it concerns land-use decision-making that should aim to capitalize on existing transit systems;
- allow existing transit services to be a priority for state of good repair funding; and
- conserve and enhance existing transit infrastructure and invest, as appropriate, in expanding transit to improve connectivity and mobility among and between diverse communities.

APPENDIX

Six core principles of the Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities:

- **Provide more transportation choices.** Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.
- **Promote equitable, affordable housing.** Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- **Enhance economic competitiveness.** Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.
- **Support existing communities.** Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
- **Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.** Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.
- **Value communities and neighborhoods.** Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.