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**Transportation Stimulus Projects Get Mixed Results Nationally:
Oregon Group Asks for Greater Transportation Choices**

A new report released today by Smart Growth America and 1000 Friends of Oregon finds that, around the country, states have produced mixed results in meeting the goals of transportation funding through the federal stimulus.

The report shows that some states are moving aggressively to make badly needed repairs and prepare for a 21st century transportation system. Others are letting their roads and public transportation deteriorate while adding new road capacity. According to the report, Oregon falls below the national average in road repair and maintenance spending, but is above the national average for non-motorized and public transportation spending.

“We’re making progress, but we’re missing an opportunity to maximize job creation and build a balanced and sustainable transportation system,” said Bob Stacey, Executive Director of 1000 Friends of Oregon. “Fixing our roads and bridges create more jobs and put people to work faster than building new roads. Investing in public transportation helps lower transportation costs for Oregon families. We can and should make smarter investment decisions.”

The *American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA)* provided \$26.6 billion in flexible transportation funding through the federal Surface Transportation Program (STP). STP funds can be used by state and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) officials for a wide range of transportation infrastructure projects, including public transportation capacity, bicycle lanes and sidewalks, repair and maintenance of bridges and roads, and new and widened roads and highways. The ARRA required that half of the funds be obligated within the first 120 days, by June 29.

The report, [*The States and the Stimulus: Are they using it to create jobs and 21st century transportation?*](#), is available from [Smart Growth America](#). The table below compares Oregon’s choices to state choices nationwide:

Type of Project	Nationwide Breakdown (%)	Oregon Breakdown (%)	Oregon total (millions)
Highway system preservation	63.0	54	\$133.9
Non-motorized projects (bicycle and pedestrian)	2.8	8	20.2
Public transportation	0.9	9	21.3
New highway capacity	31.3	17	41.9
Other projects	2.0	12	30.8

“Oregon gas tax dollars must be spent on roads,” according to Stacey. “These federal funds don’t have these restrictions. It makes sense to invest these federal funds to give Oregonians better transportation choices.”

In a recent National Association of Realtors survey, a very strong majority of Americans (80%) said they prefer that stimulus transportation funding be used for repairing roadways and bridges and for public transportation.

Smart Growth America found that some states, like Massachusetts and Iowa, used the stimulus money to make progress on the kind of transportation system that their communities need for strong economic growth. Other states missed an opportunity to make progress in filling the nation’s urgent transportation needs and creating more jobs as quickly as possible. These states built new roads rather than repairing existing ones, and missed the chance to invest in the new options their residents really want like safe bus routes and bike paths.

The states had opportunities to create more jobs, faster: shifting more spending towards repair would create more jobs. Shifting \$2 billion more to repair would have produced an average of 4,300 more jobs nationally. And because repair work can generally be started faster, these jobs would come on-line faster.

The stimulus provided a tremendous opportunity to address the nation’s enormous bridge and roadway repair backlog and the inadequacy of its public transportation system. The report documents recent findings by the American Society of Civil Engineers and American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), including the cost of roads in “poor” condition (\$355 per person, nationally) and number of “structurally deficient” bridges (18,722).

“That nationally nearly two-thirds of STP funding has gone to repairing existing roads and bridges is encouraging,” said Geoff Anderson, President of Smart Growth America, “But given our huge road and bridge repair backlog and inadequate public transportation system, \$6.6 billion for new highway capacity just doesn’t make sense. It’s like adding a new wing to your house when the roof is falling in.”

“In aggregate, the states spent virtually none of their flexible money on these choices, losing the opportunity to shield Americans from future gas price spikes and limiting their freedom to choose how they get around. We’re seeing the effects of cuts in public transportation right now and it’s often hurting low income and minority populations – the people who most rely on this transportation to get to work, be self-sufficient, and participate in the economy.