

**A PROPOSAL TO REBUILD AMERICA**  
**BY INVESTING IN TRANSPORTATION AND**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

*January 12, 2009*

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's December 12, 2008 Rebuild America proposal would provide a total of \$85 billion for "shovel-ready" projects to enhance our transportation, environmental, water resources, and public buildings infrastructure. Concerns have been expressed that these funds will be used to fund unneeded projects, so-called "bridges to nowhere". This is extremely unlikely because a "shovel-ready" project, by definition, has been fully vetted and approved at the State and local level, as described below.

**SHOVEL-READY PROJECTS**

The Committee's Rebuild America proposal establishes aggressive, "shovel-ready" deadlines for the use of the economic recovery funds. These deadlines include a 90-day, use-it-or-lose-it requirement for a percentage of the funds. This aggressive mandate will produce a "quick hit" that will jump-start the economy and create a substantial number of new construction jobs by June.

Using highway funds as an example, each State must award contracts based on bids for at least one-half of the funding allocated to the State within 90 days of when the Federal Highway Administration allocates the funds. In this way, \$15 billion of the proposed \$30 billion will be put to immediate work to jump-start the economy. If a State does not obligate its funds within the 90-day period, the funds will be redistributed to other States for their use.

**"Shovel Ready" means:**

- The project meets the normal eligibility requirements under the existing Federal highway, transit, or other grant program.
- The project has completed all necessary design work and right-of-way acquisition.
- The project has completed all environmental reviews. If the project would result in significant environmental effects, the Federal agency must have issued an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Record of Decision determining that the project complies with environmental laws. As part of this environmental review process, project sponsors must have had public hearings to consider the transportation, environmental, community, and other effects of proposed projects. As part of the EIS Record of Decision, project sponsors must also have environmental mitigation plans ready to incorporate into the project design.
- The project is on the State plan ("State Transportation Improvement Program") and, if applicable, Metropolitan plan ("Transportation Improvement Program").
- The project is ready to be put out to bid, and contracts can be awarded and work underway within 90 days of enactment.

Due to this aggressive timeline, it is anticipated that much of the funding will go to repair and maintenance activities, rather than new construction.

## “SHOVEL-READY” PROJECT EXAMPLES

### Highways and Bridges

State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) have a tremendous backlog of highway projects that could be implemented quickly if additional funds were made available. For example, State DOTs often have open-ended contracts in place for resurfacing projects, which means that work could begin immediately upon receipt of additional funds. In addition, many State DOTs have projects already in process that could be accelerated if additional funding were provided.

Specific examples of ready-to-go highway and bridge projects provided by American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials are discussed below. These are illustrative of the types of projects States could choose to fund if additional Federal-aid Highway funds are apportioned to the States.

- Brownville Bridge, U.S. Route 136, Atchison County, Missouri: According to the Missouri Department of Transportation, this project would accelerate necessary repair work on the bridge over the Missouri River at Brownville, Nebraska. The 1,903-foot bridge is 70 years old and is structurally deficient. The bridge has a rating of 3 (serious condition), which is lower than the rating of the I-35W Bridge which collapsed in Minnesota. This rating reflects such a serious condition that if its rating drops to 2, the bridge will be closed. If the bridge has to be closed, residents will have to make a 123-mile detour. Work that needs to be completed on this bridge includes joint repair, substructure repair, painting and redecking. Cost: \$13,200,000.
- Osage River Bridge, Route 17, Tuscumbia, Missouri: According to the Missouri Department of Transportation, this project would accelerate the replacement of a structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridge with the construction of a new bridge over the Osage River at Tuscumbia. The current bridge is a two-lane, 1,083-foot structure that is 75 years old and rated a 3 (serious condition). If the bridge has to be closed, residents will have to make a 40-mile detour. Cost: \$9,270,000.
- I-5/I-205 Interchange, Portland, Oregon: According to the Oregon Department of Transportation (“ODOT”), the I-5/I-205 interchange, which connects two of Oregon’s most heavily traveled freight and passenger corridors, was recognized by Portland metropolitan area residents as one of the region’s worst congestion chokepoints in a recent poll as well as noted in the State’s “Federal Bottleneck Report”. ODOT would like to address congestion at this interchange by building an acceleration/auxiliary lane that would allow traffic from the I-205 southbound ramp additional time to safely merge onto I-5 without slowing traffic in the travel lanes. This lane could significantly improve traffic flow on I-5 and I-205 at a relatively small cost. ODOT could quickly put this project out for contract and get construction underway in 2009. Cost: \$15,000,000.
- U.S. Route 20, Pioneer Mountain to Eddyville, Oregon: According to ODOT, this design/build project is currently under construction. The project will build seven miles of new alignment between Corvallis and the Oregon coast on U.S. Route 20. Currently, this segment of highway narrowly winds through the Coast Range. It is not updated to modern highway standards, experiences high crash rates, and has freight mobility restrictions. These

restrictions cause significant out-of-direction travel for trucks. Improvements to the west end tie-in section, which are designed and ready to go to construction, had to be modified to stay within budget. Additional Federal funding would allow this project to move forward immediately. Cost: \$12,000,000.

## Transit

Additional funds could be put to immediate use to meet increased ridership demand and, at the same time, create and sustain good-paying jobs and economic activity. Typically, ready-to-go projects involve purchasing buses and rail cars by exercising existing contract options, and accelerating existing construction and maintenance projects. Specific examples, provided by the American Public Transportation Association, are discussed below. These are illustrative of the types of projects that transit agencies could choose to fund if additional funds are apportioned to urbanized and nonurbanized areas.

- Virginia Railway Express, Alexandria, Virginia: This project would allow the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) to exercise options to purchase 15 locomotives, which will allow the transit agency to increase capacity by deploying longer eight- and 10-car trains. In February, VRE signed a contract with MotivePower, Inc. to purchase as many as 20 replacement locomotives. At present, VRE has been able to purchase only five locomotives due to a lack of funding. If Federal resources were made available, the railroad could immediately execute options to purchase as many as 15 locomotives. MotivePower locomotives are manufactured in Boise, Idaho. Cost: \$63,000,000.
- Muncie Indiana Transit System, Muncie, Indiana: This project would allow the Muncie Indiana Transit System to exercise existing options to purchase four replacement hybrid electric buses. The Muncie Indiana Transit System is in the final year of an existing bus procurement contract with Gillig Corporation, and it has the option to purchase four diesel-electric hybrid buses. The buses would be Muncie's first deployment of hybrid technology, and they would replace vehicles purchased in 1994 that are well past their expected service life. Diesel-electric hybrid buses reduce fuel consumption by as much as 40 percent, and regenerative braking technology reduces maintenance costs for transit agencies. If Federal resources were made available, the agency could immediately exercise options to purchase the four hybrid buses. Gillig buses are manufactured in Hayward, California. Cost: \$2,100,000.
- Regional Transportation District, Denver Colorado: These projects would finance transit station improvements to meet increased demand for transit services. Regional Transportation District ("RTD") is ready to begin construction on the renovation of Denver's Union Station, but the \$478 million project needs \$230 million in additional funding. The project has completed all necessary environmental reviews and construction could start in spring 2009 with additional federal funding. The station renovation will incorporate an at-grade, eight-track commuter rail station, relocation of RTD's regional bus facility below grade under 17th Street; and relocation of the light rail station at-grade to the Consolidated Mail Line. RTD's other ready-to-go passenger facility projects include improvements for the Belleview light rail station (\$3 million) and a design-build contract for a new park-and-ride facility in the southwest corner of the District with 200 spaces (\$2 million). Cost: \$235 million.

- New York City Transit, New York, New York: These projects would finance station rehabilitation, rail track improvements, and customer information screens. If Federal funding were made available, each of the projects could be advanced quickly. Total Cost: \$680,000,000.
  - Station Rehabilitation: More than two dozen subway stations with deteriorated conditions are in need of rehabilitation to address structural, architectural, and electrical needs and provide improvements to passenger circulation. Cost: \$550,000,000.
  - Welded rail: New York City Transit (“NYCT”) would replace obsolete rail and plates with new continuous welded rail and resilient fasteners. This investment will reduce rail breaks and cracks, which in turn will improve safety and reduce service delays. Cost: \$30,000,000.
  - Public Address/Customer Information Screens: NYCT’s current capital program includes funding to implement communications infrastructure at 44 stations and to develop designs for all 87 stations. With additional funding, the remaining 43 stations could be addressed. Cost: \$100,000,000.

## Passenger Rail

With record ridership and revenues in FY 2008, demand is growing across Amtrak’s entire system for intercity passenger rail service. The following examples of ready-to-go projects were provided by Amtrak, and are illustrative of how additional Federal funding could be used if it is made available.

- Amfleet Rail Car Overhaul: To meet increasing passenger demand, refurbish and return to service all Amfleet I and II rail cars currently in storage. Amtrak currently has a total of 81 Amfleet I and II rail cars in storage. Amfleet I cars are single-level coach and lounge cars manufactured in 1975-1977, for use mainly in short-distance service. Amfleet II cars are similar in design, but were manufactured in 1981-1983, for use mainly in long-distance service. These rail cars are needed to meet increased passenger demand, but must be refurbished before they can be returned to service. This refurbishment work includes new interiors, rebuilt air conditioners, Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”)-compliant restroom modules, rebuilt air brakes, and rebuilt trucks (wheel assemblies).

Amtrak is in the process of refurbishing and reactivating the Amfleet I coaches, as funding permits. In 2008, a total of five coaches have been refurbished, of which two were wreck-damaged. Amtrak plans to bring an additional 12 Amfleet coaches back into service in 2009 and has already budgeted for this expense. However, if additional capital funds are made available, returning stored cars to service would be Amtrak’s highest priority. An additional \$85.9 million would permit Amtrak to refurbish all 81 stored vehicles. Cost: \$85,900,000.

- Other Equipment Overhaul: In addition to the Amfleet vehicles discussed above, Amtrak has a variety of other rail cars and equipment that must be refurbished, but Amtrak lacks the funds to do so. Cost: \$58,500,000.
- ADA Station Upgrades: Amtrak is obligated to make stations accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act by July 26, 2010. Although many of the stations that

serve the majority of Amtrak's customers offer full or barrier-free access, much work remains at many stations across the country for full compliance. Such work includes improvements to parking, entryways, ticketing, restrooms, boarding platforms, lighting, and signage. Amtrak's progress in meeting the ADA access requirements has been limited in large part because of funding constraints, and the total cost for this program is estimated to be several hundred million dollars for full compliance. Funding will allow Amtrak to proceed with design and construction for select stations with the highest priority. Cost: \$25,000,000.

- Emergency Back-up Power Systems for Penn Station, 30th Street Station, and Washington Union Terminal: Currently when local electric utility power failures occur, Penn Station (New York, New York), 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Washington Union Terminal (Washington, DC) have insufficient back-up systems for station concourse and platform lighting, elevators and escalators, HVAC systems, passenger ticketing, signaling and switching operations, dispatching operations, and police and security protection. The project will enable Amtrak to install back-up generators, uninterrupted power supply systems, wiring and automatic disconnect switchgear for all three locations. Cost: \$11,000,000.
- 30th Street Station Façade Preservation: 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station in Philadelphia was built in the early 1930s and is Amtrak's third busiest station. The entire exterior façade of this historical landmark building is constructed of limestone panels which are supported by attachment to brick walls. Over the past 70 years, weather infiltration has caused deterioration and movement of the façade, its attachments, and the brick walls that provide support. To halt further deterioration, prevent damage and safety hazards for Amtrak customers and the general public, and to preserve the integrity of the station building, a phased rehabilitation and repair program needs to be undertaken. Cost: \$40,000,000.
- Ivy City Car Shop Roof Replacement: The Ivy City car shop (Washington, DC) was built in 1984 and serves as the primary car repair and maintenance facility for conventional rolling stock at the south end of the Northeast Corridor. The roof of this large building is beyond its useful life and allows water to leak into the interior working areas, equipment, and office space causing advanced deterioration and poor working conditions for employees. This project will enable Amtrak to replace the roof. Cost \$5,000,000.

### Water Quality Infrastructure

Additional funds could be put to immediate use in many States, creating much-needed jobs and economic activity. Specific examples of ready-to-go projects, provided by the Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities and the Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators, are discussed below. These are illustrative of the types of projects States could choose to fund if additional Federal funds are apportioned to the State Revolving Funds.

- Village of Cuba, New York: The Village of Cuba is served by a sanitary sewer collection system constructed in the 1920s that utilizes mainly vitrified clay tile piping. The collection system is prone to significant amounts of inflow and infiltration during wet weather. Because of these increases in flow, the Village's wastewater treatment plant frequently exceeds its permitted flow discharge, affecting the water quality of Olean Creek, which

supplies the City of Olean, New York, with drinking water. Upgrades to the Village wastewater treatment plant will protect the water quality of Olean Creek and achieve acceptable wastewater treatment for the Town and Village of Cuba. Cost: \$2,100,000.

- Westchester County, New York: Westchester County is required, by Order of Consent, to make wastewater treatment and disinfection improvements to its treatment facilities. Westchester County proposes Biological Nitrogen Removal (“BNR”) projects at four wastewater treatment facilities that discharge into the Long Island Sound Estuary. These projects are required by the Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. New York State has executed an Order of Consent with the County of Westchester to govern the BNR upgrades for each of these facilities, as well as improvements to their disinfection systems to prevent acute and chronic toxicity in marine water from chlorine. Cost: \$103,000,000.
- North Little Rock, Arkansas: North Little Rock has experienced considerable population growth and is seeking to upgrade the White Oak Bayou wastewater treatment facility to meet demand. The project will involve increasing the level of treatment and capacity at the White Oak Bayou facility and rehabilitation of the collection system. Cost: \$14,000,000.
- Pueblo Wastewater Department, Pueblo, Colorado: This project improves the water reclamation facility. Pueblo’s existing water reclamation facility was only designed for basic secondary treatment plus disinfection and dechlorination. The 2008 discharge permit renewal contains effluent ammonia limits and a compliance schedule for meeting the limits. It is anticipated that a total phosphorous standard will be imposed by a 2010 nutrient quality rule. The project will convert the water reclamation facility from the existing trickling filter/solids contact process to a three-stage activated sludge system for nitrification, first-stage denitrification, and biological phosphorous removal. To construct the new facilities and maintain existing ones, a new site dewatering system will be installed. Cost: \$22,200,000.