



NASHVILLE AREA

Metropolitan Planning Organization

MEDIA RELEASE

Middle Tenn. Celebrates Significant Mobility Improvements Generated by Obligation of Economic Stimulus Funds

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NASHVILLE, Tenn.—As of this month, the Middle Tennessee region has benefited by the investment of \$42,653,161 in stimulus funding authorized by the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and awarded by the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. Those investments have made their way to roads and bridges, with more than half of spending going to **multi-modal** projects to improve walking, bicycling, and transit options with roadway upgrades.

“As we move forward as a region to kick-start our economic engine, local communities acting as part of the MPO are committed to improving transportation choices for our citizens as reflected in our stimulus spending allocations *today* – and will *continue* to be reflected in 2010’s major update to our Regional Transportation Plan, taking us out to the year 2035, when we can expect to be about the size that Denver is today,” said Michael Skipper, MPO executive director.

As [announced](#) last week by the state Department of Transportation, Tennessee was able to obligate 100 percent of its \$572 million in statewide Highway Infrastructure Investment funds made available through ARRA – two weeks ahead of the federal government’s required deadline. Thanks to a lot of hard work by state & local officials, as well as TDOT in partnership with MPOs, Tennessee was one of the first states to obligate *all* of its Recovery Act funds for infrastructure.

“Many of Tennessee’s Recovery Act funds are already at work on transportation projects in communities across the state,” said TDOT Commissioner Gerald Nicely. “Without the Recovery Act funds, many of these important projects would not have been built or would have been delayed.”

Transit investments have a significant role to play in job creation. A recent analysis of ARRA spending by Smart Growth America found that every \$1 billion spent on public transportation produced 16,419 job-months, while the same amount spent on highway infrastructure projects produced 8,781 job-months. Important transit projects that fall under Middle Tennessee’s ARRA spending include:

- ✓ In support of the Metropolitan Transit Authority’s Bus Rapid Transit (BRT-lite) line along Gallatin Road: stations, ticket machines, displays, along with the purchase of four 60-foot hybrid buses
- ✓ For the Music City Star (RTA), the rebuild of a locomotive and construction of a new station at Martha (Lebanon, TN)
- ✓ The establishment of two express bus routes to Williamson County (RTA)
- ✓ Several improvements to transit service in/around Murfreesboro— one of America’s fastest growing urbanized areas

The Nashville Area MPO’s stimulus project selections will hopefully make life a little better for pedestrians and cyclists in the region, with Greenway projects funded in Wilson County (West Division), Sumner County (Town Creek & Lower Station Camp Creek), and Davidson County (Cumberland River). About a half-million dollars’ worth of improvements were also made to sidewalks on state routes, major arterial roadways, and MTA transit routes in Davidson County.

Millions more are being spent on improving the safety and efficiency of intersections, resurfacing deteriorating roadways, and installing technology upgrades to modernize traffic operations. Economic research conducted by IHS Global Insight, Macroeconomic Advisers, and Moody’s Economy.com estimated that ARRA spending has so far added 1.6 to 1.8 million jobs, and that its ultimate impact will be roughly 2.5 million jobs. The Congressional Budget Office has affirmed that these are conservative estimates. “Beyond the benefits of job creation, 100 percent of Middle Tennessee’s ARRA allocation was used to help shorten a long list of backlogged transportation projects awaiting funding,” said Skipper. A comprehensive list of those projects is available on the Recovery Act page at NashvilleMPO.org.