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**NEW MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION COALITION
ANNOUNCES 120-DAY ANALYSIS OF STIMULUS FUNDING,
CAMPAIGN TO REAUTHORIZE FEDERAL LAW**

“We are slowly turning the ship – but more must be done”

Baltimore – Standing at the site of a creative use of federal transportation stimulus funds – tearing down the elevated stub of the destructive “Highway to Nowhere” in West Baltimore – transportation experts from a diverse set of organizations praised how Maryland spent its stimulus dollars but said that there is much more to be done.

On the 120th day since the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) was passed into law, Transportation for Maryland released a report by Smart Growth America that analyzes how States performed on stimulus spending. The report, *The States and the Stimulus: What their Transportation Spending Tells Us about Accountability*, examines the extent to which the 50 States used stimulus funding to invest in projects that meet urgent economic recovery and transportation objectives, including creating the most jobs, investing in public transportation, and fixing our crumbling infrastructure.

“Overall, Maryland performed well with its stimulus dollars. The State invested 94% of its funding into preserving our existing transportation system, compared to a national average of just 63%,” observed Dru Schmidt-Perkins, Executive Director of 1000 Friends of Maryland. “But the stimulus spending also shows the flaws in how we plan for and prioritize our transportation projects. None of the major new transit systems, whether red line, purple line, or any other systems across the state; almost none of the major elements of the MARC plan; and few of the intersection improvements needed for the Base Realignment and Closure Act were shovel ready, so none of those critical and transformative investments could be started with stimulus funds.”

While the first round of stimulus funds are committed, two opportunities remain to initiate transformative projects in the State. “There are two pots of discretionary grants that were created in the stimulus bill. Those pots offer a chance for the State to seek transformative dollars and jumpstart these critical projects,” commented Schmidt-Perkins.

“The reauthorization of the SAFETEA-LU bill, the federal transportation bill, offers a chance to permanently correct the fundamental flaws in our process,” said Otis Rolley III, President and CEO of the Central Maryland Transportation Alliance. “Chairman Oberstar has released his draft bill, and the House Committees are already working on markup. If done right, the reauthorization could open the door to a transportation process that creates transportation choices, local jobs, and a healthier economy.”

The speakers called on Maryland’s Congressional Delegation to use their influence to pass the reauthorization bill in a form that opens the door to a 21st Century transportation system. “This site showcases how federal transportation funds can be used not just to improve our transportation system, but to improve our communities,” noted Dan Pontious, Executive Director of the Citizens Planning and Housing Association. “But it also shows how we need to do much more. We need to finish this MARC parking expansion and reconnect Payson Street for the communities that are now divided by this highway. We need to build the Red Line, upgrade the MARC station, improve the walkability here, and stimulate the transit-centered community development that the local plan for this area calls for. That’s going to take bold, creative thinking and resources at both the state and federal levels,” added Pontious.

Religious leaders pointed out the need for these funds as critical to restoring our local communities. “Transportation choices is about investing in our existing communities and creating the jobs we need to protect the families living in our neighborhoods, our towns,” declared Reverend Jamila Woods-Jones, Pastor at the Cornerstone AME Church of La Plata. “We need options to provide mobility for everyone in our society, including seniors and struggling families who cannot afford \$4 a gallon for gas. We also need quality jobs for those who have been left behind in this recession.”

The speakers were joined by other members of the growing Transportation for Maryland coalition. “We are here today to officially launch this diverse coalition, and to let our federal and state decision-makers know that we will be watching, we will be telling others, and we will be there as these critical transportation decisions are made,” announced Schmidt-Perkins. “The decisions we make today will determine the transportation legacy we leave our children. We are here to ensure that legacy works for the environment, for all citizens, and for the economy.”

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Transportation for Maryland is a diverse coalition working together across the state to reform transportation planning and the transportation system in Maryland. To do this we will work both on the national level to create a federal process that works far better and on the state level to make sure our processes are designed to achieve the vision of equitable, environmentally responsible, and economically sound transportation choices.