



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION COALITION RELEASES FIVE POINT PLAN FOR STRENGTHENING OUR ECONOMY**

*At events across the U.S., calls for presidential candidates and Congress to build our way out of economic peril and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

**Washington, D.C. — Oct. 15, 2008** – Today, on the heels of the Wall Street bailout and hours before the final presidential debate, policymakers, community and business leaders, activists and citizens gathered in six cities across the country to call on the next President and Congress to strengthen our economy by building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century transportation system.

The events highlighted “Build for America: A Five-Point Plan to Get Our Economy Moving,” a bold agenda that has the potential to create millions of good, green jobs, save Americans thousands of dollars per year, and reduce America’s dependence on oil once and for all. “Build for America” was created by the Transportation for America campaign, a diverse coalition of national and local organizations — from environmental and climate control to affordable housing and public health — that has come together in part to promote smart infrastructure investment as a way to sustain economic health.

“Americans are running on empty, with falling home values, rising gas prices, and a lagging economy,” said Shelley Poticha, co-chair of T4 and president and CEO of Reconnecting America. “We’re here to say that we can start building a way out of this mess with a wise investment strategy.”

The U.S. already spends \$70 billion a year on transportation infrastructure, and many are calling on Congress to do what has been done in every recent recession and invest still more to simulate economic recovery. However, simply using that money to build highway projects conceived in the last century is unlikely to help, Transportation for America warned.

Build for America calls for investment in public transit, high-speed and intercity rail, neighborhoods that are less car-dependent, more walkable and more affordable, and restoring the thousands of roads and bridges in failing condition across the United States. Specifically, Transportation for America and its supporters are asking the next President and Congress to work together to:

1. **BUILD TO COMPETE** with China and Europe, by modernizing and expanding our rail and transit networks to reduce oil dependence, connect the metro regions that are the engines of the modern economy.
2. **INVEST FOR A CLEAN, GREEN RECOVERY** through cleaner vehicles and new fuels as well as the cleanest forms of transportation – modern public transit, walking and biking – and for energy-efficient, sustainable development.

3. **FIX WHAT'S BROKEN** before building new roads and restore our crumbling highways, bridges and transit systems.
4. **STOP WASTEFUL SPENDING** and re-evaluate projects currently in the pipeline to eliminate those with little economic return that could deepen our oil dependence.
5. **SAVE AMERICANS MONEY.** Provide more travel and housing options that are affordable and efficient, while helping people to avoid high gas costs and traffic congestion. Save taxpayer dollars by asking the private developers who reap real estate rewards from new rail stations and transit lines to contribute toward that service.

"This is a bold agenda, but tough times call for bold action," said Gene Russianoff, staff attorney for the Straphangers Campaign for NYPIRG and spokesperson for the New York City Build for America event. "By reaching across the aisle to implement better transportation investments across in our cities and communities and across our states, we'll help meet the unprecedented demand for quality public transportation choices, maintain our current system, and create jobs that put Americans back to work."

Other cities that hosted "Build for America" events today include Madison, WI, Chicago, Phoenix, Seattle, and San Francisco.

"Investing in the Build for America plan will pay off for ordinary Americans, our environment and the economy," said Deron Lovaas, Vehicles Campaign director for the Natural Resources Defense Council. "This green recovery program will put millions to work in good paying jobs building the infrastructure we need to compete and thrive in the 21st century."

For more information or to download the complete Build for America booklet, please visit [BuildforAmerica.Org](http://BuildforAmerica.Org).

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#### **About Transportation for America Campaign**

Transportation for America is a broad coalition of housing, environmental, public health, urban planning, transportation and other organizations focused on creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century national transportation program. T4's goal is to build a modernized infrastructure and healthy communities where people can live, work and play by aligning national, state, and local transportation policies with an array of issues like economic opportunity, climate change, energy security, health, housing and community development. [www.t4america.org](http://www.t4america.org)