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**Transportation for America and Transportation Equity Network:
New Report Documents Impact of Transit Service Cuts
and Fare Increases on America's Communities**

Reduction in service and rise in fares in cities across the country especially harmful for families, elderly, low-income & minority populations

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Americans across the country, in towns large and small, are being hurt by fare increases and draconian cuts in public transportation service, an epidemic that did not have to happen, according to a report released today by Transportation for America and the Transportation Equity Network.

The report, *Stranded at the Station: The Impact of the Financial Crisis in Public Transportation*, is the first systematic analysis of the conundrum faced by communities and their transit systems: Historic ridership and levels of demand for service, coupled with the worst funding crisis in decades. In a detailed examination of 25 transit systems, the authors found that while state and local transit revenues have been pummeled by a tough economy, the effects were compounded by failures in federal policy.

"The result," said Dr. Sarah Mullins of the Transportation Equity Network, "is dramatic service cuts and fare increases that are hurting people who are trying to hang onto hard-to-find jobs and who can least afford the added financial strain." Both rural and urban communities depend on public transit to sustain a viable workforce and encourage new development and commerce, Dr. Mullins noted. Service cuts and fare increases disproportionately harm older Americans and racial minorities, populations that account for nearly 48% of households without a vehicle.

Seven systems are facing operating deficits in excess of 10 percent, including those in Atlanta, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Dallas, Washington, D.C. and Boston. To cope, agencies are lopping off routes, laying off workers and raising fares. Ten of the largest 25 transit agencies are raising fares by more than 13 percent, with San Francisco's Muni contemplating a 33 percent hike, Boston's MTA 20 percent, and DART in Dallas 17 percent.

"As employers and commuters everywhere know only too well, public transportation is an essential service that is critical to our economy," said James Corless, director of Transportation for America. Noting that Congress had acted recently to provide an emergency infusion of general fund dollars into the highway trust fund, he added, "We need to see the same sense of urgency for the rest of the transportation system. But more than that, we need a long-term, sustainable source of funding for building, operating and maintaining the entire network."

Recently, Representative Russ Carnahan attained more than 60 co-sponsors of his bill, H.R. 2746, which would allow public transit agencies greater flexibility in federal transit

funding to be used for operating assistance, in addition to capital improvements. Corless urged Congress to support legislation to allow for greater flexibility in transportation spending, in addition to a serious overhaul of our current funding mechanism and a renewed vision for transportation.

"Mass transit has a residual benefit to any community," said Congressman Carnahan. "Local transit agencies need options as they experience record-high ridership and record-high costs. Transit not only connects neighborhoods; it also is part of any comprehensive plan to secure America's energy independence and reduce global warming."

Stranded at the Station examines the impacts of proposed fare increases and service reductions on low-income, "lifeline" transit users and higher-income "choice" riders who may be riding transit for the first time. Dr. Mullins noted that low-income, elderly and minority riders, especially, are losing service on routes where transit serves as their only access to schools, healthcare and jobs. Residents of small towns and rural communities in particular are increasingly stuck without transportation options as budget shortfalls force small local transit agencies to cut back on service in rural America.

"I think these transit cuts are a shame," said Henrietta Woods, a member of Metropolitan Congregations United in St. Louis. "I am a senior citizen and a retired hospital employee. It's hard for me to get to the grocery store now that they cut my bus."

The upcoming transportation authorization is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create the safe, clean and smart transportation system necessary to move America forward. Congress is considering legislation that cuts red tape preventing local transit agencies from spending already existing public transportation funds on maintaining service and keeping fares affordable. Americans simply cannot afford to wait any longer for changes to our national transportation system that will save and create jobs and help us tackle long term economic, energy, climate and health challenges.

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ABOUT TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA (T4AMERICA)

Transportation for America is a broad coalition of housing, environmental, equal opportunity, public health, urban planning, transportation and other organizations focused on creating a 21st century national transportation program. The coalition'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

ABOUT THE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY NETWORK

The Transportation Equity Network, a project of the Gamaliel Foundation, has more than 300 grassroots and national partner organizations from the environmental and economic justice, civil rights and land use reform fields. TEN is working to ensure that transportation, metropolitan growth, and land use policy decisions produce equitable outcomes for all individuals. Disadvantaged populations have borne the brunt of the environmental and safety hazards from ill-considered transportation and land use policies.