

## Los Angeles is on the Right Track with TIGER Grants for Rail

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### *Program's merit-based project selection is a model for next transportation reauthorization*

**Los Angeles, CA** - The U.S. Department of Transportation today announced a second round of competitive "TIGER II" grants for innovative transportation projects that address economic, environmental and travel issues. Both the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and the Port of Los Angeles were among the recipients for passenger and freight rail projects.

The MTA received a \$20 million "TIGER II" grant that will leverage a \$546 million federal loan to accelerate the building of a new 8.5 mile light passenger rail line. The project, which will connect major employment centers in the Westside Region and the downtown area, serve low-income communities, and reduce congestion and emissions by providing alternatives to driving is part of Los Angeles' 30/10 initiative. The 30/10 initiative – financed by a self-imposed voter sales tax – is a plan to build 12 major transit projects in 10 years rather than 30. In addition to the congestion benefits the project will create thousands of good paying jobs, reduce petroleum dependency, and improve public health.

**Denny Zane, Executive Director of Move LA** and one of the founders of the 30/10 initiative stated, "Residents and leaders from all backgrounds – business and labor, environmentalists, and elected officials – have stated loud and clear our intention to shed the label of Los Angeles as a region covered only by highways and shrouded in smog. This Tiger grant is a recognition of the positive impacts this project will achieve and the goals we have for our region: a robust economy, clean air, and affordable, efficient transportation."

"Angelenos collectively spend more than 490 million hours a year stuck in traffic costing us over \$10 billion per year," said **Hilary Norton, Executive Director of Fixing Angelenos Stuck in Traffic (FAST)**. "This light rail project is a big step forward on our way to relieving congestion in LA. FAST looks forward to pairing this with improvements and repair of our existing roads, highways, and thoroughfares that will allow us to spend more time with our friends and families than sitting in our cars on crowded highways."

And on the freight rail side, the Port of Los Angeles also received a "TIGER II" grant to build an intermodal railyard facility to connect on-dock railyards at the Port of Los Angeles to the Alameda Corridor, which carries 15 percent of all waterborne containers that enter and exit the U.S. It will also create more than 2,000 construction jobs, relieve congestion, improve safety by removing two at-grade highway railway crossings, and eliminate 2,300 trucks per day on local roads and the I-710 - one of the nation's most overburdened trade corridors.

"As in other regions throughout the nation, our communities located near major ports, railyards, and freight corridors like the I-710 have experienced significant health and quality of life impacts as trade has boomed. We hope the next Congress will recognize the critical value of these types of projects that provide long-term air quality and congestion benefits, and act to create a national policy to invest in port and freight infrastructure that protects our health, our environment, and sustainably grows our economy," said **Angelo Logan, Executive Director of East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice**.

Under the TIGER II grant program projects are evaluated on a set of competitive, merit based criteria that measure their ability to: improve the condition of existing facilities and systems, 2) contribute to the

economic competitiveness of the U.S. over the medium- to long-term, 3) improve the quality of living and working environments for people, 4) improve energy efficiency, reduce dependence on foreign oil, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and benefit the environment, and 5) improve public safety.

The U.S. DOT received overwhelming demand for the limited amount of money, receiving more than 1,000 applications totaling nearly \$19 billion for just a \$600 million pot.

“Competition breeds innovation and bottom up collaboration – two things we desperately need more of in our federal transportation program,” said **James Corless, Director of Transportation for America**. “The Congress should follow the lead of their constituents clamoring to build these sorts of projects and authorize the surface transportation program along similar lines to support innovation and ensure that each transportation buck creates multiple bangs, in communities of all sizes.”

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**Transportation for America (T4 America)** is the largest, most diverse coalition working on transportation reform today. Our nation’s transportation network is based on a policy that has not been significantly updated since the 1950’s. We believe it is time for a bold new vision — transportation that guarantees our freedom to move however we choose and leads to a stronger economy, greater energy security, cleaner environment and healthier America for all of us. We’re calling for more responsible investment of our federal tax dollars to create a safer, cleaner, smarter transportation system that works for everyone.