



The Secretary of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590

June 24, 2008

The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter transmits the 2008 Report to Congress on Section 1301, Projects of National and Regional Significance of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

Section 1301(k) requires the Secretary of Transportation to submit a report each year to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Environment and Public Works. The enclosed report includes a funding table that shows the allocation amounts to be made available to finance grants under this section.

Section 1301(m) requires that, notwithstanding any other provision of Section 1301, the Secretary shall allocate amounts in this section for grants to carry out the 25 projects designated in the table of "Projects of National and Regional Significance" incorporated under Section 1301. As Section 1301(m) obviates the need for any funding allocation proposals or recommendations, the enclosed project information will serve to inform the committees on progress made in funding the designated projects and on progress made in establishing the regulatory framework called for in Section 1301(f)(6) for evaluating and rating projects.

I recommend that the project funding proceed in accordance with the following distribution plan set forth in Section 1301(m). The directive stipulates allocating the total of all funds in this section to the 25 projects identified in this section, and the requirement that this allocation be distributed for each of Fiscal Years (FY) 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 at 10 percent, 20 percent, 25 percent, 25 percent, and 20 percent, respectively.

The Department also wishes to convey to Congress several concerns about the Projects of National and Regional Significance. You will note that of the 25 projects, there are 12 that have not obligated any funds as of May 2008, and six have never submitted project descriptions or requested the release of funds. The total amount of Projects of National and Regional Significance funding for the six earmarked projects that have not requested release of funds is \$238 million. This is incongruous for projects that are intended to be of the highest national priority.

The Honorable James L. Oberstar

There are a number of explanations for this situation that will likely persist for some time to come, and which have been reported to us by transportation professionals in the States and localities where these projects are located. In most cases the project funding authorized under the Projects of National and Regional Significance is far less than the estimated full cost of project completion. In many of these cases, States and localities have not been able to identify funding sources to fill these gaps, and the project cannot move forward until these additional funding sources are identified. In some cases, the projects are considered to be inconsistent with the investment priorities of the States or local governments in the areas where they are located, so that State and local funds would have to be shifted from what are viewed as higher priority projects, and there is resistance to making such a funding allocation shift. Finally, in some cases the project is so early in the planning process that the full cost of the project has not even been estimated. Even if funding sources can be found to complete the funding for these projects, it is likely to be years before the Federal funds designated for these projects can be obligated. Meanwhile, high-priority projects that are ready to move forward languish for lack of funding.

The Department believes, moreover, that a number of these projects may not reflect projects that are truly of National and Regional Significance, but in fact are projects which reflect local interests, and would have been more appropriately funded from other categorically specific funds such as the Surface Transportation Program or National Highway System. Because no common metrics were utilized to declare these projects either nationally or regionally "significant", one can have little confidence that these earmarked projects produce higher returns for Federal taxpayers than other potentially "significant" projects.

Looking ahead, the Department will be developing and promulgating the Final Rule evaluation criteria for Projects of National and Regional Significance. Such criteria are essential so that we can work closely with future project sponsors and managers to ensure that funding under this important program is applied to well-planned and defensible projects that address nationally and regionally significant needs.

Identical letters have been sent to the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Chairwoman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary E. Peters". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary E. Peters

Enclosure



The Secretary of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590

June 24, 2008

The Honorable John L. Mica
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Mica:

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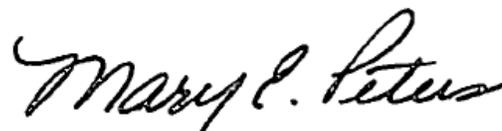
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The Secretary of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590

June 24, 2008

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairwoman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

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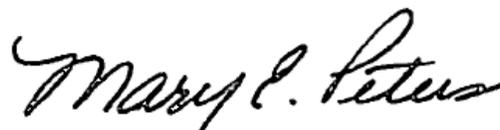
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The Secretary of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590

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The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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Mary E. Peters

Enclosure

FHWA:HOFM:EStrocko:x62997:5-12-08

cc:

HOAES

Jackie McGarry – E83-469

HOP (Skerkavich)

HOFM (Strocko)

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Letters 05-12-2008.doc

**Projects of National and Regional Significance
2008 Report to Congress
Project Information**

**United States Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROJECT STATUS AND FUNDING1
PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS4
PROMULGATION OF PROJECT EVALUATION AND RATING REGULATIONS.....14

Project Status

The FHWA has received project descriptions and funding allocation requests for 19 of the 25 projects designated under SAFETEA-LU Section 1301(m). Seventeen of these projects have received funding allocations, while two are currently pending final review and congressional notification. The following tables summarize the status and funding of the 25 projects.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) developed implementing guidance for Projects of National and Regional Significance (PNRS) grantees and posted it on the Internet in early 2006. All grant recipients for projects designated under PNRS are asked to submit project descriptions to the FHWA in order to initiate the release of designated funds. The project description, which includes information on project purpose, scope, cost, planning, and finance is submitted to the FHWA Division Office through the Department of Transportation in the State where the project is located. (Only one project description is required to be submitted for the 5 years of funding authorized by SAFETEA-LU).

The FHWA Division Office reviews and comments on the project description and forwards the description to the FHWA Headquarters where DOT staff from the relevant modal agencies, along with the Office of the Secretary, review the proposal. This review is to insure that the proposed work is aligned with the congressionally designated project and to determine where and how the Department could assist in project implementation.

Projects of National and Regional Significance Status			
State	Project	5-Year Authorized Amount	Status
CA	Bakersfield Beltway System	\$140 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
	Inland Empire Goods Movement (Norton AFB)	\$55 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
	Alameda Corridor East	\$125 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
	Transbay Terminal	\$27 m	Under Review
	Gerald Desmond Bridge/I-710	\$100 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
	Sacramento Intermodal Station	\$3 m	No Project Description Received
CO	Union Station (Denver)	\$50 m	No Project Description Received
IL	O'Hare Bypass	\$140 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
	CREATE	\$100 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
	Miss River Bridge	\$150 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
MI	Blue Water Bridge Border Plaza (Port Huron)	\$20 m	No Project Description Received
MN	Union Depot Multimodal Transit Facility	\$50 m	No Project Description Received
NJ	Liberty Corridor	\$100 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
NM	Relocate El Paso, TX Rail Yard to Santa Teresa	\$14 m	Under Review
NY	Cross Harbor Freight Movement Project	\$100 m	No Project Description Received
OR	I-5 Bridge Repair	\$160 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
PA	US 422 Widening and Interchange Improvements (Montgomery County)	\$20 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
	Rt 28 Widening and Improvements (Allegheny County)	\$15 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
	I-80 Improvements (Monroe County)	\$15 m	No Project Description Received
SC	I-73 Construction (Myrtle Beach to NC State Line)	\$40 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
VA	Portsmouth Rail Relocation	\$15 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
WA	Alaska Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement	\$100 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
	Replacement of Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall (Seattle)	\$120 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
WI	Marquette Interchange Reconstruction (Milwaukee)	\$30 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated
VA,WV, OH,[KY]	Heartland Corridor	\$90 m	FY05-FY08 Funding Allocated

Funding Info - Projects of National and Regional Significance (Sec. 1301)

State	Demo ID	Project List	Total Authorized Funding*	Estimated Total Project Cost	FY 05/06 Distribution Amount	FY 05/06 Distribution Date	FY 07 Distribution Amount	FY 07 Distribution Date	FY 08 Distribution Amount	FY 08 Distribution Date	Total FY05-FY08 Distribution Amount	Amount Obligated as of 5/12/08	Amount Expended as of 5/12/08
CA	CA743	Bakersfield Beltway	\$140,000,000	\$336,454,000	\$38,086,400	8/3/2007	\$32,225,054	8/3/2007	\$32,340,000.00	3/10/2008	\$102,651,454.00	\$18,160,000.00	\$0.00
CA	CA744	Inland Empire Goods Movement (Norton AFB)	\$55,000,000	\$598,914,000	\$14,176,800	2/5/2007	\$12,659,843	4/18/2007	\$12,705,000.00	3/10/2008	\$39,541,643.00	\$26,505,578.00	\$1,292,303.86
CA	CA745	Alameda Corridor East	\$125,000,000	\$4,600,000,000	\$32,220,000	3/16/2007	\$28,772,370	4/18/2007	\$28,875,000.00	3/10/2008	\$89,867,370.00	\$20,324,443.00	\$0.00
CA	CA746	Transbay Terminal	\$27,000,000	Under Review									
CA	CA747	Gerald Desmond Bridge/I-710	\$100,000,000	\$721,400,000	\$25,776,000	1/18/2008	\$23,017,897.00	1/18/2008	\$23,100,000.00	3/10/2008	\$23,100,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CA	CA748	Sacramento Intermodal	\$3,000,000										
CO	C0112	Union Station (Denver)	\$50,000,000										
IL	IL524	O'Hare Bypass	\$140,000,000	\$2,171,000,000	\$36,086,400	12/8/2006	\$32,225,054	4/18/2007	\$32,340,000.00	3/10/2008	\$100,651,454.00	\$4,262,976.00	\$0.00
IL	IL525	CREATE	\$100,000,000	\$1,500,000,000	\$25,776,000	1/31/2007	\$23,017,897	4/18/2007	\$23,100,000.00	3/10/2008	\$71,893,897.00	\$14,201,893.43	\$508,227.05
IL	IL526	Miss River Bridge	\$150,000,000	\$910,000,000	\$38,664,000	2/22/2007	\$34,526,844	4/18/2007	\$34,650,000.00	3/10/2008	\$107,840,844.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
MI	MI274	Blue Water Bridge Border Plaza (Port Huron)	\$20,000,000										
MN	MN238	Union Depot Multimodal Transit Facility	\$50,000,000										
NJ	NJ272	Liberty Corridor	\$100,000,000	\$601,480,000	\$25,776,000	12/26/2007	23017897	12/26/2007	\$23,100,000.00	3/10/2008	\$71,893,897.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
NM	NM077	Relocate El Paso, TX Rail Yard to Santa Teresa	\$14,000,000	Under Review									
NY	NY693	Cross Harbor Freight Movement Project	\$100,000,000										
OR	OR174	I-5 Bridge Repair	\$160,000,000	\$863,479,000	\$41,241,600	8/29/2006	\$36,828,634	4/18/2007	\$36,960,000.00	3/10/2008	\$115,030,234.00	\$47,738,376.19	\$1,219,903.47
PA	PA672	US422 Widening and Interchange Improvements (Montgomery County)	\$20,000,000	\$168,950,000	\$5,155,200	8/29/2006	\$4,603,579	4/18/2007	\$4,620,000.00	3/10/2008	\$14,378,779.00	\$11,253,000.00	\$1,219,903.47
PA	PA673	Rte 28 Widening and Improvements (Allegheny County)	\$15,000,000	\$120,000,000	\$3,866,400	8/29/2006	\$3,452,685	4/18/2007	\$3,465,000.00	3/10/2008	\$10,784,085.00	\$10,784,085.00	\$3,382,443.29
PA	PA674	I-80 Improvements (Monroe County)	\$15,000,000										
SC	SC120	I-73 Construction (Myrtle Beach to NC State Line)	\$40,000,000	\$2,525,500,000	\$10,310,400.00	2/15/2008	\$9,207,159.00	2/15/2008	\$9,240,000.00	3/10/2008	\$28,757,559.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
VA	VA239	Portsmouth Rail Relocation	\$15,000,000	\$59,600,000	\$3,866,400	11/30/2006	\$3,452,685	4/18/2007	\$3,465,000.00	3/10/2008	\$10,784,085.00	\$3,866,400.00	\$0.00
WA	WA270	Alaska Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement	\$100,000,000	\$2,800,000,000	\$25,776,000	5/19/2006	\$23,017,897	4/18/2007	\$23,100,000.00	3/10/2008	\$71,893,897.00	\$71,893,897.00	\$35,614,090.48
WA	WA271	Replacement of Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall (Seattle)	\$120,000,000	See Above	\$30,931,200	5/19/2006	\$27,621,475	4/18/2007	\$27,720,000.00	3/10/2008	\$86,272,675.00	\$86,272,675.00	\$53,685,280.03
WI	WI140	Marquette Interchange Reconstruction (Milwaukee)	\$30,000,000	\$890,000,000	\$7,732,800	8/29/2006	\$6,905,369	4/18/2007	\$6,930,000.00	3/10/2008	\$21,568,169.00	\$14,638,169.00	\$14,638,169.00
VA, WV, OH, [KY]	N/A	Heartland Corridor	\$90,000,000	\$150,000,000	\$23,198,400	1/8/2007	\$20,716,107	5/10/2007	\$20,790,000.00	3/17/2008	\$64,704,507.00	\$46,465,788.00	\$9,431,406.00
Total			\$1,779,000,000		\$ 388,640,000.00		\$ 345,268,446.00		\$346,500,000.00		\$1,080,408,446.00	\$376,367,280.62	\$120,991,726.65

* The total authorized funding levels in this table equal the totals authorized in SAFETEA-LU sections 1301, however, the funding is subject to obligation limitation and other "take-downs" designated in the Appropriations Acts.

Project Descriptions

The following summarizes project information submitted to DOT as part of project descriptions. This summary only contains projects that have completed the review process and received funding allocations. There are a total of 16 Projects of National and Regional Significance (PNRS) with 17 funding allocations.

Bakersfield Beltway System (CA)

Summary: The proposed Bakersfield Beltway System consists of three limited access expressway or freeway facilities on three different alignments:

- West Beltway - extends north-south from SR 58 to SR 119 along the western part of the metropolitan Bakersfield area.
- South Beltway - extends east-west from SR 58 to I-5 along the southern part of the metropolitan Bakersfield area.
- North Beltway - extends east-west from SR 99 to SR 43 along the northern part of the metropolitan Bakersfield area.

The proposed Beltway System will ultimately provide direct connections to I-5, SR 43, SR 99, and SR 119 bypassing the metropolitan Bakersfield area. The PNRS funding will go toward conducting environmental studies, planning, preliminary engineering, design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction for various segments.

Roadway improvements in and around the former Norton Air Force Base as part of the Inland Empire Goods Movement Gateway Project (CA)

Summary: The Inland Empire Goods Movement Gateway (IEGMG) is a regional effort to facilitate goods movement through the County of San Bernardino, particularly in and around the former Norton Air Force Base (NAFB). This project includes several transportation improvement projects that will greatly enhance mobility throughout the region and help speed the flow of commerce. The area in and around the former NAFB in San Bernardino is becoming a major distribution center for goods movement from the Los Angeles and Long Beach port areas and transcontinental freeways which go through the area. Reconstruction and improvements to these freeways will contribute to enhanced goods movement. There are two subprojects in the IEGMG which comprise this PNRS application: the I-215 corridor reconstruction and the I-10/Tippecanoe interchange reconstruction.

The I-215 corridor is one of two freeway corridors in the immediate area, both of which are currently at or near capacity. The I-215 corridor connects to I-15, a major north-south cross country corridor, which then intersects with I-40 and I-70, major east-west cross country freeway corridors. Millions of tons of maritime cargo are shipped by truck along these cross country corridors. This project will reconstruct I-215 by adding an HOV and mixed flow lane in each direction on the corridor and other operational improvements. These projects are vital to improving regional goods movement and increasing safety in this area, and improving this vital link between the area distribution centers and the major cross-country trucking corridors.

Tippecanoe Avenue in San Bernardino is one of the main arterials that connects the distribution center area around the former NAFB and the I-10 transcontinental corridor. The I-10 corridor extends from Los Angeles to Florida with connections to other transcontinental freeway corridors along the way. The existing I-10 access to and from Tippecanoe at the interchange needs improvement due to four closely spaced signalized intersections around the interchange causing queuing problems on the streets and onto the mainline. This project will construct an added auxiliary lane in the eastbound direction, widen streets and ramps, and reconfigure a westbound ramp to eliminate a signalized intersection.

Alameda Corridor East (CA)

Summary: In 2001, the Alameda Corridor East Construction Authority, San Bernardino Associated Governments, Orange County Transportation Authority/City of Placentia and the Riverside County Transportation Commission developed the comprehensive Alameda Corridor East (ACE) Trade Corridor Plan. The ACE Trade Corridor Improvement Plan proposes highway/rail grade separations at 131 crossings, plus 61 additional crossing improvements. The ACE Trade Corridor extends the public infrastructure necessary to connect the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and the Alameda Corridor to the transcontinental rail network through the Nation's second largest metropolitan area.

Eliminating vehicle conflicts at the 131 highest volume crossings will improve rail system reliability, significantly reduce the frequency of crossing accidents and railroad liability exposure, and further enhance the competitive position of Southern California in attracting international trade. The areas through which the ACE Trade Corridor passes account for approximately 6.7 million jobs today; that number is expected to grow to 9.7 million by 2020. The virtual gridlock that will result from unmitigated freight train growth will stifle both the existing economic base and the prospects for future growth. The vitality of the State's trade corridor sector and the future competitiveness of the region, State, and Nation in a just-in-time economy, depends upon its global gateways – its international seaports and airports – and the major trade corridors which serve as strategic intermodal linkages and provide needed goods movement mobility throughout the region, State, and Nation. Improving major trade corridors such as the ACE Trade Corridor, which serve the San Pedro Bay ports, is seen as essential to preserving California and the Nation's global competitiveness.

By 2020, almost 13,000 vehicle hours of delay would be eliminated with these improvements, as would an estimated 370 accidents per year. The congestion avoided by the 131 grade separations will eliminate approximately 288 tons per year of combined reactive organic gas, nitrogen oxides, and carbon monoxide annually in 2010, the attainment deadline for the most polluted air basin in the Nation.

The estimated cost of the total improvement program is \$4.6 billion. Currently the 4 counties have 25 projects funded and completed 7 projects. At least 10 projects will be funded by the PNR funds.

Gerald Desmond/I-710 Gateway Project (CA)

Summary: This project involves replacement of the Gerald Desmond Bridge which is a key component of the I-710 Corridor/Gerald Desmond Bridge Gateway Program. The I-710/Desmond Program is a comprehensive, strategic approach to addressing the congestion, air quality, and safety issues in the Corridor between the Ports of Long Beach/Los Angeles and State Route 60. The Gerald Desmond Bridge is the westerly extension of the I-710, and is currently designated part of State Route 710. The bridge replacement project entails demolition and replacement of the existing bridge with a six-lane cable-stayed bridge; and reconstruction of the Terminal Island East and I-710 Freeway/Desmond Bridge interchanges.

The I-710 Corridor/Gerald Desmond Bridge Gateway Program is a crucial transportation facility serving the Ports of Long Beach/Los Angeles, the region, State, and nation. The I-710 and Gerald Desmond Bridge carry approximately 15% and 10% of all U.S. waterborne container volume, respectively. While the recently opened Alameda Corridor can be thought of as the trade "railway" gateway to the nation, the I-710 Desmond Gateway is the de facto trade "highway" gateway to the nation. The I-710/Desmond Gateway is presently experiencing serious performance problems due to a number of interrelated reasons, including traffic congestion and safety.

The Desmond Bridge is a National Highway System Intermodal Connector Route and part of the Federal Strategic Highway Network (National Defense Highway System). Additionally, the Port of Long Beach is designated as a strategic military out-load port by the USDOT Maritime Administration (MARAD), and the Gerald Desmond Bridge provides access to MARAD's Ready Reserve vessels on Terminal Island.

The bridge's "Sufficiency Rating", which is part of the overall USDOT Highway Bridge Program (determined by the traffic volumes/operating conditions, geometric design, and structural integrity), was 43 in 2005. Replacement is warranted when a bridge has a 50-point "Sufficiency Rating." Such a low rating was determined even after the bridge was seismically retrofitted in 1998.

Additionally, the Gerald Desmond Bridge is located over the main federal navigation channel that serves the Port of Long Beach. It is one of the lowest bridges in any large commercial port in the world. The existing air draft of the bridge is 156 feet, which is insufficient to accommodate some existing container ships. In addition, new vessels currently being constructed will not be able to pass under the bridge.

Project benefits include:

Environmental Benefits By replacing the existing four-lane bridge with a six-lane bridge, and by reducing the grade from six percent to five percent, air pollution resulting from traffic congestion (particularly diesel emissions from slow truck speeds and from idling) would decrease significantly.

Congestion Mitigation Benefits Traffic operating conditions would improve from an unacceptable LOS F to an acceptable LOS D. Delays will be significantly reduced. By 2025, the replacement of the Gerald Desmond Bridge would reduce

vehicle-hours and vehicle-miles traveled per day in the Corridor by about 5,115 VHT and 28,245 VMT, respectively.

Safety Benefits The existing Gerald Desmond Bridge is not wide enough to enable the efficient and safe clearing of incidents/accidents. At present, there are various design deficiencies that contribute to the high accident rates on the I-710 Corridor and on the Gerald Desmond Bridge. Truck accidents occur frequently on the bridge, often times blocking both travel lanes, which limits emergency access and traps vehicles on the bridge until the disabled truck is removed. The new bridge will eliminate this safety hazard by providing an additional travel lane and standard inside/outside shoulders in each direction.

Construction of O'Hare Bypass/Elgin O'Hare Extension (IL)

Summary: This project is comprised of: (1) the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway Extension (including the reconstruction and upgrade of Thorndale Avenue) and investigation of a western access interchange at the proposed Western O'Hare Bypass, to access the O'Hare International Airport; (2) Construction of an access controlled facility around the western and southern boundaries of O'Hare International Airport from I-294 to I-90 (including investigation of interchange access at cross routes). This project will result in improved mobility for motorists in the Chicago metropolitan area.

CREATE (IL)

Summary: The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program involves improvements to both railroad infrastructure and the local road system in Chicago. This project will invest \$1.5 billion in capital projects to reduce train delays and congestion throughout the Chicago area along five rail corridors. Private and public contributions will fund the program, with the six railroad partners providing \$212 million (an amount equal to the potential economic benefits of the improvements to the rail industry). The remaining funds will come from Federal, State, and local governments. The key projects are:

- Grade separation of six railroad-railroad crossings (rail-rail “flyovers”), to eliminate train interference and associated delay, primarily between passenger and freight trains;
- Grade separation of 25 highway-rail crossings, to reduce motorist delay, improve safety, eliminate crossing accidents, decrease energy consumption, and reduce air pollution; and
- Additional rail connections, crossovers, trackage, and other improvements to expedite train movements in five rail corridors traversing the Chicago region.

The CREATE Program is a first-of-its-kind public-private partnership that provides a multimodal program (freight rail, passenger rail and highway) capitalizing on a spirit of collaboration among competitors to provide significant benefits to the Chicago region and the Nation. The FHWA Illinois Division Office, in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Transportation and Chicago Department of Transportation, developed the Systematic, Project Expediting, Environmental Decision-making (SPEED) Strategy to address the CREATE Program in total. The SPEED Strategy supports systematic

decisionmaking, provides an expeditious method of moving low risk component projects forward, and assesses potential environmental impacts in a proportional, graduated way.

- In all, CREATE will bring benefits to the Chicago region valued at:
 - \$595 million related to safety improvements and reduced delays for motorists and rail passengers;
 - \$1.1 billion related to air quality improvements; and
 - \$2.2 billion related to construction.
- During its construction period, CREATE will generate an annual average of more than 2,700 full-time, construction-related jobs and \$365 million in purchases of materials and services.
- By decreasing shipping times, CREATE will boost the competitiveness of manufacturers and businesses and encourage long-term job growth in Illinois and nationwide. Shippers will save an estimated \$40 million annually in reduced inventory costs.
- Reductions in highway needs and user costs will yield more than \$10 billion in savings for the Nation over 20 years.
- For area residents, CREATE means reduced traffic congestion, shorter commuting times, better air quality, and increased public safety.

Mississippi River Bridge and Related Roads (IL)

Summary: The New Mississippi River Crossing project includes a new eight lane river bridge, the relocation of I-70 on a new alignment from east of IL 203 in Illinois to existing I-70 north of downtown St. Louis and the partial construction of Relocated I-70/I-64 interchange.

This project will serve the Heart of America where one out of five industrial jobs are located, and 40 percent of U.S. exports originate. The bridge location will facilitate national east-west traffic, and assist in the north-south goods movement important to NAFTA trade relations, which support 27 percent of U.S. agricultural exports. Construction of this project will greatly improve traffic efficiency and access in Illinois and Missouri by correcting the existing transportation bottleneck that relies on a single crossing for three vital Interstates. This project will also strengthen the Nation's defense, communication, and economic infrastructure by providing an additional Mississippi River crossing in America's heartland.

Liberty Corridor (NJ)

Summary: The Liberty Corridor currently encompasses 8 counties (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Passaic and Union counties), with 232 municipalities. It contains 9 of the State's 10 largest cities and towns. The Liberty Corridor takes a comprehensive look at the transportation issues facing the region and improves the transportation system connecting the largest seaport on the East Coast and the 13th largest airport in the Nation to the national and global economy and the trans-continental rail network.

The Liberty Corridor Phase I proposal includes 10 projects (6 highway, 2 freight rail, and 2 public transit projects). These projects include:

- (1) Wittpenn Bridge Replacement - replaces the existing Wittpenn bridge with a new vertical-lift bridge on a new alignment.
- (2) North Jersey Railroad Doublestack Clearance/National Docks - improves vertical clearances on two tunnels on the Conrail railroad route between the Port of New York and New Jersey and the CSX mainline serving the U.S. rail network. The Bergen and Waldo tunnels currently limit the height of Intermodal container trains to 19-ft. 2-in. The improvements will allow passage of industry standard intermodal container trains of 20-ft. 2-in. in height.
- (3) Port Reading Junction - addresses a major choke point in the region's rail system by reconfiguring the Port Reading Junction to provide double track train operations between CSX - West Trenton line and Norfolk Southern - Lehigh line. This improves the efficiency of train operation and optimizes the current Lehigh line double tracking project.
- (4) Tremley Point Connector Road - provides access from the New Jersey Turnpike Interchange 12 through Carteret, NJ, over the Rahway River, and into Tremley Point in Linden, NJ.
- (5) North Avenue Corridor Project – Phase I - separates truck traffic for the Port and Airport from passenger traffic for retail, hotel and other land uses in the area.
- (6) Route 35/36 Eatontown - improves access to Fort Monmouth and other locations via Route 35/36.
- (7) Route 1, Section 6V, North of Ryders Lane to South of Milltown Road - improves access by replacing a deficient bridge, road improvements and additional signals.
- (8) Route 18/Interstate 287 Connection - upgrades access via Hoes Lane from Interstate 287 to the Busch Campus of Rutgers University. Hoes Lane will be upgraded to be part of State Route 18, with four lanes, pavement replacement, signal replacement and various pedestrian safety improvements (including sidewalks, multi-use paths and two new pedestrian bridges).
- (9) Liberty Corridor Bus Rapid Transit Service - Creates a bus rapid transit (BRT) line connecting Newark's neighborhoods and workforce to the downtown employers at the Port of Newark/ Elizabeth, Newark Liberty International Airport, the Newark Innovation Zone and University Heights Science Park.
- (10) New Brunswick/Northeast Corridor Transit Connection Initiative - develops a direct connection from the westbound station platform to the University Research Tower ("URT") and provides access to the North East Corridor and Newark Liberty International Airport.

Phase I projects are intended to:

- Clear chokepoints in the surface transportation system, which will assist the competitiveness of one of the Nation's largest ports as an efficient and effective means of moving goods internationally, nationally and regionally.
- Make critical connections and separate traffic flows, enabling underutilized and brownfield properties to be brought back to productive use.
- Separate freight and passenger traffic to allow diverse land uses, such as ports, warehouses, retail complexes, and hotels, to coexist and thrive.
- Enhance access to sites of innovation, assisting research institutions and firms focused on emerging technologies to attract workers and develop products that both benefit the U.S. and can be exported to the global marketplace.

The Liberty Corridor is fully integrated into the State, NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, and New Jersey Turnpike Authority's planning, and all of these entities have embraced the Liberty Corridor's concept and project selection. Given the larger planning context, more than 20 public and private organizations have come together to agree on the Liberty Corridor's priorities. The \$100 million Liberty Corridor funds will be leveraged to produce \$601 million in transportation projects.

I-5 Bridge Repair, replacement and associated improvements in the I-5 corridor (OR)

Summary: This project makes a large number of individual improvements to bridges in the I-5 corridor. In all, a total of 25 bridges have been identified for improvement. The State's recommended allocation of the available funding is proposed as follows: widening of bridges, replacing bridges, reconstruction of interchanges around bridges, and modification of bridges with limited vertical clearance.

I-5 is one of the Nation's High Priority Corridors. It is the third most heavily traveled truck corridor in the Nation, and directly connects the United States to Canada and Mexico. This corridor carries a large portion of the freight traffic in and through the State. Oregon's existing transportation system is struggling to provide viable freight routes due to vertical clearance pinch points. In particular, the movement of mobile homes, construction material, construction equipment, and many other types of freight critical to Oregon's economy are greatly restricted due to insufficient vertical clearance on many routes. The PNRS project provides for the elimination of 13 vertical clearance obstructions that currently impede successful transport within the State of Oregon and between the Western States, Canada and Mexico. Improving vertical clearance on freight routes is essential to the economic health of the State.

Additionally, several of the bridges identified require widening in anticipation of the need for additional travel-lanes on the Interstate over the next 20 years due to increasing traffic volumes. In particular, the Oregon Department of Transportation identified 2 mainline segments of I-5 (Albany-Columbia River and Creswell-Coburg), 10 interchanges, and 4 climbing lane segments that were forecast to be congested or extremely congested by 2020. The PNRS project will help fund the widening of 6 bridges (or bridge pairs) that will help alleviate future congestion, without increasing future costs, by providing sufficient structure width in bridges currently being replaced to accommodate a 20-year forecast of congestion conditions.

Route 23/US 422 Interchange Modernization and Route 363/US 422 Interchange Improvement Project and US 422 widening, Montgomery County (PA)

Summary: This project involves improvements to U.S. 422 in Montgomery County, PA around Valley Forge National Historical Park. The project's aim is to provide safety and operational improvements to U.S. 422 and the surrounding area. The funds will go toward an early action project that will add a third auxiliary lane along U.S. 422 West between the PA 23 and PA 363 interchanges (SR 0422, Section ITM project). The funding will also go toward three additional projects along U.S. 422.

Route 28 Widening and Improvements, Allegheny County (PA)

Summary: This project is located along Route 28 from the connection with I-279 and I-579 to the Millvale Interchange in the city of Pittsburgh and the Borough of Millvale. The scope of work includes widening of the road to provide four standard lanes, construction of a median barrier, grade separations of roads, channelization, and signal improvement. To accommodate the proposed improvements, right-of-way acquisition, railroad relocation, and utility relocation will also be included in the project. This project will result in improved mobility and safety for motorists in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area.

I-73, Construction of I-73 from Myrtle Beach, SC to I-95, ending at the North Carolina State Line (SC)

Summary: This project proposes to improve national and regional connectivity to the Grand Strand area of South Carolina by providing a direct link from North Carolina to the Grand Strand area located along the Atlantic Ocean. I-73 will provide Interstate highway access to the Grand Strand and assist in keeping this area of the State competitive with other tourist destinations along the coast. The project will also facilitate a more effective evacuation of the Grand Strand population during emergencies such as hurricanes. The scope of work will include all items that are considered part of new highway project development such as, preliminary engineering, environmental review, design, mitigation, right-of-way acquisition and construction.

Alaska Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement/Replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall in Seattle (WA)

Summary: This project proposes to improve the existing SR 99 corridor now served by the Alaskan Way Viaduct in Seattle, Washington. The Viaduct and the Seattle Seawall are at risk of failure from earthquakes or irreversible loss of use from age and deterioration. The project will provide facilities with improved earthquake resistance that maintains or improves mobility for people and goods along the existing SR 99 corridor. The project would also improve the Alaskan Way Seawall, which supports surface streets and the Viaduct's foundations. Specifically a 6 lane facility between Spokane Street and the Battery Street Tunnel will be constructed to replace the existing viaduct and seawall and reconnect the city street grid over SR 99 north of the Battery Street Tunnel.

The SR 99 Alaskan Way Viaduct, along with I-5, are the primary north-south limited access routes through downtown Seattle. One quarter of all north-south traffic through Seattle (103,000 vehicles) use the Viaduct every day. Closure of the Viaduct following the 2001 Nisqually Earthquake resulted in extreme congestion on I-5 and in the downtown city street grid clearly demonstrating that this is a critical route that needs to be replaced, due to the effect its closure would have on I-5 traffic. Washington State Department of Transportation estimates that if the Viaduct is no longer usable, travel time through the downtown Seattle area will double. Washington State Department of Transportation also believes that if the Viaduct were to collapse, container traffic through the International Port of Seattle (\$32 billion worth of goods each year) would grind to a halt, cutting off container traffic between Seattle and the Mid-West. This makes the Alaskan Way Viaduct a vital link in the region's highway and freight mobility system, and thus critical to the region's economy.

Reconstruction of the Marquette Interchange, Milwaukee (WI)

Summary: This project involves rebuilding the Marquette Interchange and adjacent sections of I-94, I-43, and I-794. The Marquette Interchange and the Zoo Interchange are the linchpins of the southeastern Wisconsin freeway system. The freeway system affects a significant portion of the State's residents. Besides serving the transportation needs of individuals and businesses in the Milwaukee area, approximately 62 percent of the State's jobs are influenced by the southeastern Wisconsin freeway system. Additionally, almost two-thirds of all goods shipped from the Fox Valley area travel on the southeastern Wisconsin freeway system; and with its connections to major markets, the freeway system serves as a gateway for tourists to Wisconsin, fueling an \$11.7 billion industry statewide.

Rail Relocation to Route 164/I-664 rail corridor, Portsmouth (VA)

Summary: The Portsmouth rail relocation to the Route 164 (Western Freeway) and I-664 median ("Median Rail Project") is a project to relocate the existing Commonwealth Railway rail line that runs through the cities of Portsmouth and Chesapeake with a new rail line that will run through the medians of the existing Western Freeway. The Median Rail Corridor will extend approximately 4.5 miles and will link the APM Marine Terminal currently under construction (as well as the future Virginia Port Authority (VPA) Craney Island Marine Terminal) with the Commonwealth Railway main rail line at a point near Bowers Hill.

The Median Rail Project will be a component of the "Heartland Corridor." The Heartland Corridor defines improvements necessary to permit the safe and efficient rail handling of increasing volumes of imported container shipments from the Port of Virginia into the Midwest region. The Median Rail Project will allow for improvements in the efficient and safe movement, as well as a significant increase in intermodal rail traffic associated with the new APM/Maersk facility and the proposed Craney Island Marine Terminal. The new APM/Maersk marine terminal is a \$600 million project (opened in July 2007). The VPA is planning a \$2.4 billion marine terminal adjacent to APM/Maersk (to be opened in 2017). Together this \$3 billion investment in the national marine transportation system is planned to handle nearly 5 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU). Both terminals will be served by the proposed Median Rail line.

With adequate capacity in the system, over 30 percent (nearly 1 million containers) of this cargo is planned to move by rail. The Median Rail Project will provide the ability to keep 1 million trucks off the highways while also removing 14 at-grade crossings from the urban areas of Portsmouth and Chesapeake.

Heartland Corridor Project including multiple intermodal facility improvements and improvements to facilitate the movement of intermodal freight from VA to OH (VA, WV, OH)

Summary: This project is designed to create an efficient intermodal rail route that will start at the Port of Virginia, cross West Virginia and terminate in Columbus, Ohio. In Columbus, Heartland Corridor trains will link up with western rail networks and/or the existing Norfolk Southern network that is double-stack cleared to Chicago. The funds will be used to link existing rail systems, build new rail line where needed and raise tunnel and bridge heights to allow for passage of Norfolk Southern's double-stack trains.

The Heartland Corridor Project provides the opportunity to open up a significant portion of Appalachia currently excluded from international intermodal markets, connecting to a center of existing domestic and international distribution in the Midwest, thereby strengthening the economic vitality of the entire region and enhancing the efficiency and capacity of the Nation's transportation network. The Heartland Corridor Project will result in opportunities for shippers throughout the Midwest, from central Ohio through the Chicago and Detroit regions, to move their inbound and outbound product more effectively via rail. Provisions of the Heartland Corridor Project will also allow for the future development of intermodal facilities along the corridor, which will enable areas like western Virginia, West Virginia, northeast Kentucky, or southern Ohio to benefit from rail intermodal.

To the extent that this Project is able to attract freight from highways to rail, there will be benefits through greater mobility for both motorists and those trucks which will continue to carry goods over the road. Current rail service, connecting Midwest points to maritime port facilities in Portsmouth, Virginia, or Norfolk, Virginia, is restricted to single-stack trains reducing the volume of freight that can move within a given time. To use double-stack trains freight must either travel via Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and then south, or via Danville, Kentucky, and Knoxville, Tennessee, and then east. The provision for double-stack via the Heartland Corridor will reduce the rail mileage for those containers moving from port terminals in Virginia to the Midwest by over 200 miles, making rail service more efficient and effective (increasing the volume of freight moved) and making rail a more attractive option for shippers. This project can result in a number of public benefits including but not limited to: (1) contributing to the reduction of congestion, (2) improving public safety, and (3) enabling States to stretch their highway dollars further.

Promulgation of Project Evaluation and Rating Regulations

On July 24, 2006, the FHWA published in the Federal Register at 71 FR 41748 a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to establish regulations on the manner in which the proposed projects under the Projects of National and Regional Significance (PNRS) Program will be evaluated and rated, in order to determine which projects shall receive grant funding. The FHWA was looking for specific and detailed comments that would assist in defining grant criteria, project eligibility, project ratings, and the nature and form of full funding grant agreements. The FHWA specifically solicited comments that would contribute to an understanding and a quantification of criteria related to congestion, system throughput, safety, technology, private contributions and national and/or regional economic benefits.

The first comment period for the NPRM closed on September 22, 2006. The FHWA recognized that additional time would allow interested parties a broader and more comprehensive review and discussion of the proposed regulations and, allow the development and submission of complete responses to the docket. To allow time for interested parties to submit more comprehensive comments, the FHWA reopened the comment period with a notice published in the Federal Register on December 28, 2006. This comment period closed on February 9, 2007. FHWA is currently analyzing comments and developing a final rule for the PNRS project evaluation and rating regulations.