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(Dec. 6, 2012) Reconnecting America Releases Report On Transit In Midsize Cities

Reconnecting America today released a report that explores transit in midsize cities with a focus on best practices in transit planning, funding strategies, and outcomes.

"Midsize Cities on the Move: A Look at the Next Generation of Rapid Bus, Bus Rapid Transit, and Streetcar Projects in the United States" provides examples of innovative transit in midsize cities that local leaders can draw upon to improve transportation options in their communities. The report was funded by a generous grant from The Rockefeller Foundation.

"As our report shows, when a city establishes an aggressive set of goals and develops the partnerships to advance them, transit projects can help revitalize communities," said Sarah Kline, Reconnecting America's policy director and co-author with Reconnecting America's Sasha Forbes. "The examples in the report show that projects approached from the most collaborative perspective yield the maximum benefits."

"We know that providing citizens with more transportation options helps households to reduce their transportation costs, and new modes, particularly high-quality Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), can help cities roll out efficient transportation quickly and affordably," said Benjamin de la Pena, Associate Director, The Rockefeller Foundation. "The Rockefeller Foundation is thrilled to support Reconnecting America, and hopes this report inspires other midsize cities to find the path to successfully implementing transit projects."

For purposes of this report, midsize cities are defined as those with a population between 50,000 and 250,000. More than 250 transit systems serve midsize cities, providing more than 1.5 billion trips each year.

The report focuses on midsize cities that either have implemented or are actively constructing or planning a new transit project that is different in character – either through branding, vehicle type, guideway, or service characteristics – from the base transit system in that city.

Cities studied include:

- Albany, NY
- Boise, ID
- Des Moines, IA
- Eugene, OR
- Flagstaff , AZ
- Fort Collins, CO
- Grand Rapids, MI
- Hartford, CT
- Kenosha, WI
- Little Rock, AR
- Orlando, FL
- Sarasota, FL
- Savannah, GA
- Tacoma, WA

"Across the country, midsize cities are investing in transit improvements to better connect suburbs with city centers, to move people between employment centers, and to improve overall connectivity among key destinations," Kline said. "These new transit investments promise to bring not only improved mobility for local residents, but can also be the catalyst for community revitalization, economic development, and improved connectivity."

The Midsize Cities report complements Reconnecting America's May 2012 report, "Putting Transit to Work in Main Street America: How Smaller Cities and Rural Places Are Using Transit and Mobility Investments to Strengthen Their Economies and Communities," also funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, which explored how smaller communities and rural regions are using transit to revitalize their economies and connect residents to local and regional opportunities.

Download the report at <http://reconnectingamerica.org/2012midsize>

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About Reconnecting America

Reconnecting America is a national nonprofit that is helping to transform promising ideas into thriving communities - where transportation choices make it easy to get from place to place, where businesses flourish, and where people from all walks of life can afford to live, work and visit. Reconnecting America is the managing partner of the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, the only national nonprofit effort funded by Congress to promote best practices in transit-oriented development. Reconnecting America is also a founding partner of Transportation for America, 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. For more information visit our website, www.reconnectingamerica.org.