



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CIVIC LEADERS JOIN NATIONAL COALITION TO ANNOUNCE FIVE POINT PLAN FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY THROUGH TRANSPORTATION**

*Chicago hosts one of eight events across the country, calling on presidential candidates and Congress to build our way out of economic peril and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

**Chicago, IL (Oct. 15, 2008)** – Today, on the heels of the Wall Street bailout and hours before the final presidential debate, community and business leaders joined together to call on the next President and Congress to strengthen our local and national economies by building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century transportation system.

At Union Station, the groups along with their national partners in the Transportation for America Campaign (T4), released “Build for America: A Five-Point Plan to get our Economy Moving.” This bold economic agenda has the potential to create millions of good, green jobs nationally, save Americans thousands of dollars per year, and reduce America’s dependence on oil once and for all.

“Amtrak ridership in Illinois continues to break records. We’ve shown that if you build it, they will come,” said Kevin Brubaker, Deputy Director of the Environmental Law & Policy Center. “We need a forward-thinking transportation policy that reflects citizens’ desire to get around in a green and affordable way.

“Our lawmakers in Springfield and in Washington, D.C. should act to strengthen our economy by building 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation,” said Brian Imus, Director of Illinois PIRG. “Investment in transit will produce the best returns for our economy, our pocketbooks and our communities.”

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, the groups 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.

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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.

"We're too exposed to the rising price of gasoline and the need to own too many cars," said Scott Bernstein, President of the Center for Neighborhood Technology. "This region's households are spending over \$40 billion annually for transportation, dwarfing what's invested publicly. Working families now pay as much or more for transportation as they do for housing.

"Federal policy needs to focus on giving people the choice of driving less, enjoying it more and being more financially secure. Investing in mass transit and better communities is the smartest choice we can make, and our elected representatives in Congress and Springfield near to hear us loud and clear."

Diane Palmer, Director of Communications for the Regional Transportation Authority, stressed the region's pressing need for transit investment. Other participants included Maria Saldana, representing Metropolitan Planning Council Board and Rob Hoffman from the Chicago Workforce Board.

Events similar to the one held in Chicago are happening in eight other cities today, including New York, Atlanta, Columbus, OH, Milwaukee, Phoenix, Seattle, and San Francisco.

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 (T4) 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).