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News Clip

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Subject: **U.S. Secretary of Transportation Names Five Communities to Receive Funding to Help Fight Traffic Congestion**

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Names Five Communities to Receive Funding to Help Fight Traffic Congestion

Miami, Minneapolis Area, New York City, San Francisco and Seattle Area Selected

U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters today announced she has selected five metropolitan areas across the country as the first communities to participate in a new federal initiative to fight traffic gridlock.

Today's announcement follows an eight-month nationwide competition to select a handful of communities from among the 26 who applied to join the Department's Urban Partnership program, aimed to reduce traffic congestion using approaches like congestion pricing, transit, tolling, and teleworking.

The Secretary said the communities, as winners of the competition, will receive the following funding amounts to implement their traffic fighting plans: Miami, \$62.9 million; the Minneapolis area, \$133.3 million; New York City, \$354.5 million; San Francisco, \$158.7 million; and the Seattle area (King County), \$138.7 million;

The Secretary said each of the Urban Partners has developed a total transportation solution. "These communities have committed to fighting congestion now. Our commitment was to allocate the federal contribution in a lump sum, not in bits and pieces over several years – an approach meant to get these projects off the drawing board and into action," she said.

Secretary Peters said every Urban Partner proposed some form of congestion pricing. These direct user fees have the advantage of both reducing the enormous costs of congestion, and also of raising funds more effectively than the gas tax does to help states and cities build and maintain critical transportation infrastructure, she said.

"Many politicians treat tolls and congestion pricing as taboo, but leaders in these communities understand that commuters want solutions that work," Secretary Peters said.



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Additionally, improved and expanded bus and ferry service will make it easier for commuters in Urban Partnership communities to leave their cars at home, the Secretary said. The plans also take advantage of new technologies to keep traffic moving, and flexible work schedules and telecommuting to ease traditional rush hours, she said.

The Urban Partnership Program is part of the Bush Administration's comprehensive initiative launched in May 2006 to confront and address congestion throughout the nation's transportation system.