



**NITC**

NATIONAL INSTITUTE  
for TRANSPORTATION  
and COMMUNITIES

# MEASURING RETURNS ON TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS

Federal, state and local governments spent approximately \$320 billion on transportation in 2012. These public monies buy outputs: facilities and services for highways, transit, air, water, rail and pipelines. But how effectively do these investments deliver desired outcomes: reducing commute times, improving the economy, supporting community development, enhancing public health, providing cleaner air, and advancing other livability goals?

To learn how effectively transportation investments are advancing important public goals— especially economic, health and other livability goals—the research team looked at six case study states and also a select metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in each state:

- California / Metropolitan Transportation Commission (San Francisco)
- Massachusetts / Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (Springfield)
- Minnesota / Metropolitan Council (Minneapolis)
- Tennessee / Nashville Area MPO
- Utah / Wasatch Front Regional Council (Salt Lake City)
- Virginia / Hampton Roads MPO (Virginia Beach)

This research report provides recommendations for better linking planning, governance and finance, programming, and reporting to improve accountability and transparency. Other products include a toolkit for practitioners, developed with the assistance of Transportation for America, which explores how to integrate performance measures, especially measures of outcomes, into all phases of transportation decision-making.

What do Americans get in return for their transportation investments? A lack of data makes it difficult to track the relationship of funding to livability targets. In order to develop a tool to measure outcomes, researchers explored six case studies.

**PROJECT TITLE**  
Effectiveness of Transportation  
Funding Mechanisms for  
Achieving National, State and  
Metropolitan Economic, Health  
and Other Livability Goals  
(#2017-875)

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Download the report, toolkit  
and related materials:  
[http://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/research/  
project/875](http://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/research/project/875)

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