



COLUMBIA

A Capital Place To Be



Stimulus White Paper

Columbia appreciates President-elect Obama's proposal to provide an immediate boost to the economy while also supporting the transition to 21st century jobs. The City also appreciates the President-elect's interest in fostering more competitive metro areas. Columbia is poised to quickly invest federal economic stimulus funding in a manner that will put people to work, rebuild infrastructure and lay the groundwork for the green and knowledge-based jobs that our nation needs to prosper. In South Carolina, metro areas drive the state economy, accounting for 83 percent of the gross state product. The Columbia Metro Area, the state's largest, boasts a gross metro product of \$29 billion, 19 percent of the gross state product. In recent years, the City and the University of South Carolina have worked together through projects such as EngenuitySC, a metro area-wide effort to foster innovation and entrepreneurs. Recent development in Center City Columbia demonstrates that these efforts have paid off.

However, state government policy often fails to recognize the importance of these efforts and of the role South Carolina's metro areas play in the state's economy. More often than not, the state directs resources to, and pursues policies that favor, exurban and rural areas. Simply put, ***a federal economic stimulus package that fails to direct funding to local governments will fail to build the infrastructure needed to support economic growth and job creation.*** It is critical to invest stimulus funding in our nation's cities and metro areas and provide them with the infrastructure and the resources they need to promote the recovery of our nation's growth and prosperity.

Specific Recommendations for Inclusion in the Economic Stimulus Package

Direct Highway Funding through the Surface Transportation Program, with Sub-Allocation to Metro Areas: STP provides the most flexible form of federal highway funding, allowing metro areas to meet local priorities. Sub-allocation to metro areas will ensure that highway funds are spent on sustainable projects that preserve and create jobs.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): CDBG has played a lead role in the transformation of Center City Columbia, providing seed money that the City has leveraged to transform neighborhoods. Columbia, like cities throughout the nation, has millions of dollar of ready-to-go infrastructure projects in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods that would quickly create jobs while minimizing the impact of the economic downturn on those neighborhoods.

Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant (EECBG): EECBG would provide direct, flexible funding to cities for green energy projects. Columbia recently completed a citywide energy audit and has begun implementing a wide array of energy efficiency and conservation projects that promise not only to lay the foundation for a green economy but to also save millions of taxpayer dollars through reduced City operating costs. The EECBG would also enable the City to enhance its partnerships with the University of South Carolina and EngenuitySC in this critical area.

Public Safety Jobs & Technology: Funding the COPS and Byrne Justice Assistance Grant programs will create jobs and reduce crime.