

STATEMENT OF
ALFRED H. FOXX, DIRECTOR
BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

ON
THE AMERICAN REINVESTMENT AND RECOVERY ACT

BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

SEPTEMBER 29, 2010
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Good morning Mr. Chairman and Members of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee.

My name is Alfred H. Foxx and I am the Director of the Baltimore City Department of Public Works and, until about three months ago, was the Director of the City's Department of Transportation. I have a working career that spans more than 35 years, the majority in public service, and am proud to have served my Country in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about the positive impact that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has had on my City of Baltimore, particularly the opportunities for investing in our transportation infrastructure, investing in the lives of the working people, and the resulting improvement in the quality of life for our neighborhoods.

Baltimore is one of 24 jurisdictions in the State of Maryland. We are unique in that, with the exception of small portions of I-95/395, we are responsible for every street, alley, road, bridge, street light and traffic signal within our borders. While other jurisdictions have State highways, roadways and attendant bridges and overpasses under the care and maintenance of the Maryland Department of Transportation, we in Baltimore build, widen, pave, reconstruct and repair our entire transportation infrastructure.

City of Baltimore – Transportation Infrastructure

2,000 miles of roadways	72,000 Street lights
7 miles of Interstate highways	1,300 Signalized intersections
298 Bridges & culverts	250,000 Traffic & informational signs
3,600 miles of sidewalks, curbs & gutters	10,770 Parking meters
456 miles of alleys	

Baltimore is an old city that was established and grew because of the beneficial location of a Harbor. Second only to New York as a point of immigration, we embraced waves of immigrants who helped build and create the communities that exist today. We are home to approximately 651,000 people of many races, backgrounds and incomes; have institutions of learning making great advances in the health and biotechnological fields; are enriched with a vibrant cultural and arts heritage; gaining a reputation for our growing sustainable and green movement; and sit at the confluence of a vital port, highway and rail transport system that supports our national commerce. But we are also an older urban center facing many of the challenges of other East Coast cities; transitioning from an industrialized to a more service-oriented economy, working to become a more technologically savvy city, while finding ways to support these changes with an aging infrastructure built to support a much different way of life.

The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act came as a shot in the arm at a time when, as Director of Transportation, I was looking at a capital program of zero non-federal dollars. We couldn't even provide the match to our regular federal-aid highway program for any new projects. Baltimore received \$35.1 million in Recovery Act dollars through the federal Surface Transportation Program and \$1.59 million in discretionary funds. We were able to take plans sitting on the shelf for lack of funding and get them out on the street. While the Recovery Act required communities to react quickly to the opportunities it offered, we were able to put together a diverse package of projects to reach across much of our local economy through street resurfacing, street reconstruction and streetscaping, traffic signal reconstruction, fiber optic communications to better manage signalization, and bridge reconstruction. In doing so, we were able to get our infrastructure investment back on track, creating a ripple effect in our local and State economy.

One would need no better gauge of the economic climate at that time for the construction, trades, professional and support services, and equipment and material suppliers, than the competitive bids we received for these projects. Bids came in well below the estimated costs, in some cases as much as 40% lower than estimated. As a result, we were able to stretch these funds to do even more by advertising a second phase of projects.

Project	Amount	Completion
Orleans Street Streetscape – Central Avenue to Wolfe St	\$7,082,521	Fall 2010
Resurfacing Frankford Avenue – Sinclair Lane to Druid Park Drive	\$1,051,680	Completed
Resurfacing of Hilton Street – Frederick Road to Gwynns Falls Parkway	\$843,766	Completed
Resurfacing of Northern Parkway – Falls Road to Park Heights Avenue	\$7,572,092	Fall 2010
Park Heights Avenue Streetscape – Garrison Blvd to Northern Parkway	\$1,619,916	Completed
Argonne Drive Bridge over Herring Run - Reconstruction	\$6,528,294	Summer 2011
Pennington Avenue Bridge – Additional Structural Elements	\$3,013,859	Fall 2011
Edmondson Village Street Lighting	\$794,985	Spring 2011
City-wide Traffic Signal Reconstruction & Wiring	\$3,878,542	Fall 2012
City-wide Street Resurfacing	\$2,465,407	Spring 2011
New water taxi vessels & dock improvements	\$1,590,000	Spring 2011

One opportunity we took advantage of was to address bridges with low safety ratings. The Argonne Bridge reconstruction over Herring Run is one example of effective use of Recovery Act funding. The project was awarded to a local firm that employs a variety of skilled craftsmen from carpenters to steel workers, using a variety of materials from local suppliers. The project is expected to sustain 90 direct jobs over its 15 month construction. In addition, rehabilitating this bridge now allows the City to build on longer-term investments to be made by the Departments of Transportation, Public Works, and Recreation and Parks in rehabilitating the Herring Run watershed and creating the first phase of a new greenway in Northeast Baltimore.

The Recovery Act allowed us to add \$3 million to an existing project to fix structural elements of the Pennington Avenue drawbridge at Curtis Creek. This bridge, just a few hundred yards north of a critical Coast Guard maintenance yard, has suffered from significant mechanical problems over the past few years, which were being fixed. Recovery dollars are allowing us to complete the work with structural improvements which should keep the bridge in good stead for the next 25 years.

The resurfacing of Northern Parkway, a major east-west arterial that was in poor condition, was a project the City had wanted to do for years. This roadway is heavily used by commuters, by residents living in the adjacent neighborhoods, and by a major hospital. Northern Parkway interconnects with I-83 and is the route racing fans use during the running of the Preakness, a nationally covered sports event. Thanks to the Recovery Act, the project will soon be completed. In addition to the resurfacing, the project required reworking underground utilities and revamping of street lighting and signalization to bring this important roadway up to par. This project, along with the resurfacing of the intersecting Park Heights Avenue, is also critical in the context of supporting a major neighborhood revitalization project in the Park Heights community and is creating an attractive gateway into this once-neglected community.

Funds provided under the Ferry Boat Discretionary Program will enable Baltimore to enhance its water taxi service to residents and commuters while drawing upon the skills of marine-oriented jobs. The Inner Harbor creates a unique problem for residents attempting to get to jobs and locations within the Downtown area along the eastern side of the Harbor. Water taxis provide an alternative mode of transportation for communities lacking good east-west transit service as well as a unique way to avoid congestion on surface streets. With these funds we have purchased two new watercraft, purchased the necessary land for and construction of a new pier in South Baltimore, and made safety and passenger waiting area improvements at all of the water taxi stops.

On October 29, 2008, the National Association of Counties (NACo) testified before this Committee urging support for a national economic recovery package by investing in the nation's infrastructure. NACo noted that counties have a major role to play,

representing 44 percent of the nation's road miles, 45 percent of the nation's bridges, and one third of the nation's transit systems. They pointed to the impact the economic conditions were having on counties' budgets at that time. For Baltimore, the timing of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act could not have been more critical. We believe the investments we have been able to make through the Recovery Act will complement our future investments, improve the quality of life for our communities, provide meaningful employment, and encourage investment by others in our city.

I thank the Committee for their kind attention and will be happy to answer any questions the members may have.