



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

Metropolitan Transportation Infrastructure Survey



A Survey Sponsored by Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB)
usmayors.org/transportationsurvey



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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The United States Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,204 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.

Special thanks to our sponsor, Parsons Brinckerhoff.

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Founded in 1885 and headquartered in New York City, Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) is a leader in the development and operation of infrastructure to meet the needs of clients and communities. The firm has approximately 14,000 employees in 150 offices globally. PB provides strategic consulting, planning, design, program and construction management, and operations and maintenance services to both public- and private-sector clients.

PB is proud to serve as sponsor of the United States Conference of Mayors survey of metropolitan transportation infrastructure needs and priorities, and this report of key findings. PB strives to be a good corporate citizen and to contribute to the quality of life in the communities where we live and work. We share the vision—captured in the survey and highlighted in this report—that the funding and development of sustainable transportation infrastructure is essential to the social and economic growth and vitality of our cities, now and in the future.

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Foreword

Our nation's transportation system is broken. Because the federal government has failed to invest in transportation infrastructure in metropolitan areas—home to two-thirds of the country's population, 86 percent of United States employment, and 90 percent of wage income—families spend too much time stuck in traffic and businesses cannot efficiently move their products to market.

The largest metropolitan areas account for 87 percent of the nation's traffic. The three most congested areas—Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago—account for 27 percent of that traffic. Our metropolitan areas rank high among world economies (e.g., New York's economy ranks 12th and is larger than India's economy), but they are saddled with bus and rail systems at capacity and aging roads and bridges that will undermine their ability to meet the nation's future economic output. Simply put, these areas are receiving significantly less in federal transportation investments than would reflect their role and importance to the nation's economy.

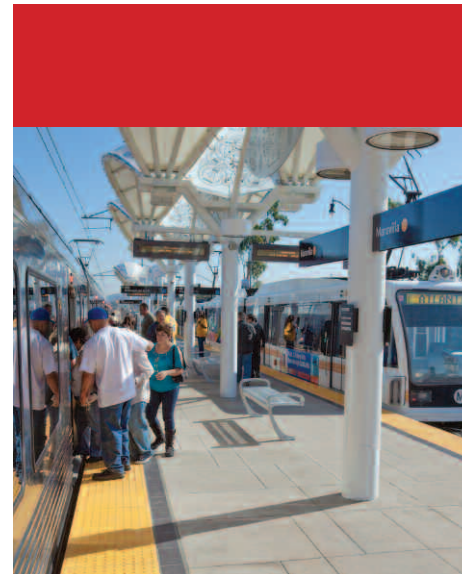
Given these factors, metropolitan areas should be at the center of federal transportation infrastructure investment. They are the drivers of the 21st-century United States economy.

This survey confirms what mayors have been saying for years: through a new direct partnership with mayors, the federal government should make tomorrow's transportation infrastructure more metropolitan-focused, more energy-efficient, and more environmentally sustainable.

As the federal government sets priorities for long-term spending and deficit reduction, future transportation infrastructure investments should prioritize spending on pressing metropolitan transportation infrastructure needs as opposed to low-priority expansion projects such as the infamous Bridge to Nowhere. The long-term productivity of transportation infrastructure spending is greater when it is invested where economic growth will occur, and over the next 20 years, 94 percent of United States economic growth will occur in metropolitan areas. Absent these reforms, 93 percent of mayors surveyed in this study said they would not support an increase to the federal gas tax to fund 20th-century transportation infrastructure improvements.

The United States Conference of Mayors is pleased to be working with the Obama Administration and Congress in helping to shape a federal surface transportation law that will rebuild transportation infrastructure in metropolitan areas, reduce traffic congestion, create jobs, and ensure that cities and their metropolitan economies across the United States, and, in turn, the nation's economy, emerge from the recession.

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director
The United States Conference of Mayors



Overview

The United States Conference of Mayors commissioned this survey of mayors to determine metropolitan surface transportation infrastructure needs and where the Obama Administration and Congress should prioritize surface transportation investments in the reauthorization of the federal surface transportation law.

Mayors throughout the United States were surveyed from March 14 to April 8, 2011. During this period, 176 cities in 43 states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, responded to the survey. Cities with populations up to 100,000 comprised the largest group (99 cities, or 56%); cities of 100,000 to 500,000 comprised the second largest group (53 cities, or 30%); and cities over 500,000 in population (24 cities) totaled 14 percent of the survey. The South region comprised the largest number of cities (59 cities, or 34%); the West region was second with 51 cities (29%); the Midwest region followed with 40 cities (23%); and the Northeast region (22 cities) totaled 13 percent of the survey. Cities in Puerto Rico comprised the smallest group in the survey (four cities, or two percent). For each of the report's findings, calculations are based on the number of cities responding to that survey question.

Specifically, the survey sought information from mayors on: (1) the quality of transportation infrastructure; (2) challenges in using transportation as part of broader strategies to reduce congestion, improve livability, and increase economic competitiveness; (3) transportation projects being delayed or cancelled due to uncertainty with the federal funding programs; (4) support for increased federal spending on surface transportation infrastructure; (5) support for an increase in the federal gas tax for transportation infrastructure improvements; (6) support for reforms in federal transportation programs to allow cities and their metropolitan areas to receive federal funds directly; (7) technical capacity to manage federal funding directly; (8) local funding source for transportation improvements; (9) support for the national infrastructure bank and federal financing tools; (10) priorities for investing in public transit bus and rail; and (11) the role that transportation can play in economic recovery.

The survey was developed by The United States Conference of Mayors with Parsons Brinckerhoff.

"I've seen some amazing projects that are transforming sprawling, struggling 20th century cities into clean, green, accessible hubs of activity where people choose to live and work and start a family."

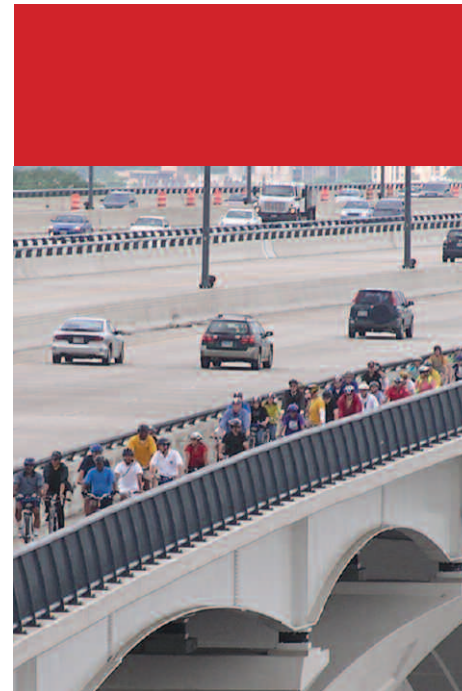
*Secretary Ray LaHood
U.S. Department of Transportation
January 21, 2010*

Key Findings

Among the major findings of the United States Conference of Mayors Metropolitan Transportation Infrastructure survey:

- Ninety-eight percent of the mayors point to investment in affordable, reliable transportation as an important part of their cities' economic recovery and growth.
- Ninety-three percent of the mayors urge reforms in federal transportation programs to allow cities and their metropolitan areas to receive a greater share of federal funds directly.
- Absent a greater share of funding directly to cities and metropolitan areas, only seven percent of the mayors indicate support to increase the federal gas tax.¹
- Ninety-six percent of the mayors believe that the federal government should increase spending on transportation infrastructure to reverse decades of underinvestment in cities, with strong majorities indicating support to increase the federal gas tax to improve transportation infrastructure, if a greater share of the funding were invested in local road and bridge infrastructure (89%), and public transit (65%).
- Seventy-five percent of the mayors indicate support to increase the federal gas tax if a greater share of the funding were invested in bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- Eighty percent of the mayors indicate that highway expansion should be a low priority.
- Seventy-five percent of the mayors say a national infrastructure bank or expanded availability of federal financing tools such as Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) or Build America Bonds would accelerate or increase the number of transportation projects that could be implemented.

¹ The United States Conference of Mayors policy does not support an increase in the federal gas tax without reforms and programs in the reauthorization of the federal surface transportation law that are metropolitan-focused, more energy-efficient, and more environmentally sustainable.



Summary of Key Findings

"The vast majority of Americans and their jobs are located in urban areas. Also, the future of our nation lies in our ability to revitalize existing places (namely inner cities and older suburbs) rather than continuing to grow outwardly. Our metropolitan regions are better equipped to make decisions on how to invest in their local area's transportation system."

"Our major metropolitan areas are the economic engines of our regions, states, and nation. If we don't provide proper financial support to enable them to compete and thrive in the 21st century, our global competitiveness will continue to weaken."

"Transportation and mobility are critical to maintaining our economic viability."

"Transportation is a key determinant of economic development and yet local economic development impacts do not necessarily justify transportation investment in the eyes of State and Federal decision-makers. This needs to change if we are ever going to revitalize our inner cities."

Investing In Metropolitan Transportation Infrastructure: Recovery and Growth

Two-thirds of the American population lives in metropolitan areas. These areas are home to 86 percent of United States employment, 90 percent of wage income, and over the next 20 years, 94 percent of the nation's economic growth. Investment in metropolitan areas, especially transportation infrastructure, yields strong benefits for the United States economy. In light of these benefits, it is not surprising that 96 percent of the mayors said that the federal government should increase spending on surface transportation infrastructure. When asked how important a role does affordable and reliable transportation play in promoting economic recovery in their city, 98 percent point to investment in affordable and reliable transportation as an important part of their city's economic recovery from the recession and an important part of their city's long-term growth.

As a follow-up question, mayors were asked if uncertainty over the future of federal funding programs is leading to the delay and cancellation of transportation infrastructure projects. More than six in ten (64%) said projects in their city have been delayed or cancelled due to Congress' failure to enact a long-term federal surface transportation reauthorization. The last multi-year federal surface transportation law expired in September 2009.

Quotes appearing in the Summary of Key Findings are comments submitted by mayors in response to the Metropolitan Transportation Infrastructure survey.

Investing in Metropolitan Transportation Infrastructure: Direct Federal Partnership with Mayors

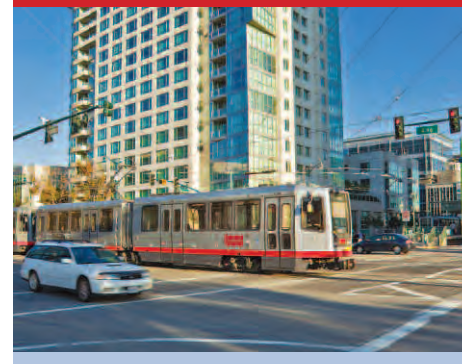
Mayors were asked to what extent they agree that reforms are needed in federal surface transportation programs to allow cities and metropolitan areas to receive a greater share of federal funds directly. A strong majority (93%) said federal surface transportation programs should be reformed to allow cities and metropolitan areas to receive a greater share of federal surface transportation funds directly, with regulatory streamlining (98%), enhanced flexibility (99%), and incentives for coordinating transportation and housing (85%) identified as areas that would help cities manage these funds more effectively.

To enable their cities to meet federal transportation project matching requirements, more than three in five (62%) mayors said that they have established a dedicated local funding source for transportation improvements.

Absent a greater share of funding directly to cities and metropolitan areas, only seven percent of mayors indicated support to increase the federal gas tax.

Mayors were asked if a national infrastructure bank or expanded availability of federal financing tools such as TIFIA or Build America Bonds that can leverage local funding sources, such as the popular America Fast Forward initiative led by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, would make it more likely that they could implement a local funding source and accelerate or increase the number of transportation projects they could implement. Three in four said the expanded availability of these federal financing tools would accelerate or increase the number of transportation projects that could be implemented. This pattern holds with more than three in five (64%) indicating that the expanded availability of these federal financing tools would make it more likely that they could implement a local funding source.

"Cities and metropolitan areas are better prepared to respond to the true needs of their geographies and, as a consequence, should control larger portions of associated funding streams."



"Funding directly to the municipality, much like the FTA currently funds projects for transit, would be more efficient and save a lot of time and paperwork."

"Direct funding would speed project delivery. Cities should be able to opt into a direct funding relationship with the FHWA."

“Existing funding mechanisms should be completely overhauled to express genuine support for livable, healthy, and economically competitive 21st century cities. We don’t need the last great highway projects of the 20th century, but rather the first great transportation projects of the 21st century.”

“Current revenues are insufficient to maintain existing infrastructure. Which bridges should we close or streets should we return to dirt or gravel because we can’t afford the maintenance?”

“Our major regional transit assets, including heavy rail, have deteriorating infrastructure. Our roadways also require additional investment to effectively serve the high volumes of traffic running parallel to the nearby interstate. If our region could more appropriately invest in high capacity, affordable, and reliable transit alternatives, there could be much less pressure on local roads, arterials, and the Interstate.”

“There are abundant reasons to completely re-think our approach to urban transportation problems and their associated remedies. We can’t keep doing the same thing and yet expect different outcomes. It is time to stop expanding urban highways until we build and/or upgrade transit assets.”

Investing in Metropolitan Transportation Infrastructure: Energy-Efficient and Environmentally Sustainable Transportation Investments

Mayors were asked to what extent they support increased spending on surface transportation infrastructure and under what circumstances they would support an increase in the federal gas tax for surface transportation infrastructure improvements. Three in five (56%) said they would not support an increase in the federal gas tax if federal transportation funding were allocated among programs in the same proportions that it is today, with forty-nine percent not willing to support an increase in the federal gas tax if a greater share were invested in highway infrastructure.

Of note, strong majorities indicated support to increase the federal gas tax to improve transportation infrastructure, if a greater share of the funding were invested in local road and bridge infrastructure (89%), and public transit (65%). Interestingly, but not surprisingly given increasing road and bridge state-of-good-repair costs, more than three-quarters of the mayors (78%) said that maintenance of existing roads and streets should be prioritized, whereas the reverse is true for public transit. Mayors identified the need to grow public transit capacity (40%) and operating assistance (46%) to meet the escalating demand for more public transit, rather than just simply maintaining what is already in place. As the price of gas approaches \$4 a gallon, and in some states exceeds that price, mayors are seeing large public transit ridership increases. These numbers correspond with a strong majority of mayors (80%) who said highway expansion should be a low priority.

Seven in ten mayors indicated support to increase the federal gas tax if a share of the funding were allocated to coordinate transportation with housing, economic development, and environmental investments.

Mayors were asked what their biggest challenges are in using transportation as part of their city’s broader strategies to reduce congestion, improve livability, and increase economic competitiveness. Lack of funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects emerged as a key issue facing three in five mayors (60%). To meet this challenge, seven in ten mayors (75%) indicated support to increase the federal gas tax if a greater share of the funding were invested in bicycle and pedestrian projects.

The five biggest challenges are road/street maintenance (78%); bicycle/pedestrian projects (60%); public transit operating assistance (45%), public transit capacity (40%); and road/street expansion (36%).

More than half (54%) indicated support to increase the federal gas tax if a share of the funding were allocated to build high-speed intercity passenger rail infrastructure.



A National Priority for Competing in a Global Economy

Time has shown that there is a strong correlation between the growth and success of our country and our investment in infrastructure. From the creation of the original New York City subway, which opened in 1904, to the transformative investment in transit being undertaken today in cities like Los Angeles, Parsons Brinckerhoff has been proud to work with cities and metropolitan regions to develop infrastructure that provides a sense of place and improves communities.

Investing in our cities makes good economic sense for the nation. Metropolitan areas are home to two of every three Americans, and are the hubs of economic activity. It is a lesson that is not lost on other countries, as they look to compete more effectively in an increasingly global economy. Regrettably, at the national level, we are not keeping pace. As a percentage of our gross domestic product (GDP), investment in infrastructure today is half of what it was in 1960.² The World Economic Forum’s 2010-2011 Global Competitiveness Report identifies investment in infrastructure as the second of twelve pillars necessary for global competitiveness, stating that, “Extensive and efficient infrastructure is critical for ensuring the effective functioning of the economy.” The report ranks the United States 23rd in the quality of overall infrastructure – a ranking that contributed to our decline from second to fourth in overall global competitiveness.

While the United States has been disinvesting, we see other countries taking a cue from our history by making significant investments in transportation. Today, we are investing approximately two percent of our GDP on infrastructure; Europe and China are investing approximately five percent and nine percent, respectively. Growth in India, China, Brazil and other surging economies is being fueled in part by investment in transit systems, roads, airports and other infrastructure. Thousands of miles of high-speed rail systems are being built in Europe and Asia, connecting communities and economic centers.

The American public gets it. People recognize the need for greater investment in infrastructure, and are living with the consequences of underinvestment. The 2009 Gallup World Poll found that Americans are dissatisfied with the state of our transportation systems. We ranked 17th of 32 developed countries in satisfaction with roads and highways, and 25th with respect to the state of public transportation. Surveys of the American public consistently show that the mayors’ views reflect those of their constituents. A 2009 Building America’s Future survey found that 94 percent of Americans are concerned about America’s infrastructure, and 84 percent support greater

² The Department of the Treasury with the Council of Economic Advisers, “An Economic Analysis of Infrastructure Investment,” October 11, 2010.



investment.³ Another recent survey, sponsored by The Rockefeller Foundation, found that 79 percent of Americans believe we must modernize our transportation infrastructure and then keep it up to date if the United States is to remain the world's economic superpower. That survey also found that registered voters want leaders to find common ground on transportation legislation more than any other issue, even higher than dealing with the federal budget deficit.⁴

Americans' support for addressing local transportation issues is also evident in the voting booth. When it comes to referenda, voters showed their support for increased transportation investment by approving 77 percent of state and local transportation ballot measures in 2010. Transportation referenda have twice the approval rate of all ballot measures, and enjoy success across regions, city size, and party affiliation.⁵ The importance of investing in metropolitan transportation was reinforced by a recent survey undertaken by the Economist Intelligence Unit of 575 urban professionals living and working in metropolitan areas around the world, about a quarter of them within the United States. When asked what should be the main priority for their mayor in making their city more competitive, 61 percent of respondents put improvement of public transport and local roads at the top of their list—far ahead of education, security, sporting/cultural events, environment, and other issues.

An October 2010 report by the Department of the Treasury and Council of Economic Advisors noted that “well designed infrastructure investments can raise economic growth, productivity, and land values, while also providing significant positive spillovers to areas such as economic development, energy efficiency, public health and manufacturing.” The report also noted the direct connection between investment in urban transit and increases in property values and economic activity. The results of The United States Conference of Mayors survey make it clear that mayors across our country understand this: 98 percent of mayors point to investment in affordable, reliable transportation as an important part of their cities' economic recovery and growth.

When mayors in the United States speak to their need to improve the quality of roads and transit systems in their cities, they are responding to a public need in a way that will arm their cities for success in global competition. Supporting their investments to achieve that quality—and spur economic recovery and growth—should be a national priority.

George J. Pierson
President and CEO, Parsons Brinckerhoff

³ Luntz et al., “The Building America's Future National Survey,” 2009.

⁴ Hart Research Associates, “The Rockefeller Foundation Infrastructure Survey,” February 2011.

⁵ Center for Transportation Excellence, “Trends and Results from 2010 Transportation Ballot Measures,” November 2010.

Cities and States Represented in the Survey

City	State	Population	City	State	Population
New York	NY	8,008,278	Denver	CO	554,636
Los Angeles	CA	3,694,820	Tucson	AZ	551,000
Chicago	IL	2,896,016	Long Beach	CA	487,100
Houston	TX	2,257,412	New Orleans	LA	484,674
Philadelphia	PA	1,517,550	Las Vegas	NV	478,434
San Diego	CA	1,223,400	Cleveland	OH	478,403
Dallas	TX	1,188,580	Mesa	AZ	462,823
Honolulu	HI	902,704	Sacramento	CA	452,959
San Jose	CA	894,943	Albuquerque	NM	448,607
San Francisco	CA	799,185	San Juan	PR	434,374
Indianapolis	IN	791,926	Fresno	CA	427,652
Columbus	OH	730,000	Atlanta	GA	416,474
Louisville	KY	694,000	Tulsa	OK	393,049
Austin	TX	656,562	Omaha	NE	390,007
Baltimore	MD	651,154	Minneapolis	MN	382,618
Memphis	TN	650,100	Arlington	TX	371,038
Milwaukee	WI	596,974	Miami	FL	362,470
Boston	MA	589,141	St. Louis	MO	348,189
Washington	DC	572,059	Pittsburgh	PA	334,563
Portland	OR	568,380	Newark	NJ	273,546
El Paso	TX	563,662	Riverside	CA	255,166
Seattle	WA	563,374	St. Petersburg	FL	248,232

Cities and States Represented in the Survey

City	State	Population
Lincoln	NE	225,581
Plano	TX	222,030
Rochester	NY	219,773
Madison	WI	208,054
Grand Rapids	MI	197,800
Irving	TX	191,615
Huntington Beach	CA	189,594
Orlando	FL	185,951
San Bernardino	CA	185,401
Jackson	MS	184,256
Salt Lake City	UT	181,743
Chandler	AZ	176,581
Chattanooga	TN	168,500
Dayton	OH	166,179
Pembroke Pines	FL	151,613
Santa Clarita	CA	151,088
Tallahassee	FL	150,624
Joliet	IL	146,000
Lakewood	CO	144,126
Bridgeport	CT	139,529
Eugene	OR	137,893
Sunnyvale	CA	135,721

City	State	Population
Elk Grove	CA	131,212
Mesquite	TX	124,523
Evansville	IN	121,582
Hartford	CT	121,578
Carrollton	TX	121,000
Elizabeth	NJ	120,568
Palmdale	CA	116,670
Waco	TX	113,726
Gilbert	AZ	109,697
Allentown	PA	106,632
Everett	WA	101,100
Dearborn	MI	99,573
Temecula	CA	97,935
Macon	GA	97,255
Charleston	SC	96,650
Richardson	TX	95,267
Boulder	CO	94,673
Albany	NY	94,301
Visalia	CA	91,565
Lakeland	FL	90,000
Killeen	TX	86,911
Westland	MI	86,602

City	State	Population
Frisco	TX	86,538
Germantown	MD	86,395
Trenton	NJ	85,403
Plantation	FL	82,934
West Palm Beach	FL	82,103
Racine	WI	81,855
Reading	PA	81,207
Roseville	CA	79,921
Roswell	GA	79,334
Pompano Beach	FL	78,191
Somerville	MA	77,478
Santa Maria	CA	77,423
Kalamazoo	MI	77,145
Arlington Heights	IL	76,943
Avondale	AZ	76,900
Beaverton	OR	76,129
Schaumburg	IL	75,386
Wilmington	DE	72,664
Turlock	CA	70,158
Carmel	IN	68,653
Muncie	IN	67,430
Deerfield Beach	FL	64,583

City	State	Population
Merced	CA	63,893
Redlands	CA	63,591
Santa Fe	NM	62,203
Eden Prairie	MN	62,000
Schenectady	NY	61,821
North Little Rock	AR	60,433
Burnsville	MN	60,220
North Miami	FL	59,880
Palo Alto	CA	58,598
Gardena	CA	57,746
Dothan	AL	57,737
Lauderhill	FL	57,585
La Mesa	CA	56,658
Niagara Falls	NY	55,593
Petaluma	CA	54,548
Rowlett	TX	53,750
Frederick	MD	52,767
Sarasota	FL	52,715
Oak Park	IL	52,524
Milford	CT	52,305
Piscataway	NJ	50,482
Shawnee	KS	47,996

Cities and States Represented in the Survey

City	State	Population	City	State	Population
Cayey	PR	47,370	Doral	FL	35,000
Warren	OH	46,832	Michigan City	IN	32,900
Kokomo	IN	46,113	Wildwood	MO	32,884
Pinellas Park	FL	45,658	Glendale Heights	IL	31,765
Hattiesburg	MS	44,779	Lewiston	ID	30,904
San Luis Obispo	CA	44,174	Alton	IL	30,496
Huntersville	NC	44,054	Cataño	PR	30,071
Valdosta	GA	43,724	Kyle	TX	30,000
Allen	TX	43,554	Morristown	TN	25,800
Wilkes-Barre	PA	43,123	Golden	CO	17,159
Cidra	PR	42,753	Auburn	CA	13,106
Bullhead City	AZ	41,000	West Columbia	SC	13,064
Sumter	SC	40,399	South Sioux City	NE	11,925
Lenexa	KS	40,238	Jackson	WY	8,647
Lima	OH	40,081	Auburn	GA	7,600
West Sacramento	CA	40,000	Franklin	PA	7,212
Brookfield	WI	39,740	Needles	CA	4,844
Linden	NJ	39,394	Tyrone	GA	3,916
Monrovia	CA	39,147	Marlette	MI	2,053
Burlington	VT	38,889	Pecatonica	IL	1,997
Hallandale Beach	FL	38,712	Columbus Junction	IA	1,900
Lake Oswego	OR	35,278	Myersville	MD	1,382