

March 2011

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION

Competitive Grant Programs Could Benefit from Increased Performance Focus and Better Documentation of Key Decisions



G A O

Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

Why GAO Did This Study

In February 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) appropriated \$1.5 billion for discretionary grants for capital investments in surface transportation projects of national and regional significance, including highways, transit, rail, ports, and others. The act required the Department of Transportation (DOT) to develop criteria to award these grants—known as the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants—and to meet several statutory requirements. GAO was asked to review (1) the criteria and process used to evaluate applications and award grants, (2) the outcome of the process, and (3) the extent to which DOT communicated information to applicants and the public. GAO reviewed documentation of the award process and selection documentation and interviewed key DOT officials.

What GAO Recommends

Congress may wish to consider balancing the goals of merit-based selection of projects with geographic distribution of funds and limit, as appropriate, the influence of geographic considerations in any future DOT competitive discretionary grant program. GAO recommends that DOT document decisions in its review of applications and, in consultation with Congress, develop and implement a strategy to disclose information about its decisions. DOT provided technical comments on this report.

View [GAO-11-234](#) or key components. For more information, contact Phillip Herr at (202) 512-2834 or herrp@gao.gov.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION

Competitive Grant Programs Could Benefit from Increased Performance Focus and Better Documentation of Key Decisions

What GAO Found

Criteria and Process

DOT developed criteria to evaluate TIGER applications, such as improving the state of repair of critical infrastructure, reducing fatalities and injuries, and increasing economic competitiveness by improving the efficient movement of workers or goods. GAO has called for a more performance-oriented approach to funding surface transportation and has recommended that a merit-based competitive approach—like TIGER—be used to direct a portion of federal funds to transportation projects of national and regional significance. This is a departure from the formula-based approach regularly used for surface transportation in which funds are largely returned to their state of origin and states have considerable flexibility in selecting projects for these funds—an approach that can potentially result in projects of national or regional significance that cross state lines and involve more than one transportation mode not competing well at the state level for these funds. DOT provides over \$40 billion annually in formula funds to states and urbanized areas for highway and transit projects; by contrast, TIGER provided \$1.5 billion on a one-time basis. However, TIGER was part of the Recovery Act, which was intended to provide economic stimulus across the nation, and the act required TIGER to balance using a competitive approach with achieving an equitable geographic distribution of funds. DOT has proposed a discretionary grant program like TIGER in its fiscal year 2012 budget, which means that DOT and Congress have the opportunity to consider how to balance the goals of merit-based selection of projects with geographic distribution of funds.

The process DOT used to evaluate TIGER applications involved several teams. First, 10 Evaluation Teams of five reviewers assessed over 1,450 applications requesting almost \$60 billion. The evaluators drafted narratives explaining their assessments for each selection criterion, assigned ratings such as “highly recommended” and “recommended,” and advanced those that best met the merit-based criteria for further review. A Control and Calibration Team also selectively reviewed and advanced applications throughout the process to ensure consistency across the Evaluation Teams’ ratings and to help meet statutory requirements such as an equitable geographic distribution of funds. The Evaluation Teams advanced 115 highly recommended applications. The Control and Calibration Team advanced an additional 50 recommended applications as well as 1 not recommended application. Together, the teams advanced 166 applications for further review.

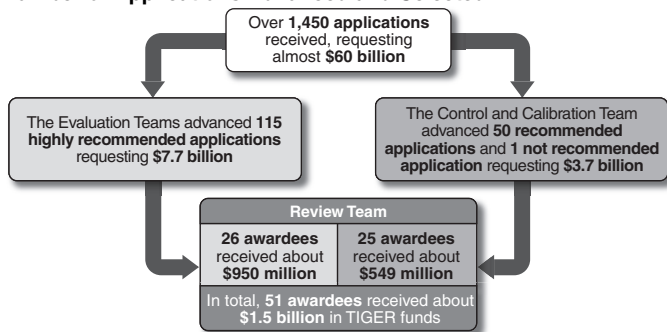
The TIGER Review Team, composed of 12 senior DOT officials, such as the Deputy Secretary and cognizant operating administrators, reviewed these 166 applications in a series of meetings over about 2 months. This team considered a broader set of factors than those considered by the Evaluation Teams. For example, it assessed the readiness of projects and confirmed the accuracy of information in applications, including whether project benefits outweighed costs. It also had to ensure that TIGER awardees, taken as a

whole, met the requirements of the Recovery Act, such as achieving an equitable geographic distribution of funds. The Review Team developed a memo with its final list of 51 projects that it recommended to the Secretary of Transportation for award, and all projects were accepted by the Secretary.

Outcomes

Of the 51 applications that received awards, 26 were from the highly recommended applications advanced by the Evaluation Teams and the other 25, which received one-third of TIGER funds, were from the recommended applications advanced by the Control and Calibration Team.

Number of Applications Advanced and Selected



Source: GAO analysis of DOT information.

While DOT thoroughly documented the Evaluation Teams’ assessments and the Review Team’s memo described the strengths of projects recommended for award, it did not document the Review Team’s final decisions and its rationale for selecting recommended projects for half the awards over highly recommended ones. Internal documentation of the Review Team’s deliberations was limited to draft minutes from the team’s initial assessments of projects. These draft minutes, which were not complete and never finalized or approved, reflect questions Review Team members raised about the strengths and weaknesses of various applications. For example, the Review Team questioned the extent to which financial commitments of project partners had been secured, whether projects were “ready-to-go,” or whether a project’s economic benefits were overstated. However, these questions did not necessarily reflect the reason a project was ultimately recommended or rejected for award. In addition, DOT officials told us that some highly recommended projects were not selected to achieve an equitable geographic distribution of award funds. In particular, DOT officials stated that some highly recommended projects from the Central and Western regions were rejected to prevent these regions from being overrepresented and that they advanced recommended projects from the South because projects initially selected for award underrepresented this region.

Because the Review Team was responsible for considering a wider range of factors than the Evaluation Teams, it is not unreasonable to expect that the Review Team’s deliberations could produce a different result. Furthermore, the draft minutes and GAO’s discussions with DOT officials provide some insight into the deliberations of the Review Team and indicate they raised some valid concerns about highly recommended projects. However, because no internal documentation from Review Team meetings exists in which final decisions to recommend or reject projects for award were made, DOT cannot definitively demonstrate the basis for its award selections, particularly the reasons why recommended projects were selected for half the awards over highly recommended ones. Developing internal documentation of agency activities is a key part of accountability for decisions, and DOT guidance states that officials should explain how discretionary grant projects were selected when projects with the highest priority in a technical review are not funded. The absence of documentation can give rise to challenges to the integrity of the decisions made, and DOT is vulnerable to criticism that projects were selected for reasons other than merit.

Communication

DOT’s TIGER program externally communicated outcome information similar to other Recovery Act competitive grant programs GAO examined, including the Review Team’s memo to the Secretary and the amount of funding awarded. As with most other programs, DOT did not publish the reasons for the Review Team’s decisions or why some applications were selected while others were rejected. GAO found no requirements for federal programs to externally communicate the reasons for their selection decisions and federal agencies rarely publicly disclose the reasons for their selection decisions. However, TIGER represented a new approach to funding projects on a competitive basis across many modes of transportation, including ports and freight projects that rarely compete for federal transportation funds and DOT has proposed a new \$2 billion discretionary grant program in fiscal year 2012 modeled after TIGER. Given this continued interest in awarding some transportation funds based on merit and performance—and GAO’s previous work supporting such an approach for projects of regional and national significance—disclosing additional information would give Congress a better basis to assess the merits of this new approach and the information it needs to judge whether and how to continue with it. Developing a strategy, in consultation with the Congress, to disclose additional information publicly would also help build confidence in DOT’s institutional ability to expertly administer a departmentwide, competitive program.

Contents

Letter		1
	Background	3
	DOT Developed Comprehensive Merit-Based Selection Criteria and a Competitive Selection Process to Evaluate TIGER Applications and Meet Statutory Requirements	6
	DOT Applied Competitive Selection Criteria and Addressed Statutory Requirements; However, It Did Not Document Key Decisions	17
	DOT Communicated the Criteria and Selection Process to Applicants and the Public but Provided More Limited Information on Award Decisions	26
	Conclusions	29
	Matter for Congressional Consideration	30
	Recommendations for Executive Action	31
	Agency Comments	31
Appendix I	Lessons Learned from TIGER and Applied in TIGER II	32
Appendix II	Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	35
Appendix III	Standard Evaluation Sheet Used by Evaluation Teams to Evaluate Applications against TIGER Criteria	39
Appendix IV	Applications Received and Projects Selected for Funding	46
Appendix V	Status of Implementation of TIGER Grants	51
Appendix VI	GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments	53

Tables

Table 1: TIGER Grant Primary and Secondary Selection Criteria	9
Table 2: Evaluation Team Adjectival Ratings	13
Table 3: Applications by Evaluation Team Overall Scores	18
Table 4: Percentage and Amount of TIGER Funding Selected in Each Transportation Mode	20
Table 5: Percentage of Advanced and Awarded Applications Receiving Highly Recommended Overall Ratings by Individual Evaluation Team Members	22
Table 6: Discretionary Grant Programs Reviewed	37
Table 7: Number and Percentage of Applications Submitted and Funding Requested by Region	46
Table 8: Number and Percentage of Applications Submitted and Funding Requested by Project Type	46
Table 9: Number and Percentage of Advanced Applications and Funding Requested by Region	47
Table 10: Number and Percentage of Advanced Applications and Funding Requested by Project Type	48
Table 11: Number and Percentage of Awardees and Funding Amount by Region	49
Table 12: Number and Percentage of Applications Submitted and Funding Requested by Project Type	49

Figures

Figure 1: Timeline for TIGER	5
Figure 2: TIGER Selection Process Flow Chart	12
Figure 3: Awardees by Region, Jurisdiction Size, Transportation Mode, and Funding Level	19
Figure 4: Results of the TIGER Selection Process	21

Abbreviations

DOT	Department of Transportation
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
NOFA	Notice of Funding Availability
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OST	Office of the Secretary of Transportation
Recovery Act	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
TIFIA	Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act
TIGER	Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery

This is a work of the U.S. government and is not subject to copyright protection in the United States. The published product may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without further permission from GAO. However, because this work may contain copyrighted images or other material, permission from the copyright holder may be necessary if you wish to reproduce this material separately.



G A O

Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

March 30, 2011

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate

The Honorable John L. Mica
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
House of Representatives

In February 2009, facing what was generally reported to be the most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression, Congress enacted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) to, among other things, preserve and create jobs, promote economic recovery across the nation, and invest in transportation and other infrastructure to provide long-term economic benefits. The Recovery Act appropriated \$48 billion for transportation investments, including \$1.5 billion for discretionary grants available to state and local governments, including organizations such as transit agencies, port authorities, and metropolitan planning organizations, among others, and to be administered by the Department of Transportation (DOT) for capital investments in surface transportation, including highway, transit, rail, port, and other projects.¹ The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) discretionary grants were designed to fund merit-based projects expected to have a significant impact on the nation, a metropolitan area, or a region. In making awards, the legislation directed DOT to address several statutory requirements. In December 2009, Congress appropriated \$600 million to DOT for a “TIGER II” discretionary grant program similar to the original TIGER program’s structure and objectives.² DOT announced the projects selected for TIGER grants in February 2010 and projects selected for TIGER II grants in October 2010.

¹Pub. L. No. 111-5, 123 Stat. 115, 203 (2009).

²Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-117, 123 Stat. 3034, 3036 (2009).

You expressed interest in DOT's evaluation and selection process for the TIGER grants and the extent to which information about that process was made public. In response, we examined (1) the criteria and process established by DOT to evaluate TIGER applications and award grants; (2) the outcomes of DOT's process to evaluate TIGER applications and award grants; and (3) the extent to which DOT communicated the TIGER criteria, evaluation process, and outcomes to applicants and the public. This report also addresses, in appendix I, lessons learned from TIGER that were applied in TIGER II.

To carry out this work, we reviewed the act and its requirements for TIGER grant awards and the department's criteria for selecting awardees as published in the *Federal Register* and other TIGER guidance materials, such as the DOT Evaluation Score Sheets that defined what characteristics would meet each criterion. We reviewed documentation such as the TIGER grant selection process summary and DOT's March 2009 *Financial Assistance Guidance Manual*, which provides guidance on discretionary grant processes. We analyzed (1) available data from the applications such as the amount of the request, transportation mode, and region; (2) the initial ratings from a competitive review focused on project merits; (3) which applications were advanced for further review and which were not; and (4) recommendations of senior staff that described the strengths and weaknesses of projects recommended for award. However, because DOT did not document its reasons for key decisions, our review was limited to draft minutes that were not finalized or approved and that summarized initial assessments of advanced projects. To gain insight into award decisions, we asked DOT officials to reconstruct and discuss why projects were recommended or rejected for award, and, while this offers some insight, such information has significant limitations. Specifically, it is testimonial in nature and reflects officials' recollections several months after TIGER grants were announced. It may therefore contain a greater level of uncertainty and error than documentation created while decisions were made. We assessed DOT's level of public communication regarding the criteria and evaluation process for TIGER grants by comparing it to Office of Management and Budget guidance on publishing selection criteria. We also compared DOT's communication of TIGER grant awards to other Recovery Act discretionary grant programs. Finally, we reviewed TIGER II guidance and training resources to identify changes between TIGER and TIGER II. We also interviewed 8 of the 51 TIGER awardees, selecting them based on funding level, region, transportation mode, and jurisdiction size. We conducted this performance audit from June 2010 through March 2011 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the

audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. For more information on our scope and methodology, see appendix II.

Background

The Recovery Act provided the Secretary of Transportation \$1.5 billion for the purpose of awarding discretionary grants on a competitive basis. Eligible projects included capital investments in roads, highways, bridges, or transit; passenger and freight rail; and port infrastructure, as well as bicycle and pedestrian-related improvements.³ The TIGER program's purpose was to fund merit-based projects that would provide a significant impact on the nation, a metropolitan area, or a region and required DOT to develop criteria to evaluate the merits of and select grants that would meet the goals of the program. The Recovery Act also directed the Secretary to meet several statutory requirements in making the final award selections including:

1. ensuring an equitable geographic distribution of funds;
2. achieving an appropriate balance in addressing the needs of urban and rural communities;⁴
3. giving priority to projects for which federal funding would be required to complete an overall financing package that includes nonfederal sources; and
4. giving priority to projects that are expected to be completed within 3 years of enactment of the act and obligating all TIGER funds by September 30, 2011.

³Eligible projects include any highway and bridge project eligible under Title 23 of the United States Code and public transportation projects eligible under Chapter 53 of Title 49 of the United States Code.

⁴The Recovery Act did not provide a metric or further define an "appropriate balance" of the needs of urban and rural communities, and DOT did not elaborate on this in its Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). 74 Fed. Reg. 28755, June 17, 2009. The Fiscal Year 2010 Appropriations Act that established TIGER II set a more specific requirement than TIGER by requiring DOT to award no less than \$140 million of the \$600 million to projects located in rural areas.

The Recovery Act also allowed DOT to provide up to \$200 million to support projects eligible for federal credit assistance. The legislation required that DOT make individual awards of no less than \$20 million and no more than \$300 million. However, the legislation gave the department discretion to waive the minimum grant size for the purpose of funding significant projects in smaller cities, regions, or states, and DOT opted to do so in certain cases.

Traditionally, federal surface transportation funding has been primarily delivered through formula grant programs—about \$40 billion annually—based on distributions prescribed by federal statute. In addition, to address concerns about the “equity” of how federal aid is distributed among states, Congress has included legislative provisions for geographic distribution in every surface transportation reauthorization act since 1982. For highway programs, DOT’s distribution formulas include provisions to ensure that states receive a guaranteed portion—92 percent since fiscal year 2008—of the estimated share of taxes highway users in each state contributed for a subset of highway programs.⁵ The grant funds are then administered by the state or passed through an intermediary or subrecipient, such as a local government.

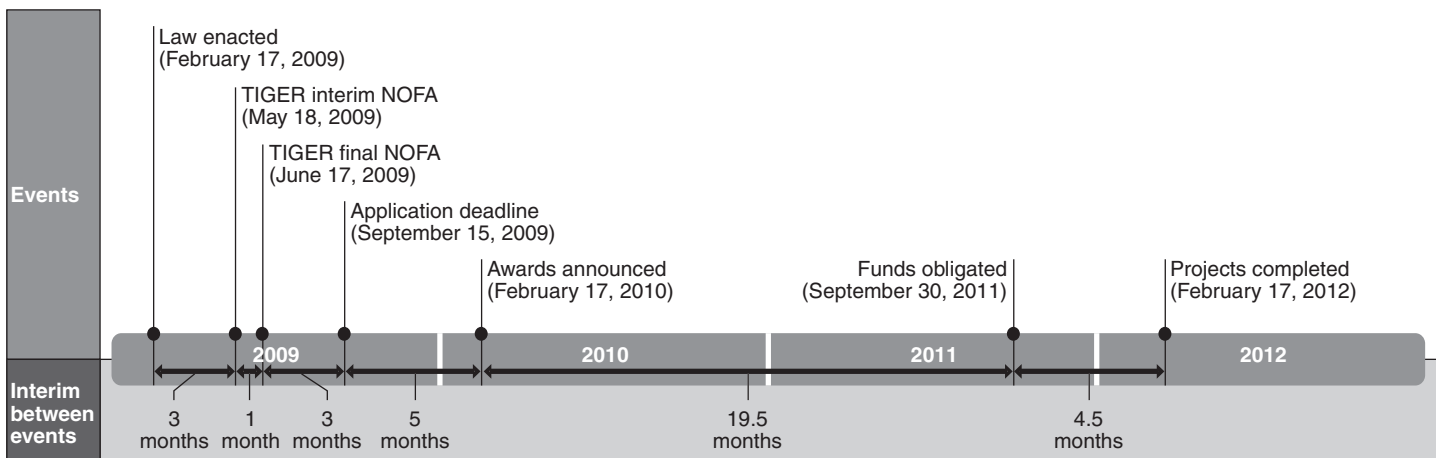
Compared with formula programs, discretionary grant programs are rarely used to distribute surface transportation funding. In a discretionary grant program, agencies rely on a competitive process in which Congress gives award discretion to federal agencies to review applications in light of legislative and regulatory requirements as well as published selection criteria established for a program. The review process gives agencies the discretion to determine which applications best address the program requirements and are, therefore, most worthy of funding. The TIGER program was a new discretionary grant program for DOT, wherein DOT had to establish criteria and an evaluation process that could be used to assess applications from several different transportation modes. By including the requirement that awards achieve an equitable geographic distribution, among others, DOT had to design a process that addressed both competitive selection criteria and statutory requirements.

The Recovery Act set short time frames for DOT to implement the TIGER program so that these funds—like other programs in the Recovery Act—

⁵The Equity Bonus is calculated from 12 formula programs and High Priority Projects designated by Congress.

would produce a stimulative effect on the economy. Specifically, the act required DOT to announce all projects selected to be funded by TIGER grants by February 17, 2010, 1 year after enactment and to obligate all TIGER funds by September 30, 2011. DOT published its Notice of Funding Availability on June 17, 2009; applications were due by September 15, 2009, and awards announced by the statutory deadline (see fig. 1 for a timeline of TIGER activities).

Figure 1: Timeline for TIGER



Source: GAO analysis of DOT guidance.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2010 appropriated \$600 million to DOT for National Infrastructure Investment grants in support of a TIGER II discretionary grant program. Similar to the TIGER program's structure and objectives, these grants were to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that are expected to have a significant impact on the nation, a metropolitan area, or a region. TIGER II had many of the same statutory requirements that TIGER had, as well as some additional ones, including a requirement that DOT ensure selection of a variety of transportation modes.

DOT Developed Comprehensive Merit-Based Selection Criteria and a Competitive Selection Process to Evaluate TIGER Applications and Meet Statutory Requirements

DOT Established Criteria for Awarding Competitive Grants That Support Merit-Based Investments in Transportation Infrastructure

To meet the Recovery Act requirement that DOT develop criteria to evaluate the merits of TIGER program applications and select grants, DOT published criteria in a May 2009 interim Notice of Funding Availability after the passage of the Recovery Act,⁶ and in June 2009, when DOT published its final Notice of Funding Availability, we evaluated the criteria. We concluded that DOT had followed key federal guidance and standards for developing selection criteria.⁷ For example, DOT's criteria clearly indicated that projects should produce long-term benefits such as improving the state of repair of existing transportation infrastructure, reducing fatalities and injuries through safety investments, and increasing economic competitiveness by improving the efficient movement of workers or goods. In addition, a benefit-cost analysis was generally

⁶74 Fed. Reg. 23226, May 18, 2009.

⁷GAO, *Recovery Act: The Department of Transportation Followed Key Federal Requirements in Developing Selection Criteria for Its Supplemental Discretionary Grants Program*, [GAO-09-785R](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 30, 2009).

required to determine if a project's expected benefits outweighed its costs.⁸

Developing rigorous criteria for discretionary grants is important because criteria focus the competitive selection process and helps agencies, like DOT, address national and regional priorities and achieve the highest possible return on federal investments. As we have reported, many federal surface transportation programs do not effectively address key challenges because federal goals and roles are unclear, programs lack links to performance, and some programs do not use the best tools and approaches to ensure effective investment decisions.⁹ For these and other reasons, surface transportation funding remains on GAO's high-risk list.¹⁰ Our previous work has called for a more performance-oriented approach to funding surface transportation, and in particular policies that ensure that goals are well-defined and focused on the federal interest and that recipients of federal funds are accountable for results.¹¹ Specifically, we have recommended that a criteria-based selection approach—like that developed in TIGER—be used to direct a portion of federal funds in programs designed to select transportation projects with national and regional significance.¹²

Such an approach—one rarely used to fund surface transportation—represents a significant departure from the formula-based approach

⁸In our 2009 report, we compared the information in DOT's interim *Federal Register* notice to requirements identified in the following: (1) a 2003 directive from the Office of Management and Budget that establishes the information requirements federal agencies should communicate to applicants for discretionary grants; (2) a March 2009 Administration memorandum that provides the overarching goals executive departments and agencies should follow when developing transparent, merit-based selection criteria to award Recovery Act funds; and (3) a 1994 executive order outlining several principles executive departments and agencies should follow when developing and implementing plans for infrastructure investment and management. 68 Fed. Reg. 37370, June 23, 2003, 74 Fed. Reg. 12531, March 25, 2009, and 59 Fed. Reg. 4233, January 31, 1994, respectively.

⁹GAO, *Surface Transportation: Restructured Federal Approach Needed for More Focused, Performance-Based, and Sustainable Programs*, [GAO-08-400](#) (Washington, D.C.: March 6, 2008).

¹⁰GAO, *High-Risk Series: An Update*, [GAO-11-278](#) (Washington, D.C.: February 2011).

¹¹[GAO-08-400](#).

¹²GAO, *Surface Transportation: Clear Federal Role and Criteria-Based Selection Process Could Improve Three National and Regional Infrastructure Programs*, [GAO-09-219](#) (Washington, D.C.: February 6, 2009).

regularly used to fund the nation's surface transportation program. Formula programs distribute over \$40 billion annually to states and urbanized areas for highway and transit projects (compared with the \$1.5 billion one-time appropriation provided for TIGER). In fiscal year 2009, this included almost \$36 billion for highway infrastructure projects through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and approximately \$10 billion in transit grants to urbanized areas and states through the Federal Transit Administration. The Federal-Aid Highway Program in particular poses considerable challenges to introducing a merit-based performance orientation for selection of projects of national or regional significance. This is because this program distributes funding through a complicated process in which the underlying data and factors are ultimately not meaningful because they are overridden by other provisions designed to yield a largely predetermined outcome—that of returning revenues to their state of origin. Moreover, once the funds are apportioned, states have considerable flexibility to reallocate them among highway and transit programs. As we reported in June 2010, this flexibility, coupled with a rate-of-return orientation, essentially means that the Federal-Aid Highway Program functions, to some extent, as a cash transfer, general purpose grant program.¹³ This formula-based approach can potentially result in meritorious projects of national or regional significance—in particular those involving multiple modes of transportation or those that cross state boundaries—not competing well at the state level for available funds.

TIGER selection criteria reflected federal interest in specific goals, such as improving the state of repair of transportation infrastructure. Specifically, DOT developed and applied two primary criteria—(1) long-term outcomes and (2) job creation and economic stimulus—and two secondary criteria—innovation and partnerships. DOT further defined its primary and secondary criteria with the concepts described in table 1 to help TIGER reviewers determine how well a proposed project aligned with each criterion. DOT described these criteria in its final Notice of Funding Availability, noting that primary criteria were weighted more heavily than secondary criteria, while the concepts defining each selection criterion were weighted equally.

¹³GAO, *Highway Trust Fund: Nearly All States Received More Funding Than They Contributed in Highway Taxes Since 2005*, GAO-10-780 (Washington, D.C.: June 30, 2010).

Table 1: TIGER Grant Primary and Secondary Selection Criteria

Selection criterion	Definitions
Primary	
Long-term outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>State of good repair</u>: improving the condition of existing transportation facilities or systems, minimizing life-cycle costs • <u>Economic competitiveness</u>: contributing to the economic competitiveness of the United States over the medium- to long-term • <u>Livability</u>: improving communities’ quality of living and working environments • <u>Sustainability</u>: improving energy-efficiency, reducing dependence on oil, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, benefiting the environment • <u>Safety</u>: improving the safety of U.S. transportation facilities and systems
Job creation and economic stimulus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the short- or long-term creation or preservation of jobs • Quickly promoting new or expanded business opportunities • Readiness to proceed rapidly upon receipt of a TIGER grant (measured by proposed schedule, ability to obtain environmental and legislative approvals, technical and financial feasibility, the degree to which the project was or would be incorporated into larger planning efforts)
Secondary	
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of innovative technology (such as smart cards, real-time dispatching, and radio frequency identification) to pursue long-term outcomes and/or significantly enhance the performance of the transportation system • New approaches to transportation funding and finance, contracting, project delivery, congestion management, safety management, asset management, or long-term operations and maintenance
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with nonfederal entities and use of nonfederal funds • Involving parties not traditionally involved in transportation projects (example: partnering with community-based organizations to connect disadvantaged people with economic opportunities) • Support from nontransportation public agencies pursuing similar objectives

Source: 74 Fed. Reg. 28755, June 17, 2009.

The criteria were designed to help DOT reviewers and applicants determine which projects were closely aligned with the goals of the TIGER program. Some criteria assessed the direct effects—such as reductions in travel time and the number of fatalities and injuries—that are common metrics used in evaluating the performance of transportation projects. For example, to assess whether a project achieved a “state-of-good repair”

within the long-term outcomes criterion, evaluators had to determine if a project was relevant to regional, state, or local efforts to maintain transportation facilities; if failing to rehabilitate the condition of infrastructure would threaten future economic growth and stability; and if a sustainable source of revenue was available for the long-term operation and maintenance of the infrastructure, among other issues. The Beartooth Highway Reconstruction Project in Park County, Wyoming, a project awarded \$6 million, proposed to improve the state of repair of a 7-mile segment of a highway, including replacing a critical bridge in deficient condition, connecting Yellowstone National Park with the Shoshone National Forest by completing its reconstruction. FHWA deemed this segment of highway inadequate and substandard in 1994.

Other criteria were intended to help DOT assess the potential for a project to produce indirect effects such as improved quality of life, coordinated economic development, and better land use. One factor also within the long-term outcomes criterion—fostering livable communities or “livability”—represented a new focus for DOT projects. DOT defined livability as:

- enhancing mobility through the creation of more convenient transportation options for travelers,
- increasing modal connectivity between various transit and other transportation options,
- improving accessibility to transportation for economically disadvantaged populations, and
- coordinating transportation and land-use planning decisions.

For example, the Saint Paul, Minnesota, Union Depot Multi-Modal Transit and Transportation Hub, a project awarded \$35 million, was given funding to renovate the city’s historic Union Depot to colocate Amtrak, intercity bus carriers, local buses, light rail services, taxis, and bicycle accommodations, as well as offer new space for commercial development. The award announcement indicated that colocating these transportation services would increase connectivity between transportation modes and create commercial space that would promote economic growth and redevelopment in the downtown area. For more discussion of how DOT defined its criteria, see appendix III, which shows the score sheet Evaluation Teams used to assess applications.

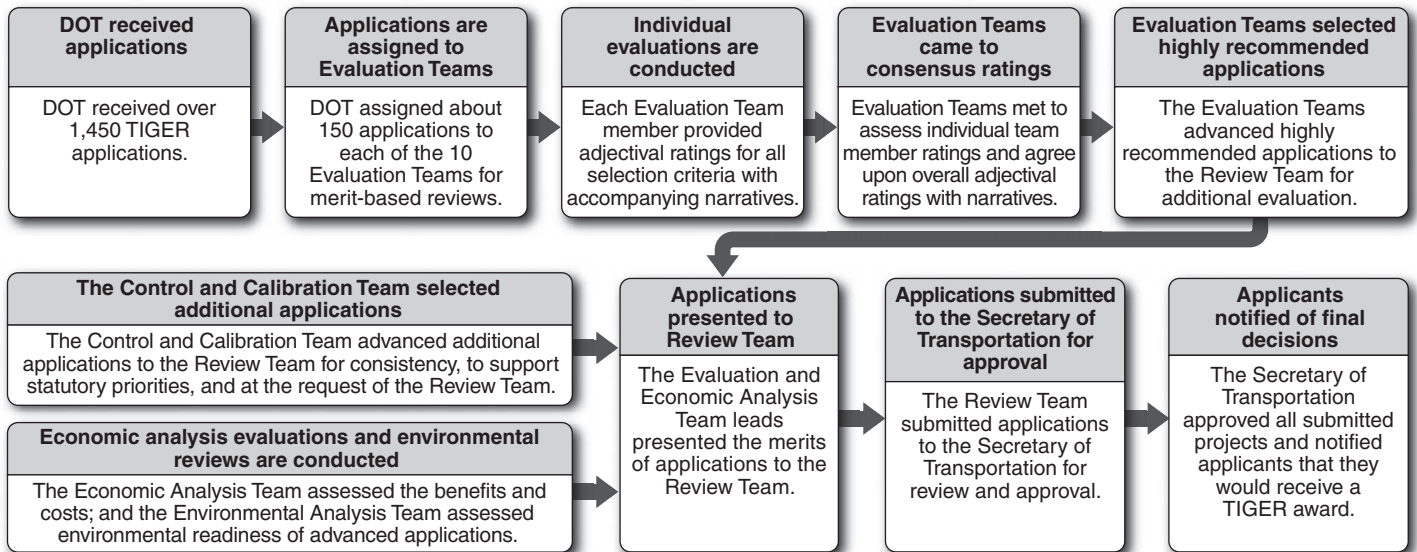
To meet the Recovery Act’s direction that the Secretary meet several statutory requirements in making the final award selections,¹⁴ DOT published and made potential applicants aware of these requirements in its Notice of Funding Availability. In addition, DOT developed internal guidance to clarify these requirements in the award process. For example, according to officials, DOT defined achieving an equitable geographic distribution of funds by establishing four regions based on a methodology that accounted for population sizes, geographic proximities, and the existing distribution of federal surface transportation formula funds. In addition, DOT sought to ensure within regions that awards were not clustered in one or two states, but were reasonably well distributed within a region. To give priority to projects for which federal funding would be required to complete an overall financing package, DOT gave priority to projects that included significant state, local, or private co-investment, required projects to demonstrate “independent utility,” meaning that projects created a complete and operable segment that would produce significant transportation benefits upon completion, according to officials. In some cases, this meant DOT funded a project in its entirety, while in others it funded a segment of a larger application as long as that segment resulted in complete and operable infrastructure.

DOT Established a Competitive Selection Process for Evaluating Applications That Included Merit-Based Assessments and Addressed Statutory Requirements

DOT’s process for competitively selecting applications involved several teams of reviewers—Evaluation Teams assessed and rated applications and a senior-level Review Team made final award recommendations. In addition, other teams evaluated the consistency of the ratings and assessed the accuracy of applicants’ economic analyses and project readiness. The TIGER selection process is described in figure 2.

¹⁴Including (1) ensuring an equitable geographic distribution of funds; (2) achieving an appropriate balance in addressing the needs of urban and rural communities; (3) giving priority to projects for which federal funding would be required to complete an overall financing package that includes nonfederal sources; and (4) giving priority to projects that are expected to be completed within 3 years of enactment of the act (obligating funds by September 30, 2011).

Figure 2: TIGER Selection Process Flow Chart



Source: GAO analysis of DOT information.

Note: Adjectival rating categories were highly recommended, recommended, not recommended, and negative. See table 2 for additional explanation of these ratings.

Evaluation Teams

DOT used 10 Evaluation Teams of five reviewers each—primarily career employees with technical knowledge—who represented the different DOT operating administrations, including the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Transit Administration, the Maritime Administration, and the Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST). This team design meant that applications were reviewed by an intermodal team that included members with subject matter expertise from several different transportation modes. Although applications were assigned randomly, DOT did ensure that at least one team member had expertise in the mode presented in the application. The teams assessed over 1,450 applications that requested almost \$60 billion, and each team evaluated approximately 150 applications.

Evaluation Team members were directed to select projects that they judged had the greatest potential to meet the primary and secondary criteria. Individual team members provided a rating of “highly recommended,” “recommended,” “not recommended,” or “negative” for each of the elements defining the primary and secondary criteria—for instance, state of good repair, livability, and others—and an overall score based on these criteria. Individuals also drafted short narratives

supporting their assessment. Table 2 presents the definition of each adjectival rating

Table 2: Evaluation Team Adjectival Ratings

Rating	Description
Highly recommended	The project aligns extremely well with the objectives of the selection criterion under consideration.
Recommended	The project aligns well with the objectives of the selection criterion under consideration.
Not recommended	The project provides limited value with respect to the selection criterion under consideration, or the project's alignment with the criterion was not addressed in the application.
Negative	The project would adversely impact the department's efforts to promote the outcomes described for the criterion under consideration.
Not rated	Projects determined to be ineligible early in the process were excluded from review.

Source: GAO analysis of DOT guidance.

Once the team members completed their individual evaluations, the team met as a whole to come to consensus on an overall team rating for each application and a narrative describing their assessment of each project. The Evaluation Teams prioritized applications receiving an overall team rating of highly recommended and advanced these projects to the Review Team for further evaluation.

In determining the overall project rating, DOT's guidance encouraged Evaluation Teams to identify and advance for further review projects that best met the merit-based criteria. These applications were to be ranked "highly recommended" and were to be subject to additional review by additional teams on a wide range of factors—a time-consuming process that needed to be reserved for a smaller group of applications. DOT's guidance to individual Evaluation Team members indicated they should in general give an overall rating of highly recommended to projects that receive a highly recommended in multiple selection criteria and that a negative score on any of the selection criteria reduced the likelihood that the project would receive a highly recommended overall rating. Furthermore, DOT's guidance stated that Evaluation Teams generally should advance projects that received an overall highly recommended score from four to five of the individual team members. Those receiving three highly recommended overall scores were to be advanced only on a case-by-case basis in consultation with other teams involved in the review process. Projects receiving one to two highly recommended overall scores

generally were not to be advanced. Finally, DOT's guidance noted that Evaluation Teams should not advance any project unable to demonstrate a likelihood of significant long-term benefits in the long-term outcome criterion.

As the Evaluation Teams' primary responsibility was to conduct a merit-based technical review of applications based on the criteria DOT developed, according to DOT officials, they were not responsible for addressing other factors in the TIGER review:

- The Evaluation Teams were directed to consider information presented in the applications—including project benefits and costs and the project's completion of National Environmental Policy Act¹⁵ requirements—but not confirm its accuracy. Evaluation Teams were told that separate Economic Analysis and Environmental Teams would determine the accuracy of the benefits and costs and would validate projects' environmental readiness.
- The Evaluation Teams were not responsible for ensuring that applications selected would meet the Recovery Act's statutory requirements, including achieving an equitable geographic distribution of funds and balancing the needs of urban and rural communities. The teams did contribute to prioritizing projects expected to be completed within the 3-year time frame as part of project readiness, but they did not have to ensure projects met this requirement. Finally, with regard to prioritizing applications in which TIGER funding would complete a funding package, while the Evaluation Teams could make *recommendations* on funding levels and whether segments of a project (rather than the entire project) should be funded, determining what level of funding to present to the Secretary of Transportation as part of an award fell primarily to the senior-level Review Team.

Control and Calibration Team

A Control and Calibration Team—led by a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy with two staff members from OST's Office of Policy—also reviewed and advanced applications, and it did so both during the Evaluation Teams' assessments as well as later in the process when the Review Team

¹⁵The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision-making processes by considering the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions. To meet NEPA requirements, federal agencies may be required to prepare a detailed statement known as an Environmental Impact Statement. The Environmental Protection Agency reviews and comments on environmental impact statements prepared by other federal agencies.

identified projects for award. According to DOT officials, the Control and Calibration Team advanced applications primarily in two ways: It used a statistical analysis to assess the ratings across the 10 Evaluation Teams and ensure that projects of similar types and quality were advanced consistently to the Review Team. This analysis was also intended to make certain that there were no significant disparities in ratings among the different transportation modes—an issue that, while not a requirement in TIGER, officials believed was worth monitoring given TIGER’s unique approach.

The Control and Calibration Team also advanced projects at the request of the Review Team. In several cases, the Review Team asked to assess projects of similar types in an effort to ensure that the most meritorious projects of this type were selected for award. For instance, the Review Team requested an analysis of the effect on port projects of the expansion of the Panama Canal as well as a side-by-side comparison of all streetcar applications and projects on Indian Reservations and federal lands. The Review Team also asked the Control and Calibration Team to identify additional projects to help them meet statutory requirements such as geographic distribution and providing some funding in the form of credit assistance. In response, the Control and Calibration Team, in consultation with the Evaluation Team leads, identified additional projects beyond those initially advanced by the Evaluation Teams for the Review Team to consider, which resulted in additional projects being advanced that received an overall ranking from the Evaluation Teams of recommended rather than highly recommended.

Economic Analysis and Environmental Analysis Teams

DOT required applicants to include a description of the status of environmental approvals as well as information on the project’s benefits and costs. Applications advanced to the Review Team were reviewed by an Environmental Analysis Team that assessed each advanced project’s ability to substantially meet federal environmental readiness requirements. In addition, an Economic Analysis Team composed of nine DOT economists—including the Chief Economist and economists from relevant operating administrations—assessed the economic analysis from each advanced application to determine whether the analysis was “useful” or “not useful” in its presentation of information and variables considered and whether the total benefits of a proposed project were reasonably likely to outweigh its costs. DOT required applicants to provide different types of information of benefits and costs depending on the amount the application requested. Specifically, projects requesting more than \$100 million were required to calculate the net benefits of a project, indicate the value assigned to qualitative benefits, and describe the methodology used

to arrive at this calculation. DOT directed applicants requesting more than \$20 million and less than \$100 million to provide estimates of expected benefits in the five long-term outcomes. Applicants requesting less than \$20 million did not have to submit a benefit-cost analysis. The Economic Analysis and Environmental Analysis Teams presented their findings to the Review Team, which considered this information along with other factors in its assessment of applications.

Review Team

The Review Team consisted of 12 senior DOT staff, including the Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary, three Assistant Secretaries, the Chief of Staff, the General Counsel, and Administrators from the cognizant operating administrations—the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Maritime Administration, and the Research and Innovative Technology Administration. This team assessed all applications advanced by the Evaluation Teams and Control and Calibration Team. The Review Team was responsible for addressing four broad areas:

- First, it was responsible for ensuring that the award recommendations made to the Secretary, taken as a whole, met all statutory requirements, including ensuring an equitable geographic distribution of funds, balancing the needs of urban and rural communities, prioritizing projects for which federal funding would complete an overall funding package that included nonfederal sources, and prioritizing projects that could be completed within 3 years of the act's enactment.
- Second, it assessed the merits of advanced projects by considering the TIGER criteria applied by the Evaluation Teams and whether project benefits outweighed costs. It accomplished this by receiving technical presentations from the Evaluation Team leaders and the Economic Analysis Team.
- Third, it had to ensure that potential awardees were in fact eligible, ready-to-go, and that information in the application—such as expected benefits—was accurate. To accomplish this, the Review Team requested more information on some advanced projects. For example, in some cases, validating environmental readiness required a follow-up conversation with applicants to obtain clarification about the documentation submitted or assurances provided in their applications.
- Fourth, it recommended to the Secretary of Transportation which projects to fund and whether an application should receive partial or full funding.

The Review Team's initial assessments were conducted during a series of meetings that occurred over about 2 months. In each meeting, the Review Team evaluated about 6 to 12 projects, discussed project strengths and weaknesses, identified areas for clarification or follow-up, and ranked each project in a tier based on the likelihood that the team would fund the project. At the conclusion of its assessment, the Review Team developed a memo with a final list of projects that it recommended for award. This memo included a description of each project's strengths, benefits, and how the project aligned with TIGER criteria. This memo was sent to the Secretary of Transportation who approved all the recommended projects and announced the TIGER recipients and award amounts in February 2010.

**DOT Applied
Competitive Selection
Criteria and
Addressed Statutory
Requirements;
However, It Did Not
Document Key
Decisions**

**The Review Team
Assessed 166 Advanced
Projects and Selected 51
Projects for Award**

Of the 1,457 applications submitted, 8 percent or 115 applications received an overall team rating of highly recommended and were advanced by the Evaluation Team for further review. These 115 applications made requests for funding that totaled about \$7.7 billion—about five times the \$1.5 billion available for award. About 33 percent of the 1,457 applications received an overall team rating of recommended. The remaining 59 percent received a not recommended or negative rating or were excluded from evaluation for reasons such as eligibility, readiness, or other factors that made the application not acceptable to receive funding. Table 3 shows how all applications were rated by the Evaluation Teams.

Table 3: Applications by Evaluation Team Overall Scores

(Dollars in billions)

Rating	Number of applications	Percentage of applications receiving this rating	Amount requested
Highly recommended	115	8%	\$7.7
Recommended	487	33	22.3
Not recommended	731	50	25.8
Negative	6	0.4	0.07
Other ^a	118	8	3.3
Total	1,457	100%	\$59.1

Source: GAO analysis of DOT guidance.

Notes: Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

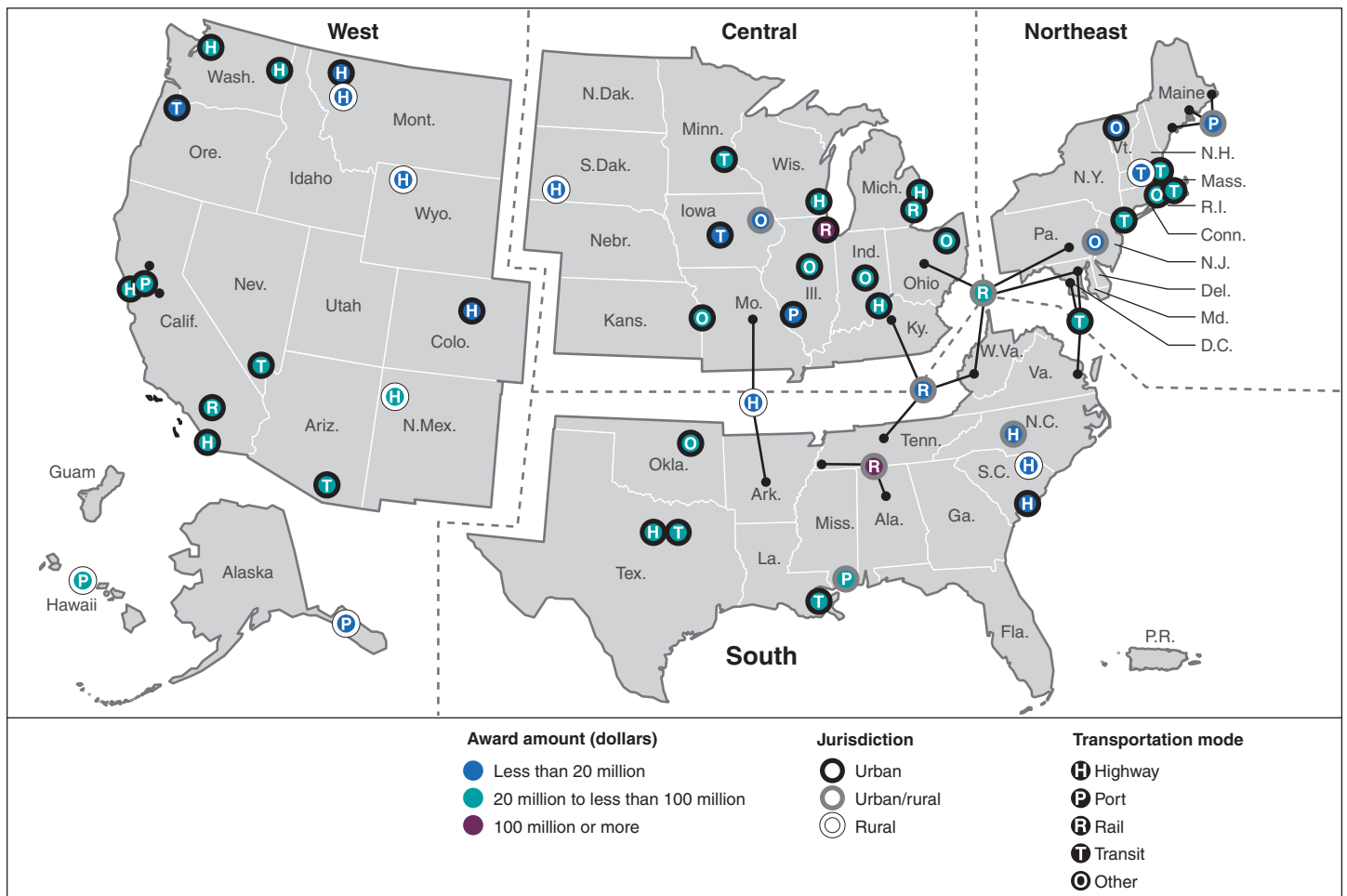
^aThese projects were either not rated or removed from additional review for reasons primarily related to eligibility and readiness issues.

In addition to projects advanced by the Evaluation Team, the Control and Calibration Team advanced 50 recommended projects and 1 not recommended project to the Review Team, for a total of 166 advanced projects. As noted, the Review Team ultimately selected for approval by the Secretary of Transportation 51 of the 166 advanced projects for award. The Secretary approved awards for each of these 51 applications.

TIGER awards were distributed across the country with 41 states and the District of Columbia receiving awards and with roughly equal funding levels (from 20 to 27 percent of funding) going to the four geographic regions DOT established, as shown in figure 3. Awardees represented a balance between the needs of urban and rural communities, as both groups received awards in about the same proportion as applications submitted and advanced. However, rural projects tended to receive smaller awards and received 11 percent of the total funds. The average TIGER award was just under \$30 million. The largest award was \$105 million for a large freight rail project in two states that would improve intermodal domestic rail service. The smallest award was \$3.15 million for a project to improve a road and waterfront bike path in Vermont.¹⁶ Figure 3 shows the distribution of awards by region, jurisdiction size, transportation mode, and funding level.

¹⁶ As stated, applicants from smaller cities, states, or regions could be exempted from the \$20 million minimum funding request size requirement.

Figure 3: Awardees by Region, Jurisdiction Size, Transportation Mode, and Funding Level



Sources: DOT (data); Map Resources (map); and GAO.

While there was no requirement to distribute awards across different modes of transportation, TIGER funding supported highway, transit, rail, port, and other projects—including bridge replacements, streetcar lines, and bicycle-pedestrian networks (see table 4). Transit projects received the most funding with 12 projects receiving \$469 million. Although TIGER grants were not awarded to intercity passenger rail projects, freight rail projects received about 25 percent of the total award funds. Although these projects received less funding overall than transit, funding levels tended to be higher per project with 5 freight projects receiving a total of \$354 million.

Table 4: Percentage and Amount of TIGER Funding Selected in Each Transportation Mode

(Dollars in millions)

Transportation mode	Percentage of total funding award	Amount of funding	Number of projects
Transit	31%	\$469	12
Rail	25	379	6
Highway	22	335	18
Other	14	216	9
Port	7	98	6
Total	100%	\$1,498	51

Source: GAO analysis of DOT data.

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

In addition, TIGER-funded projects were eligible for federal credit assistance through the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA), which provides direct loans, loan guarantees, and standby lines of credit to finance surface transportation projects of national and regional significance.¹⁷ TIGER funds used for TIFIA grants allow DOT to make a smaller financial commitment to support much larger projects—specifically, DOT estimates that each dollar of federal funds can provide up to \$10 in TIFIA credit assistance. DOT offered TIFIA awards to five applicants in the amount of either \$10 million or \$20 million each. One applicant had applied for and received a TIFIA award, and four applicants, while applying for a regular grant, were offered an opportunity to use the grant funds as a TIFIA award, at their discretion. Three of these four applicants opted to take the award as a grant and one took a TIFIA award.

DOT officials said that, as required by the Recovery Act and part of DOT’s partnership criterion, applicants who had secured funding commitments from third parties such as state and local government and private industry fared better in the TIGER process. Specifically, DOT noted in the Review Team’s memo to the Secretary that 11 of the 51 awardees had arranged

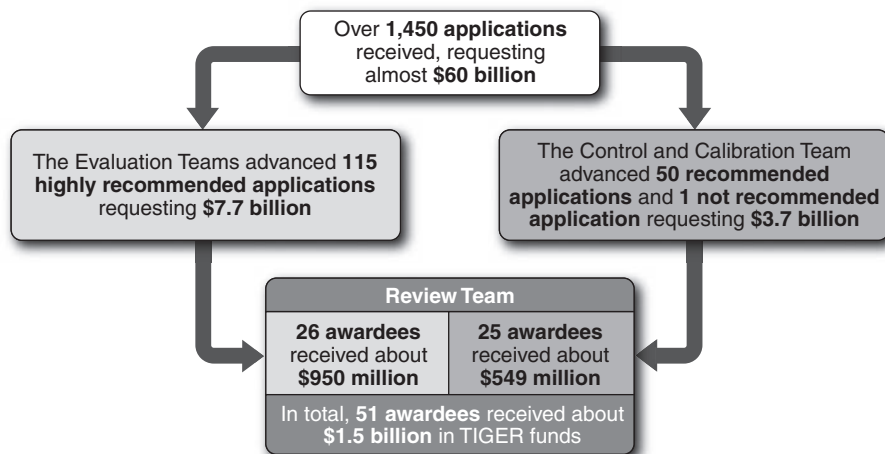
¹⁷TIFIA provides federal credit assistance to nationally or regionally significant surface transportation projects, including highway, transit, and rail. The program is designed to fill market gaps and leverage substantial private co-investment. The Recovery Act allowed DOT to provide up to \$200 million to support subsidy and administrative costs of projects eligible for federal credit assistance.

funding partnerships for their projects and were seeking TIGER funding to complete a funding package. While all TIGER awards were directed to projects that applicants indicated could be completed as a result of the award, these 11 awardees received 40 percent of the awarded funds. See appendix IV for additional information on the awardees and selection process and appendix V for information on the status of obligations and outlays for TIGER grants.

Half the Awardees Were Chosen from Applications Advanced by the Evaluation Teams While the Other Half Were Advanced by the Control and Calibration Team

The Review Team selected 26 awardees from the pool of 115 highly recommended applications advanced by the Evaluation Teams' competitive review process. These applicants received about \$950 million of the funds. The other 25 applications selected for award, which received about \$549 million of TIGER funds, were from the pool of applications advanced by the Control and Calibration Team. Applications advanced by the Control and Calibration Team included 50 that received an overall rating of recommended from the Evaluation Teams and one that received a not recommended rating: Cincinnati's streetcar project. DOT officials said this project was advanced to the Review Team because it provided additional context for the Review Team's analysis of streetcar projects, and it was not awarded a TIGER grant. Figure 4 shows the results of the TIGER selection process, including applications advanced by the Evaluation Teams and the Control and Calibration Team.

Figure 4: Results of the TIGER Selection Process



Source: GAO analysis of DOT information.

The recommended projects advanced by the Control and Calibration Team tended to fare less well in the technical review process. As mentioned earlier, each project received an overall rating from individual Evaluation Team members as well as a consensus overall rating from the team as a whole. The recommended projects advanced by the Control and Calibration Team not only received lower overall consensus ratings from the Evaluation Teams (recommended versus highly recommended), they also received fewer overall highly recommended ratings from individual Evaluation Team members. For example, as shown in table 5, the 51 projects advanced by the Control and Calibration team received a highly recommended overall rating from individual team members less than one-fourth of the time. By comparison, projects advanced by the Evaluation Teams received highly recommended overall ratings from individual team members about two-thirds of the time.

Table 5: Percentage of Advanced and Awarded Applications Receiving Highly Recommended Overall Ratings by Individual Evaluation Team Members

	Projects advanced		Projects awarded	
	Evaluation Teams	Control and Calibration Team	Evaluation Teams' advanced projects	Control and Calibration Team's advanced projects
Number of applications	115	51	26	25
Individual scores: Percent receiving highly recommended overall rating from individual Evaluation Team members	65%	21%	78%	23%

Source: GAO analysis of DOT data.

Because the Review Team was responsible for considering a wider range of factors than the Evaluation Teams, it is not unreasonable to expect that the Review Team's deliberations could produce a different result. However, while DOT thoroughly documented the Evaluation Teams' assessments and the reasons for its decisions and the Review Team's memo to the Secretary described the strengths and benefits of projects recommended for award, DOT did not document the Review Team's reasons for its decisions, including the reasons for selecting recommended projects over highly recommended ones. Most significantly, DOT did not document Review Team meetings in which final decisions to recommend or reject a project for award were made. Documentation of the Review Team's deliberations was limited to draft minutes from the team's initial assessments of advanced projects—a process that occurred in meetings

held over a period of about 2 months. The minutes were never finalized or approved and were provided to us in draft form.

We analyzed these draft minutes and found that they reflected questions Review Team members raised about the strengths and weaknesses of various applications—questions consistent with TIGER criteria and requirements. For instance, the Review Team raised questions about the following projects, none of which received an award:

- *The extent to which financial commitments of project partners had been secured.* For instance, the Coos Bay Rail Line Rehabilitation Project in Oregon proposed rehabilitating track so that a shortline railroad could serve regional industrial operations, distribution facilities, and marine terminals around the Coos Bay harbor and other locations in southwest Oregon. The project would also have reconnected these facilities to the national rail system. The Review Team raised questions about the project’s financial commitments—specifically, whether there would be any significant cost-sharing by the state or other commitments to the project.
- *Whether projects were sufficiently ready-to-go.* For example, the North Corridor Commuter Rail Project in North Carolina proposed to upgrade 25 miles of rail to permit faster passenger operations as well as construct new passenger and maintenance facilities and acquire additional equipment. The Review Team was concerned that this project would require an environmental impact statement to satisfy the environmental readiness requirements, which could substantially delay the project’s initiation.
- *Whether a project’s economic benefits were overstated.* The West Shoreway Project in Cleveland, Ohio, proposed to reconstruct 2.5 miles of limited access highway along Cleveland’s lakefront into a boulevard with six intersections, providing improved waterfront access. However, the Economic Analysis Team characterized the analysis provided by the applicant as “not useful” and therefore insufficient to demonstrate that the project’s benefits exceeded its cost. In response, the Review Team asked whether more data could be found on the potential benefits and economic merits of the project. According to DOT officials, producing a useful benefit-cost analysis was a challenge for many TIGER applicants. (See appendix I for a discussion of steps DOT took to improve applicant benefit-cost analyses in TIGER II.)

Our review of these narratives suggests that, on the whole, the team asked reasonable questions and raised some valid concerns about many of the projects they did not recommend for award. However, DOT officials told us that these questions did not necessarily reflect the reason a project was

ultimately recommended or rejected for award. Furthermore, some of the draft minutes simply noted that the Review Team did not see what made a certain project more compelling than similar projects—a comment that yields limited insight into why certain projects were selected and others rejected.

To gain insight into the Review Team’s final decisions, we asked DOT officials with the Control and Calibration Team overseeing the TIGER process to reconstruct and discuss the reasons why projects were recommended or rejected for award by the Review Team. While these discussions offered some insight, such information has significant limitations. Specifically, it is testimonial in nature and reflects officials’ recollections from several months after the completion of the TIGER grant awards. It may therefore contain a greater level of uncertainty and error than documentation created while decisions were being made.

According to these DOT officials, one important factor affecting award decisions was the need to achieve an equitable geographic distribution of funds (which, as noted earlier, DOT defined as distributing funding in roughly equal amounts across four regions and without concentrating projects in any one state within a region). DOT met this requirement by rejecting some highly recommended projects to limit the number of awards to regions that would have been overrepresented and by making awards to recommended projects in regions that would have been underrepresented. Specifically, officials stated that that 15 highly recommended projects in the West and the Central regions were rejected to limit the awards to these regions. In addition, although the Evaluation Teams advanced 23 highly recommended projects from the South, the Review Team recommended only 2 of these projects for award. DOT officials indicated that these projects were rejected for a wide range of reasons such as limited financial partnerships or the availability of other funding sources such as tolls or user fees to support the project, among others. As a result, the South was underrepresented for awards. To address this, officials told us they advanced 14 additional Southern region applications that had received lower overall ratings of recommended from the Evaluation Teams,¹⁸ and 6 of these 14 recommended projects received an award.

¹⁸DOT officials stated that 5 of the 14 projects were also advanced because they were helpful in meeting other goals or requirements—such as projects suitable for federal credit assistance.

While the DOT's draft minutes and our discussions with OST officials provide some insight into the deliberations of the Review Team, because there was no internal documentation from the Review Team meetings in which final decisions to recommend or reject projects for award were made, DOT cannot definitively demonstrate the basis for its award selections, particularly the reasons why recommended projects were selected for half the awards over highly recommended ones. For example, without documentation DOT cannot demonstrate why statutory requirements such as geographic distribution and other priorities such as projects being ready-to-go and documenting their benefit costs analysis could not have been achieved by selecting \$1.5 billion of applications from among the \$7.7 billion in highly recommended applications advanced by the Evaluation Teams. As our previous work has noted, documentation of agency activities is a key part of accountability for decisions.¹⁹ Furthermore, DOT's Office of Inspector General (OIG) has published several documents in which it raised questions about DOT's discretionary grant selections, noting that projects were not always selected based on the relative priority assigned in a technical review.²⁰ According to the OIG, when decisions to fund projects deemed to be of lower-priority in a technical review over higher-priority projects, a more thorough review and analysis of project alternatives and documentation of the rationale used to support decisions are necessary. DOT's March 2009 *Financial Assistance Guidance Manual* also stresses the importance of documenting such decisions. This manual provides a standardized set of procedures for DOT in processing and awarding grants, and it states that decisions not to fund projects with the highest priority from a technical review shall be documented.²¹ The absence of an insightful internal record of award decisions and the reasons why final selections differ from the priorities recommended from the technical review can give rise to challenges to the integrity of the decisions made. DOT's lack of documentation of key

¹⁹GAO, *Standards for Internal Controls in the Federal Government*, GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1 (Washington, D.C.: November 1999).

²⁰See Department of Transportation, Office of the Inspector General, *DOT's Implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: Continued Management Attention Is Needed to Address Oversight Vulnerabilities*, MH-2010-024 (Washington, D.C., Nov. 3, 2009); *ARRA Advisory – FAA's Process for Awarding ARRA Airport Improvement Program Grants*, AA-2009-003 (Washington, D.C., Aug. 6, 2009); *Awarding Discretionary Funds in the U.S. Department of Transportation*, MH-1998-155 (Washington, D.C., June 12, 1998).

²¹Department of Transportation, *Financial Assistance Guidance Manual* (Washington, D.C., March 2009).

decisions—particularly those in which it selected recommended projects for award over those receiving a highly recommended rating in the technical evaluation—makes it vulnerable to criticism that projects were selected for reasons other than merit.

DOT Communicated the Criteria and Selection Process to Applicants and the Public but Provided More Limited Information on Award Decisions

DOT externally communicated information on the TIGER evaluation criteria and selection process, and some of the applicants we interviewed, each of which received awards, said they understood the criteria and found DOT's guidance helpful. According to grant policies and guidance from the Office of Management and Budget,²² funding announcements that clearly state selection criteria promote competition and fairness in the selection of grantees. DOT's Notice of Funding Availability for TIGER included information on all of the statutory requirements and competitive criteria that DOT used to evaluate the applications, as well as the relative weights of the competitive criteria,²³ and some of the applicants we interviewed specifically said they understood the criteria and found the information clear. For example, a Burlington Vermont Waterfront Transportation Improvements North project official said that they were able to find information on all of the criteria and application process through publicly available sources, including the DOT Web site that posted several "Questions and Answers" regarding TIGER. Several applicants we interviewed said that DOT officials responded to questions in writing online for the benefit of all applicants.

DOT made less information publicly available on the outcome of its selection process—for instance, it did not publish the reasons for the Review Team's decisions or why some applications were selected while others were rejected. However, in our review, we did not find any requirements or guidance instructing federal programs to publicly disclose the reasons for their selection decisions. Congress and the President have emphasized the need for accountability, efficiency, and transparency and

²²Office of Management and Budget, *Office of Federal Financial Management Policy Directive on Financial Assistance Program Announcements*, 68 Fed. Reg. 37370 (June 23, 2003). This directive requires federal government financial assistance program offices to publish notices that contain clear information regarding the funding availability.

²³74 Fed. Reg. 28755, June 17, 2009.

have made these a central principle of the Recovery Act,²⁴ but the act did not define the attributes of transparency or how deep into the deliberative process an agency's actions should be transparent.²⁵

To assess the extent to which DOT publicly communicated outcome information, we compared the information TIGER externally communicated to the information communicated by 22 other similar Recovery Act competitive grant programs (for a list of these programs, see app. II). Only one of the programs communicated more outcome information on technical scores and comments. Although it was not required in the Recovery Act to do so, the Department of Education's Race to the Top grant fund published all of its ratings and decisions regarding its applicants on its Web site,²⁶ including the application, the score sheet summarizing how the application was rated, narratives on the application that describe the ratings, the application's progression through the selection process, and whether each applicant received an award.

In addition to these Recovery Act grant programs, we also compared the TIGER program to the Federal Transit Administration's discretionary New Starts program—the federal government's primary program for supporting capital investments in rail and bus rapid transit systems. Like Race to the Top, DOT's New Starts program also published all scores. However, the evaluations in these two programs were not structured identically to TIGER. Specifically, New Starts did not have a second round of review and

²⁴As Congress finished work on the act, the House Appropriations Committee released a statement saying, "A historic level of transparency, oversight and accountability will help guarantee taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and Americans can see results for their investment." To do so, Congress built into the act numerous provisions to increase transparency and accountability over spending that require recipients of Recovery Act funding to report quarterly on a number of measures, as contained in section 1512 of the act. For example, the Recovery Act also requires that nonfederal recipients of Recovery Act-funded grants, contracts, or loans submit quarterly reports on each project or activity, including information concerning the amount and use of funds and jobs created or retained.

²⁵The Recovery Act contains a number of provisions related to transparency, notably the requirement that recipients of these funds report quarterly on a number of things, such as the purpose and expected outcomes of their awards and on jobs created. These reports are available on the Administration's Web site at www.recovery.gov. See GAO, *Recovery Act: Increasing the Public's Understanding of What Funds Are Being Spent on and What Outcomes Are Expected*, GAO-10-581 (Washington, D.C.: May 27, 2010).

²⁶Race to the Top, which is part of the Recovery Act's State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (sec. 14006), is a competitive grant program that provides funds to states to encourage educational reform that will result in improved academic performance.

used the ratings from its evaluative process as the basis for recommending awards to Congress. Race to the Top used a different approach from TIGER to gain further insight into applicants being considered for award—namely, it invited small groups of applicants to give oral presentations to a panel before awards were finalized.

DOT officials told us they took actions to provide feedback to applicants but have not yet developed a strategy for disclosing additional information to the public. Specifically, officials noted that they provided one-on-one discussions between DOT staff and applicants that requested feedback on their TIGER applications. However, DOT officials also told us they recognize that they will need to make the process more transparent. For instance, officials told us they are exploring plans to increase the program's level of communication with the public for TIGER II and future discretionary grant programs, although they have not yet decided what additional information they would make available. Officials said they are considering providing a summary abstract for each TIGER II application that describes the project and its strengths and also indicates the rationale for why it was selected or not selected. Officials said this approach could increase transparency, show accountability for DOT's decisions, and offer an opportunity to improve applications in subsequent discretionary programs. However, DOT officials also expressed concern that public disclosure of considerations or opinions—favorable or unfavorable—taken into account by individuals or groups during the application review and selection processes could hamper deliberation in future discretionary grant selection processes.

Although DOT is not required to make this kind of complete and detailed information public, in not doing so, it may be missing an opportunity to better meet Congress' and applicants' needs. TIGER is a unique program that distributes surface transportation funds based on merit and performance across many modes of transportation on a competitive basis—a new approach for DOT. TIGER also made federal investments in projects like ports and freight rail infrastructure that rarely compete for federal transportation funds. Congress expressed an interest in continuing this new approach when it enacted TIGER II, and DOT has proposed a new \$2 billion discretionary grant program in its fiscal year 2012 budget modeled after TIGER. Were DOT to make additional information on its selection decisions publicly available, Congress would have more information to help them better understand the basis on which the funding is being distributed, and thus would have additional information about the merits of this new approach and more confidence in the outcome. In addition, the demand for TIGER funds was substantial, with over 1,450

applications received. Were DOT to make additional information on its selection decisions publicly available, potential applicants would have better information on how to develop and submit well-developed projects that address significant regional and national transportation challenges.

Conclusions

The TIGER program represented an important step toward investing in projects of regional and national significance on a merit-based, competitive basis. Allocating federal funding for surface transportation based on performance in general, and directing some portion of federal funds on a competitive basis to projects of national or regional significance in particular, is a direction we have recommended to more effectively address the nation's surface transportation challenges. TIGER—and the TIGER II program that followed—was a novel approach to funding surface transportation in that it distributed funds across many modes of transportation and allowed projects like ports and freight railroads that rarely compete for existing federal transportation funds to participate. While Congress, when it enacted TIGER II, and the Administration have expressed an interest in this new approach, the role of discretionary grants in the funding the nation's overall surface transportation program is evolving. Formula funding is—and will likely continue to be—the primary mechanism for distributing federal funds for surface transportation. Congress has struck a careful balance in formula programs to achieve equity among the states in how surface transportation funds—in particular, highway funds—are distributed and to allow states to select projects that reflect state and local priorities. There is a natural tension between providing funding based on merit and performance and providing funds on a formula basis to achieve equity among the states. Consequently, meritorious projects of national or regional significance, in particular those involving multiple modes of transportation or those that cross geographic boundaries, may not compete well at the state level for formula funds. Given that the Recovery Act was intended to create and preserve jobs and promote economic recovery nationwide, Congress believed it important that TIGER grant funding be geographically dispersed. In the future, however, surface transportation competitive grant programs provide Congress the opportunity to consider the appropriate balance between funding projects based on merit and performance and providing funds to achieve equity among the states.

TIGER was a new program for DOT, and the Recovery Act set short time frames for establishing and administering the program. DOT met these deadlines and developed a sound set of criteria to evaluate the merits of applications and select grants that would meet the goals of the program.

Furthermore, it maintained good documentation of the criteria-based evaluation conducted by its Evaluation Teams in the technical review and effectively communicated information about its criteria to applicants—an important step in promoting competition and fairness. By thoroughly documenting how its technical teams considered and applied the criteria, clearly communicating selection criteria to applicants, and publicly disclosing some information on the attributes of the projects that were selected, DOT took important steps to build the framework for future competitive programs and its institutional capacity to administer them. This foundation is important if there are going to be future rounds of TIGER or similarly structured programs. Congress needs to have the best information on how well the TIGER program has worked, and DOT needs to gain the confidence of Congress and the public so that it can fairly and expertly administer a multi-modal, multi-billion dollar discretionary program.

The absence of documentation—in particular, the lack of documentation regarding decisions to select recommended projects for half the awards over highly recommended ones—can give rise to challenges to the integrity of the decisions DOT made and subject it to criticism that projects were selected for reasons other than merit. Documenting key decisions, as good internal control practices and DOT’s guidance already require, could provide a roadmap for administering future competitive grant programs and help build confidence in DOT’s institutional ability to administer this type of program. Furthermore, while federal agencies rarely publicly disclose the reasons for their selection decisions in a competitive review process, the uniqueness of the TIGER approach and DOT’s limited experience with it suggests that publicly disclosing additional information about selection decisions would give Congress a better basis to assess the merits of this new approach and the information it needs to judge whether and how to continue with it. Given DOT’s concerns about the potential effect on internal deliberations, the decision of what information to disclose publicly is best made by DOT in consultation with the Congress, balancing DOT’s concerns with the Congress’ need for information.

Matter for Congressional Consideration

If Congress enacts competitive discretionary grant programs such as the TIGER program in the future, it may wish to consider balancing the goals of funding projects through merit-based selection with achieving an equitable geographic distribution of funds by establishing thresholds and other mechanisms to limit, as appropriate, the influence of geographic considerations.

Recommendations for Executive Action

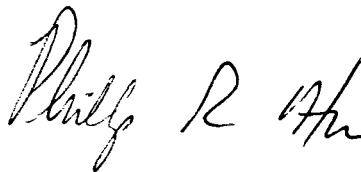
To ensure that future rounds of the TIGER program or other similarly structured competitive grant programs are accountable to Congress, transparent to the public, and provide meaningful feedback to applicants, we recommend that the Secretary of Transportation (1) document key decisions for all major steps in the review of applications, particularly the reasons for acceptance or rejection of applications and decisions in which lower-rated applications are selected for award over higher-rated applications, and (2) in consultation with the Congress, develop and implement a strategy to disclose information regarding award decisions.

Agency Comments

GAO provided DOT with a draft of this report for its review and comment. DOT officials provided technical comments via e-mail which we incorporated as appropriate. DOT officials stated the department would consider our recommendations.

As agreed with your offices, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution until 30 days from the report date. At that time, we will send copies of this report to congressional subcommittees with responsibilities for surface transportation issues and the Secretary of Transportation. In addition, this report will be available at no charge on GAO's Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-2834 or herrp@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made significant contributions to this report are listed in appendix VI.



Phillip Herr
Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues

Appendix I: Lessons Learned from TIGER and Applied in TIGER II

The Department of Transportation (DOT) identified several challenges during the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) evaluation process that it sought to address as “lessons learned” in the TIGER II process. In TIGER, many projects were given a full review multiple times before DOT determined their eligibility and readiness. The Evaluation Teams tried to identify projects that were not eligible or were not ready-to-go with respect to environmental approvals or securing other financial commitments. However, some of these applications still advanced to the Review Team and were thus reviewed again by the Economic Analysis Team or the Control and Calibration Team before their final status was determined. The solution in TIGER II was to implement a pre-application process that required applicants to provide documentation that would determine if each project or planning activity was (1) eligible, (2) ready-to-go, and (3) had secured the necessary nonfederal funding match claimed in the application. As stated in the TIGER and TIGER II Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), DOT officials required documentation such as project schedules, environmental and legislative approvals, state and local planning, and technical and financial feasibilities for review. DOT officials said this pre-application process provided more assurance that the final applications being reviewed were eligible and ready-to-go, which improved efficiency and allowed teams to focus on the merits of qualified applications.

A second challenge resulted from the fact that applications were randomly assigned to the 10 Evaluation Teams, which also caused DOT to have to review them a number of times. As a result of the random assignment, each Evaluation Team reviewed projects from a mix of transportation modes, which prevented a side-by-side comparison of the merits and benefits for similar types of projects. Although the Evaluation Teams assessed all applications and advanced only highly recommended projects for further review, the Review Team wanted to review certain projects that had significant similarities to ensure that the most meritorious projects had in fact been advanced. For example, the Control and Calibration Team advanced five recommended streetcar applications and several recommended port projects that cited benefits from the expansion of the Panama Canal. The Review Team reevaluated them all to determine which projects were the most meritorious. The solution in TIGER II was to assign similar types of projects to Evaluation Teams so that the initial review assessed the merits of applications from the same types of projects side-by-side at the beginning of the process. Projects advanced for further review were evaluated all together without respect for mode. DOT officials told us this change allowed them to substantially improve the efficiency of the review process and make awards expeditiously in TIGER II.

A third challenge in TIGER was for DOT to meet the statutory requirement to prioritize awards to projects for which federal funding would complete a funding package—a challenge, in part, because of the high demand for TIGER funds and the statutory requirement that funds be equitably distributed across the nation. In TIGER, DOT interpreted this requirement to mean that it would give priority to projects that included substantial co-investment, and that it would fund discrete project segments from within larger applications as long as these segments demonstrated “independent utility,” which DOT defined as a segment of a larger application that provided significant transportation benefits and created an operable project when completed. However, although the TIGER NOFA did state it would consider one or more components of a large project that met selection criteria, it did not explicitly state that DOT would consider funding project segments. Further, DOT officials said that the extent to which applications provided information on how projects could be segmented varied. As a result, DOT had to contact some applicants the Review Team was considering for award to discuss whether projects could be segmented to achieve operable and complete projects and at what funding level. In TIGER II, DOT provided explicit guidance in the NOFA defining independent utility and the potential for large applications to receive partial funding. Further, TIGER II guidance requires the applicant to identify and clearly describe the benefits of each discrete project segment and how this segment aligns with selection criteria.

According to DOT officials, a final challenge in TIGER was that many applications evaluated by the Economic Analysis Team were deemed to not have useful analyses of expected project benefits and costs. Further, DOT economists stated that many applicants also substituted economic impact analyses, which typically focus on local and regional benefits rather than national benefits. Because of this, the Economic Analysis Team individually assessed the economic analyses from the 166 advanced applications to determine the actual benefits and costs to present accurate information to the Review Team, which they stated was a time-consuming process. DOT officials thought the limited usefulness of applicants’ economic analyses was largely a consequence of applicants lacking familiarity with how to properly conduct such analyses. For TIGER II, DOT provided specific benefit-cost guidance that roughly accounted for about one-third of the information in the TIGER II NOFA. DOT also provided question and answer webinars on how to conduct a benefit-cost analysis. Lastly, DOT provided training seminars for applicants explaining the differences between benefit-cost and other analyses, the standards for conducting proper benefit-cost analyses, and the characteristics of a useful benefit-cost analysis. DOT also indicated in these sessions and in its

guidance that not including useful benefit-cost analyses might be the basis for denying an award. As a result, DOT officials hoped to improve the quality of the benefit-cost analyses applicants provided and that it would be able to conduct an efficient assessment of them.

Appendix II: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

To determine what criteria and processes were used in evaluating applications and making award selections, we reviewed goals and objectives for the TIGER program provided in the law, the *Federal Register*, and DOT documents. We also reviewed guidance and documentation of training provided to individuals serving as reviewers in the grant evaluation process. Further, we reviewed prior GAO work evaluating DOT's TIGER grant criteria and guidance developed by DOT and the Office of Management and Budget on leading practices for managing discretionary grant programs.

To describe the outcomes of DOT's evaluation process, we requested documentation of the Evaluation and Review Teams' assessments of applications. Due to the level of documentation DOT maintained, our ability to analyze this information differed substantially between the two teams.

- *Evaluation Teams:* DOT maintained thorough documentation of the Evaluation Teams' reviews, including individual team member and team ratings, as well as associated narratives describing the strengths and weaknesses of each application. We assessed the reliability of these data by interviewing the leaders of each of the 10 Evaluation Teams, as well as DOT officials who helped develop the process for Evaluation Teams to record their assessments. Ratings of each application by each individual team member were recorded in spreadsheets along with narratives describing the individual team member's assessment. Then, when the entire Evaluation Team met to discuss scores and develop team ratings, these scores and accompanying narratives were also recorded in a spreadsheet. We reviewed these data for missing information, errors, and other indicators of reliability. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report. We used these data to summarize information on the initial pool of applicants, those advanced to the Review Team, and those selected for an award. Specifically, we categorized projects by award amount, region, transportation mode, jurisdictional size, and other measures to describe patterns in the characteristics of the projects and patterns of awards.
- *Review Team:* DOT provided draft minutes that were never finalized or approved from 15 of the 16 Review Team meetings. In each of these meetings, the Review Team evaluated about 6 to 12 projects and made an initial assessment and as needed identified issues in need of follow-up, such as confirming financial commitments. The minutes did not include what we understood was the final meeting to rate the remaining applications (about 15 projects did not appear in the draft minutes). The minutes also did not include information about the final award decisions.

Because DOT did not document the rationale for selecting recommended projects for award over highly recommended ones, to gain insight into award decisions, we asked DOT officials to reconstruct and discuss why projects were recommended or rejected for award. This approach provided some insight, but such information also has significant limitations. Specifically, it is testimonial in nature and reflects officials' recollections from several months after the completion of the TIGER grant awards. It may therefore contain a greater level of uncertainty and error than documentation created while decisions were being made.

We also examined the extent to which DOT's competitive selection process helped DOT to achieve statutory requirements for TIGER as defined in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act). We accomplished this by analyzing data on geographic location, jurisdiction size, and other factors among applications submitted, advanced, and awarded. We summarized information on the extent to which DOT officials documented their decisions to advance applications for the next round of review, and to select applications for an award.

To determine the extent to which DOT communicated the criteria, process, and outcomes to applicants and the public, we compared application review documents, including technical evaluation guidance and information used to make awards decisions, with information communicated to potential applicants through the *Federal Register*. In addition, we interviewed DOT program officials, including technical evaluation panelists, as well as examined outreach presentations and documentation to understand the level of communication between potential applicants and DOT officials regarding the TIGER process and outcomes. We also interviewed a judgmental selection of TIGER awardees to get their perspective on DOT's level of communication. We spoke to eight awardees because they could discuss the entire process and outcomes. We judgmentally selected awardees based their funding level, region, transportation mode, and jurisdiction size. Because this was not a random or representative sample, the views of these applicants cannot be generalized. We also reviewed other Recovery Act discretionary grant program Web sites—22 in total—as well as DOT's New Starts discretionary grant program to determine the types of information these programs make publicly available, and compared this level of communication to the TIGER grant program. Table 6 lists these programs.

Table 6: Discretionary Grant Programs Reviewed

Program title	Agency/office
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program	Department of Commerce
Central Valley Project Improvement Act, Title XXXIV	Department of the Interior
Emergency Medical Services for Children (Recovery Act)	Department of Health and Human Services
Emergency Watershed Protection Program	Department of Agriculture
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act	Department of the Interior
Geologic Sequestration Training and Research Grant Program	Department of Energy
Grants to Health Center Programs (Recovery Act)	Department of Health and Human Services
Head Start (Recovery Act)	Department of Health and Human Services
High-Speed Rail Corridors and Intercity Passenger Rail Service – Capital Assistance Grants	Department of Transportation
National Geospatial Program: Building The National Map	Department of the Interior
National Railroad Passenger Corporation Grants	Department of Transportation
Office of Science Financial Assistance Program	Department of Energy
Pregnancy Assistance Fund Program	Department of Health and Human Services
Preventing Healthcare-Associated Infections (Recovery Act)	Department of Health and Human Services
Prevention and Wellness—Leveraging National Organizations (Recovery Act)	Department of Health and Human Services
Recovery Act Grants for Training in Primary Care Medicine and Dentistry Training and Enhancement	Department of Health and Human Services
Recovery Act Transitional Housing	Department of Justice
Science Grants for Basic Research, Educational Outreach, or Training Opportunities (Recovery Act)	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Senior Community Service Employment Program	Department of Labor
State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Race-to-the-Top Incentive Grants (Recovery Act)	Department of Education
State Grants to Promote Health Information Technology (Recovery Act)	Department of Health and Human Services
Trans-National Institutes of Health Research Support (Recovery Act)	Department of Health and Human Services

Source: GAO.

To determine what challenges DOT faced and the steps DOT took to address them in TIGER II, we interviewed relevant DOT officials involved in the TIGER evaluation process, including all 10 of the Evaluation Team leaders and 2 members of the Review Team. We also reviewed DOT webinars, reviewed guidance DOT issued in the form of “Question and Answer” documents on the TIGER Web site, and reviewed supplemental guidance. We also made comparisons between the TIGER and TIGER II guidance documents to understand what had been changed or clarified from the first round of review to the second.

We conducted this performance audit from June 2010 through March 2011 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix III: Standard Evaluation Sheet Used by Evaluation Teams to Evaluate Applications against TIGER Criteria

EXHIBIT A – STANDARD EVALUATION SHEET

For each item identified below, please provide a rating of highly recommended, recommended, not recommended, or negative. Each rating should be supported by a narrative statement explaining why the application received such a rating. Narrative statements should be clear, concise and written in plain English, without undefined acronyms. A few well-written sentences should be sufficient for many of the criteria, but evaluation team members may provide longer narratives if necessary. Narratives should reference the application where appropriate, to avoid lengthy duplication of application contents. Overall ratings should be justified by the underlying ratings.

Please note: While the Federal Register notice provides examples of measures that can be used to demonstrate alignment with each of the selection criteria, and these measures are specified in the relevant tables below, the Federal Register notice also encourages applicants to demonstrate the responsiveness of a project to any and all of the selection criteria with the most relevant information that applicants can provide, regardless of whether such information has been specifically requested, or identified, in the notice. Therefore, evaluation team members may base their ratings on information provided by an applicant that demonstrates the responsiveness of its project to a particular criterion regardless of whether such information was identified or requested in the Federal Register notice.

Primary Selection Criteria:

1.	Long-Term Outcomes:	Rating:
	<p>State of Good Repair:</p> <p>“In order to determine whether the project will improve the condition of existing transportation facilities or systems, including whether life-cycle costs will be minimized, the Department will assess (i) whether the project is part of, or consistent with, relevant state, local or regional efforts to maintain transportation facilities or systems in a state of good repair, (ii) whether an important aim of the project is to rehabilitate, reconstruct or upgrade surface transportation projects that threaten future economic growth and stability due to their poor condition, (iii) whether the project is appropriately capitalized up front and uses asset management approaches that optimize its long-term cost structure, and (iv) the extent to which a sustainable source of revenue is available for long-term operations and maintenance of the project. The application should include any quantifiable metrics of the facility or system’s current condition and performance and, to the extent possible, projected condition and performance, with an explanation of how the project will improve the facility or system’s condition, performance and/or long-term cost structure.”</p> <p>Narrative: <i>[to be provided by team member]</i></p>	[xxx]

**Appendix III: Standard Evaluation Sheet Used
by Evaluation Teams to Evaluate Applications
against TIGER Criteria**

<p><i>Economic Competitiveness:</i></p> <p>“In order to determine whether a project promotes the economic competitiveness of the United States, the Department will assess whether the project will measurably contribute over the long-term to growth in employment, production or other high value economic activity. For purposes of aligning a project with this outcome, applicants should provide evidence of the long-term economic benefits that are provided by the completed project, not the near-term economic benefits of construction that are captured in the Jobs Creation & Economic Stimulus criterion. In weighing long-term employment benefits, the quality of jobs supported will be considered as well as number of jobs and whether these jobs are expected to provide employment in Economically Distressed Areas. Priority consideration will be given to projects that: (i) improve long term efficiency, reliability or cost-competitiveness in the movement of workers or goods, or (ii) make improvements that allow for net new investments in expansion, hiring, or other growth of private sector production at specific locations, particularly Economically Distressed Areas. Applicants may propose other methods of demonstrating a project’s contribution to the economic competitiveness of the country and such methods will be reviewed on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Economic competitiveness may be demonstrated by the project’s ability to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the transportation system through integration or better use of all existing transportation infrastructure (which may be evidenced by the project’s involvement with or benefits to more than one mode and/or its compatibility with and preferably augmentation of the capacities of connecting modes and facilities), but only to the extent that these enhancements lead to the economic benefits that are identified in the preceding paragraph.”</p> <p>Narrative: <i>[to be provided by team member]</i></p>	<p align="center">[xxx]</p>
<p><i>Livability:</i></p> <p>“Livability investments are projects that not only deliver transportation benefits, but are also designed and planned in such a way that they have a positive impact on qualitative measures of community life. This element of long-term outcomes delivers benefits that are inherently difficult to measure. However, it is implicit to livability that its benefits are shared and therefore magnified by the number of potential users in the affected community. Therefore, descriptions of how projects enhance livability should include a description of the affected community and the scale of the project’s impact. In order to determine whether a project improves the quality of the living and working environment of a community, the Department will qualitatively assess whether the project:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) will significantly enhance user mobility through the creation of more convenient transportation options for travelers; (2) will improve existing transportation choices by enhancing points of modal connectivity or by reducing congestion on existing modal assets; (3) will improve accessibility and transport services for economically disadvantaged populations, non-drivers, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities, or to make goods, commodities, and services more readily available to these groups; and/or (4) is the result of a planning process which coordinated transportation and land-use planning decisions and encouraged community participation in the process. <p>Livability improvements may include projects for new or improved biking and walking infrastructure. Particular attention will be paid to the degree to which such projects contribute significantly to broader traveler mobility through intermodal connections, or improved connections between residential and commercial areas.”</p> <p>Narrative: <i>[to be provided by team member]</i></p>	<p align="center">[xxx]</p>

**Appendix III: Standard Evaluation Sheet Used
by Evaluation Teams to Evaluate Applications
against TIGER Criteria**

<p><i>Sustainability:</i></p> <p>“In order to determine whether a project promotes a more environmentally sustainable transportation system, the Department will assess its ability to:</p> <p>(1) improve energy efficiency, reduce dependence on oil and/or reduce greenhouse gas emissions; applicants are encouraged to provide quantitative information regarding expected reductions in emissions of CO₂ or fuel consumption as a result of the project, or expected use of clean or alternative sources of energy; projects that demonstrate a projected decrease in the movement of people or goods by less energy-efficient vehicles or systems will be given priority under this factor; and</p> <p>(2) maintain, protect or enhance the environment, as evidenced by its avoidance of adverse environmental impacts (for example, adverse impacts related to air quality, wetlands, and endangered species) and/or by its environmental benefits (for example, improved air quality, wetlands creation or improved habitat connectivity).</p> <p>Applicants are encouraged to provide quantitative information that validates the existence of substantial transportation-related costs related to energy consumption and adverse environmental effects and evidence of the extent to which the project will reduce or mitigate those costs.”</p> <p>Narrative: <i>[to be provided by team member]</i></p>	<p align="center"><i>[xxx]</i></p>
<p><i>Safety:</i> Improves safety</p> <p>“In order to determine whether the project improves safety, the Department will assess the project’s ability to reduce the number, rate and consequences of surface transportation-related crashes, and injuries and fatalities among drivers and/or non-drivers in the United States or in the affected metropolitan area or region, and/or its contribution to the elimination of highway/rail grade crossings, the protection of pipelines, or the prevention of unintended release of hazardous materials.”</p> <p>Narrative: <i>[to be provided by team member]</i></p>	<p align="center"><i>[xxx]</i></p>
<p><i>Overall Rating for Long-Term Outcomes³:</i></p> <p>Narrative: <i>[to be provided by team member]</i></p>	<p align="center"><i>[xxx]</i></p>

³ A project need not be well aligned with each of the long-term outcomes in order to receive a rating of “highly recommended” in the long-term outcomes criterion overall. However, to receive a rating of “highly recommended” in the long-term outcomes criterion a project must be “highly recommended” for at least one of the long-term outcomes or “recommended” for multiple long-term outcomes. Projects that are strongly aligned with multiple long-term outcomes should be the most likely to receive a rating of “highly recommended” in this criterion.

**Appendix III: Standard Evaluation Sheet Used
by Evaluation Teams to Evaluate Applications
against TIGER Criteria**

2.	Job Creation & Economic Stimulus⁴:	Rating:
<p>“In order to measure a project’s alignment with this criterion, the Department will assess whether the project promotes the short- or long-term creation or preservation of jobs and whether the project rapidly promotes new or expanded business opportunities during construction of the project or thereafter. Demonstration of a project’s rapid economic impact is critical to a project’s alignment with this criterion. Applicants are encouraged to provide information to assist the Department in making these assessments, including the total amount of funds that will be expended on construction and construction-related activities by all of the entities participating in the project and, to the extent measurable, the number and type of jobs to be created and/or preserved by the project during construction and thereafter. Applicants should also identify any business enterprises to be created or benefited by the project during its construction and once it becomes operational.</p> <p>To the extent possible, applicants should indicate whether the populations most likely to benefit from the creation or preservation of jobs or new or expanded business opportunities are from Economically Distressed Areas. In addition, to the extent possible, applicants should indicate whether the project’s procurement plan is likely to create follow-on jobs and economic stimulus for manufacturers and suppliers that support the construction industry. A key consideration in assessing projects under this criterion will be how quickly jobs are created.</p> <p>Consistent with Section 1602 of the Recovery Act (<i>Preference for Quick-Start Activities</i>), the Department will assess whether a project is ready to proceed rapidly upon receipt of a TIGER Discretionary Grant.</p> <p>In compliance with the Recovery Act, the Department will give priority to projects that are expected to be completed on or before February 17, 2012. For purposes of this solicitation, “completed” means that all of the TIGER Discretionary Grant funds awarded to the project have been obligated and expended and construction of the project is substantially complete.</p> <p>The ability of the grant recipient to complete the project by this date must be clearly demonstrated in the project schedule. The Department will give priority to projects that utilize innovative contracting approaches that encourage accelerated project delivery. The Department will consider projects that are not expected to be completed by February 17, 2012, but these projects will not be rated as highly under this criterion.”</p> <p>Narrative: <i>[to be provided by team member]</i></p>		[xxx]

⁴ For the Jobs Creation & Economic Stimulus criterion, projects need not receive a rating of “highly recommended” in order to be advanced to the Review Team, although a project that is not ready to proceed quickly, as evidenced by the items identified in the Project Readiness table (*Project Schedule, Environmental Approvals, Legislative Approvals, State and Local Planning, Technical Feasibility, and Financial Feasibility*), should be less likely to receive a high rating in this criterion.

**Appendix III: Standard Evaluation Sheet Used
by Evaluation Teams to Evaluate Applications
against TIGER Criteria**

Project Readiness (A Component of Job Creation & Economic Stimulus):

For each item identified below, please provide an assessment of whether a project is ready to proceed rapidly upon receipt of a TIGER Discretionary Grant. To the extent a project is not ready, please provide an assessment of whether the project is reasonably likely to be ready within 6 months of award of a TIGER Discretionary Grant.

1.	Project Schedule: "A feasible and sufficiently detailed project schedule demonstrating that the project can begin construction quickly upon receipt of a TIGER Discretionary Grant and that the Grant Funds will be spent steadily and expeditiously once construction starts; the schedule should show how many direct, on-project jobs are expected to be created or sustained during each calendar quarter after the project is underway."	<i>[brief assessment of project readiness]</i>
2.	Environmental Approvals: "Receipt (or reasonably anticipated receipt) of all environmental approvals necessary for the project to proceed to construction on the timeline specified in the project schedule, including satisfaction of all Federal, State and local requirements and completion of the National Environmental Policy Act process."	<i>[brief assessment of project readiness]</i>
3.	Legislative Approvals: "Receipt of all necessary legislative approvals (for example, legislative authority to charge user fees or set toll rates), and evidence of support from State and local officials, including relevant governor(s) and/or mayors. Evidence of support from all relevant State and local officials is not required, however, the evidence should demonstrate that the project is broadly supported."	<i>[brief assessment of project readiness]</i>
4.	State and Local Planning: "The inclusion of the project in the relevant State, metropolitan, and local planning documents, or a certification from the appropriate agency that the project will be included in the relevant planning document prior to award of a TIGER Discretionary Grant; any MPO that is applying for a TIGER Discretionary Grant should provide evidence that the owner of the project supports the application and will cooperate in carrying out the activities to be supported by the TIGER Discretionary Grant."	<i>[brief assessment of project readiness]</i>
5.	Technical Feasibility: "The technical feasibility of the project, including completion of substantial preliminary engineering work."	<i>[brief assessment of project readiness]</i>
6.	Financial Feasibility: "The viability and completeness of the project's financing package (assuming the availability of the requested TIGER Discretionary Grant funds), including evidence of stable and reliable financial commitments and contingency reserves, as appropriate, and evidence of the grant recipient's ability to manage grants."	<i>[brief assessment of project readiness]</i>
	Overall assessment of when the project will be ready to proceed to construction: <i>[to be provided by team member]</i>	

**Appendix III: Standard Evaluation Sheet Used
by Evaluation Teams to Evaluate Applications
against TIGER Criteria**

Secondary Selection Criteria:

3.	<i>Innovation:</i>	Rating:
	<p>“In order to measure a project’s alignment with this criterion, the Department will assess the extent to which the project uses innovative technology (including, for example, intelligent transportation systems, dynamic pricing, rail wayside or on-board energy recovery, smart cards, real-time dispatching, active traffic management, radio frequency identification (RFID), or others) to pursue one or more of the long-term outcomes outlined above and/or to significantly enhance the operational performance of the transportation system. The Department will also assess the extent to which the project incorporates innovations that demonstrate the value of new approaches to, among other things, transportation funding and finance, contracting, project delivery, congestion management, safety management, asset management, or long-term operations and maintenance. The applicant should clearly demonstrate that the innovation is designed to pursue one or more of the long-term outcomes outlined above and/or significantly enhance the transportation system.”</p> <p>Narrative: <i>[to be provided by team member]</i></p>	[xxx]

4.	<i>Partnership:</i>	Rating:
	<p><i>Jurisdictional & Stakeholder Collaboration:</i></p> <p>“In order to measure a project’s alignment with this criterion, the Department will assess the project’s involvement of non-Federal entities and the use of non-Federal funds, including the scope of involvement and share of total funding. The Department will give priority to projects that receive financial commitments from, or otherwise involve, State and local governments, other public entities, or private or nonprofit entities, including projects that engage parties that are not traditionally involved in transportation projects, such as nonprofit community groups. Pursuant to the OMB Guidance, the Department will give priority to projects that make effective use of community-based organizations in connecting disadvantaged people with economic opportunities.</p> <p>In compliance with the Recovery Act, the Department will give priority to projects for which a TIGER Discretionary Grant will help to complete an overall financing package. An applicant should clearly demonstrate the extent to which the project cannot be readily and efficiently completed without Federal assistance, and the extent to which other sources of Federal assistance are or are not readily available for the project, including other funds made available pursuant to the Recovery Act. The Department will assess the amount of private debt and equity to be invested in the project or the amount of co-investment from State, local or other non-profit sources.</p> <p>The Department will also assess the extent to which the project demonstrates collaboration among neighboring or regional jurisdictions to achieve National, regional or metropolitan benefits. Multiple States or jurisdictions may submit a joint application and should identify a lead State or jurisdiction as the primary point of contact. Where multiple States are submitting a joint application, the application should demonstrate how the project costs are apportioned between the States to assist the Department in making the distributional determinations described below in Section III(C) (<i>Distribution of Funds</i>).”</p> <p>Narrative: <i>[to be provided by team member]</i></p>	[xxx]

**Appendix III: Standard Evaluation Sheet Used
by Evaluation Teams to Evaluate Applications
against TIGER Criteria**

	<p><i>Disciplinary Integration:</i></p> <p>“In order to demonstrate the value of partnerships across government agencies that serve the various public service missions forwarded by the Recovery Act and to promote collaboration on the objectives outlined in this notice, the Department will give priority to projects that are supported, financially or otherwise, by non-transportation public agencies that are pursuing similar objectives. For example, the Department will give priority to transportation projects that create more livable communities and are supported by relevant public housing agencies, or transportation projects that encourage energy efficiency or improve the environment and are supported by relevant public agencies with energy or environmental missions.”</p> <p>Narrative: <i>[to be provided by team member]</i></p>	<p><i>[xxx]</i></p>
	<p>Overall Rating for Partnership:</p>	<p><i>[xxx]</i></p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><i>Overall Project Rating:</i></p>	<p>Rating:</p>
	<p>Narrative: <i>[to be provided by team member – the overall project rating needs to be justified by the underlying ratings assigned for each of the selection criteria.]</i></p>	<p><i>[xxx]</i></p>

Appendix IV: Applications Received and Projects Selected for Funding

Composition of Initial Applicant Pool

DOT's TIGER program received 1,457 applications requesting almost \$60 billion. The applications were distributed among the regions with the South submitting both the highest number of applications and the highest percentage of the total funding request. See table 7 for a summary of the regional distribution of the applications.

Table 7: Number and Percentage of Applications Submitted and Funding Requested by Region

(Dollars in millions)

Region	Number of applications	Percentage of applications	Amount of funding requested	Percentage of total funding request
Northeast	234	16%	\$9,984	17%
Central	339	23	12,562	21
South	519	36	23,206	39
West	365	25	13,319	23
Total	1,457	100%	\$59,071	100%

Source: GAO analysis of DOT data.

Highway project applications by far represented the largest number of applicants by project type comprising over half the number of applicants and amount requested. Transit projects accounted for the second largest percentage with about 15 percent of applications and almost one-fifth of the amount requested. See table 8 for a summary of the distribution of project types among the applications submitted.

Table 8: Number and Percentage of Applications Submitted and Funding Requested by Project Type

(Dollars in millions)

Project type	Number of applications	Percentage of applications	Amount of funding requested	Percentage of total funding request
Highway	831	57%	\$33,074	56%
Transit	223	15	10,934	19
Other	174	12	5,559	9
Rail	129	9	5,923	10
Port	100	7	3,572	6
Total	1,457	100%	\$59,071	100%

Source: GAO analysis of DOT data.

Considering the size of jurisdiction, urban areas made up the majority of applications and funding requests with rural areas representing slightly over one-quarter of applications and slightly less than one-quarter of funds.

Composition of Applications Advanced for Further Review

From this initial applicant pool, DOT officials from both the Evaluation Teams and the Control and Calibration Team advanced 166 applications requesting approximately \$11 billion in TIGER funds for further review. Of these, DOT advanced just over one-fifth of applications from the Northeast, Central, and South regions. The West region, however, had more applications advanced than the other regions. The Northeast, Central, and West regions requested around the same proportion of funds requested by forwarded applications, but the South requested substantially more, around one-third of the total. The requested amounts for advanced projects were roughly in line with the funding requests for all applicants within each region. As discussed in the report, decisions on which applications to advance were a combination of the applications' ratings against DOT's selection criteria and other factors such as geographic distribution requirements. See table 9 for a summary of the regional distribution of the advanced applications.

Table 9: Number and Percentage of Advanced Applications and Funding Requested by Region

(Dollars in millions)

Region	Number of applications	Percentage of applications	Amount of funding requested	Percentage of total funding request
Northeast	33	20%	\$2,338	21%
Central	36	22	2,270	20
South	39	23	3,810	33
West	58	35	2,982	26
Total	166	100%	\$11,400	100%

Source: GAO analysis of DOT data.

Approximately 40 percent of the advanced applications were for highway projects. Transit projects were about one-quarter of the total advanced applications and requested funds. Rail, port, and other projects each had about one-tenth of applications forwarded. These applicants also requested less funding overall. See table 10 for a summary of the distribution of project types among the advanced applications.

Table 10: Number and Percentage of Advanced Applications and Funding Requested by Project Type

(Dollars in millions)

Project type	Number of applications	Percentage of applications	Amount of funding requested	Percentage of total funding request
Highway	67	40%	\$5,070	44%
Transit	43	26	2,736	24
Rail	21	13	1,672	15
Port	19	11	1,046	9
Other	16	10	875	8
Total	166	100%	\$11,400	100%

Source: GAO analysis of DOT data.

Both urban and rural applications were advanced in roughly the same proportion in number and funding level requested as they had applications submitted.

Composition of Selected Projects

DOT officials selected 51 projects to receive about \$1.5 billion in TIGER funds. Of the many characteristics of the TIGER awardees, there was one discernable trend with respect to which projects were selected to receive the most funds. DOT officials said that awardees with significant leveraged funds from third parties fared well in the process. For example, while DOT noted leveraging or partnerships for 11 of the 51 awardees in its decision rationale document, these 11 awardees received 40 percent of the distributed funds. DOT officials said that this trend occurred because they selected applicants that could leverage funding from third parties, allowing DOT to complete funding packages for more applicants. In conjunction with the tendency to select leveraged projects, DOT also awarded partial funding to all but six applicants. The average amount of funds made available was about half of what had been requested with some applicants receiving only 3 percent of what they had requested. However, DOT officials said that all awards went to applicants that could complete a project with independent utility.

TIGER awards ranged from 20 percent to 27 percent of funds awarded over the four geographic regions. The four regions received roughly the same percentage of TIGER funds with the Northeast and the West receiving 27 percent each and the South receiving 20 percent. Of note, while the South requested 39 percent of funds in the initial application

pool and 33 percent of funds for advanced applications, it ultimately received about one-fifth of the funding. This was due in part to questions about the economic benefits of projects and additional funds of some highly recommended Southern applications, as well as lower evaluative ratings for Southern projects overall. See table 11 for a summary of the regional distribution of the awardees.

Table 11: Number and Percentage of Awardees and Funding Amount by Region

(Dollars in millions)

Region	Number of awardees	Percentage of awardees	Amount of funds made available	Percentage of total funding made available
Northeast	10	20%	\$398	27%
Central	15	29	392	26
South	10	20	302	20
West	16	31	406	27
Total	51	100%	\$1,498	100%

Source: GAO analysis of DOT data.

Funding awards among selected project types ranged from 7 percent to 31 percent. For example, transit projects received about 31 percent of the total funds, whereas port projects received 7 percent of the total. See table 12 for a summary of the distribution of project types among the TIGER awardees.

Table 12: Number and Percentage of Awardees and Funding Amount by Project Type

(Dollars in millions)

Project type	Number of awardees	Percentage of awardees	Amount of funds made available	Percentage of total funding made available
Highway	18	35%	\$335	22%
Transit	12	24	469	31
Other	9	18	216	14
Rail	6	12	379	25
Port	6	12	98	7
Total	51	100%	\$1,498	100%

Source: GAO analysis of DOT data.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

**Appendix IV: Applications Received and
Projects Selected for Funding**

There was no discernable trend for urban or rural projects in terms of the number of projects selected for funding, as both locality groups received funding amounts in about the same proportions as applications submitted and advanced. However, rural projects tended to be smaller and received only 11 percent of the TIGER funds.

Appendix V: Status of Implementation of TIGER Grants

As of February 2011, DOT had executed all but two of the 59 grant agreements¹ and obligated \$1,468 million in TIGER funds. In addition, DOT has outlayed \$39 million of the obligated funds. DOT delegated responsibility for completing grant agreements, obligating funds, and overseeing the projects to the operating administrations based on the project's transportation mode and the applicant. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Maritime Administration have executed all of their grant agreements and obligated all of their funds. The two outstanding grant agreements are both Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) projects, which required additional time to complete. For example, one project in Colorado opted to use its \$10 million grant as TIFIA assistance, and doing so required additional traffic and revenue studies before the agreement could be finalized. Recovery.gov tracks the amount of funds obligated by state, but not the grant agreements.

DOT divided oversight responsibilities among the operating administrations, depending upon the transportation mode of the project in each grant agreement as well as prior institutional relationships between the applicant and DOT. Specifically, DOT considered the capacity of the operating administrations and whether there was an existing oversight relationship between a grantee and a federal agency. For example, some rail projects were delegated to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) because FHWA has existing relationships with the relevant states and freight railroads, and FRA has limited capacity for overseeing grants, especially with the large volume of High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail grants FRA is overseeing. Also, projects such as improving grade crossings can be overseen by FHWA because FHWA has a history of oversight with these types of projects as they affect both rail and highways.

According to officials, DOT is interested in performance measurement and is taking steps to begin building knowledge on this subject across the department. Our prior work has shown that measuring performance allows organizations to track the progress they are making toward their goals and gives managers crucial information on which to base their

¹Although 51 projects were selected for award, several projects have more than one grant agreement. For example, the Crescent Corridor project, which involves a freight rail line crossing two states, has two grant agreements—one with each of the two states that received money for the project.

organizational and management decisions.² TIGER presents an opportunity to focus on performance and results in transportation projects, and DOT officials incorporated performance measurements into grant agreements. Officials believe that every TIGER project can incorporate and collect performance measures, but regions and states have varying capabilities. For example, localities with existing data collection programs and resources may be able to collect and manage performance information; however, other localities may find such a task more challenging, according to DOT officials. In these cases, DOT has asked these awardees to collect information that would serve as a precursor to performance measurements, which should help to build capacity and experience among these localities. DOT is currently developing and experimenting with the best methods for measuring objectives and collecting data, and it is working collaboratively with applicants to weigh different options for performance measurements.

²GAO, *Statewide Transportation Planning: Opportunities Exist to Transition to Performance-Based Planning and Federal Oversight*, [GAO-11-77](#) (Washington, D.C.: December 15, 2010).

Appendix VI: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Phillip Herr, (202) 512-2834 or herrp@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, GAO staff who made major contributions to this report are Steve Cohen (Assistant Director), Joah Iannotta (analyst-in-charge), Carl Barden, Aisha Cabrer, David Hooper, Sarah Jones, SaraAnn Moessbauer, Amy Rosewarne, and Max Sawicky.

GAO's Mission

The Government Accountability Office, the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress, exists to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and policies; and provides analyses, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions. GAO's commitment to good government is reflected in its core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability.

Obtaining Copies of GAO Reports and Testimony

The fastest and easiest way to obtain copies of GAO documents at no cost is through GAO's Web site (www.gao.gov). Each weekday afternoon, GAO posts on its Web site newly released reports, testimony, and correspondence. To have GAO e-mail you a list of newly posted products, go to www.gao.gov and select "E-mail Updates."

Order by Phone

The price of each GAO publication reflects GAO's actual cost of production and distribution and depends on the number of pages in the publication and whether the publication is printed in color or black and white. Pricing and ordering information is posted on GAO's Web site, <http://www.gao.gov/ordering.htm>.

Place orders by calling (202) 512-6000, toll free (866) 801-7077, or TDD (202) 512-2537.

Orders may be paid for using American Express, Discover Card, MasterCard, Visa, check, or money order. Call for additional information.

To Report Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in Federal Programs

Contact:

Web site: www.gao.gov/fraudnet/fraudnet.htm

E-mail: fraudnet@gao.gov

Automated answering system: (800) 424-5454 or (202) 512-7470

Congressional Relations

Ralph Dawn, Managing Director, dawnr@gao.gov, (202) 512-4400
U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7125
Washington, DC 20548

Public Affairs

Chuck Young, Managing Director, youngc1@gao.gov, (202) 512-4800
U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7149
Washington, DC 20548

