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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UIC Urban Forum Brings Together Top Officials, Business Leaders to Focus on Metropolitan Resilience Strategies

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood Discusses What's Next for Transportation Funding

CHICAGO—(Dec. 6, 2012)—Top federal, state and municipal officials, alongside private-sector and community leaders, gather today for the 2012 Urban Forum at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to discuss the issues metropolitan areas have been experiencing during these tough economic times, their responses and strategies to address those challenges and improve quality of life.

Entitled, “Metropolitan Resilience in a Time of Economic Turmoil,” the 2012 UIC Urban Forum will foster dialogues on coping with economic challenges in the Chicago metropolitan region and the other urban regions of the nation, improving government cooperation, collaboration and efficiency, spurring economic growth and development, strengthening social safety nets, and addressing the cities’ infrastructure and pension systems.

“It is with great pride that UIC is once again hosting the Urban Forum and its esteemed participants,” said Paula Allen-Meares, Chancellor of UIC. “UIC has a commitment to improving the quality of urban areas in Chicago, nationwide and around the globe, especially in these tough financial times, and we look forward to the collaborative and innovative ideas to come out of today’s Forum.”

Participants in the 2012 UIC Urban Forum range from federal government officials to local community leaders to academics and include U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, Illinois Deputy Governor Cristal Thomas, Chicago Deputy Mayor Steven Koch, Cook County Deputy Chief of Staff Neil Khare, Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman, Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, Las Vegas City Manager Betsy Fretwell, Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, Chicago Transit Authority President Forrest Claypool, Chicago Community Trust President and CEO Terry Mazany, among many more civic, academic and policy experts.

“With approximately 80 percent of Americans living in urban areas and producing approximately 85 percent of GDP, cities are the backbone of the nation’s economic vitality,” said Michael Pagano, Dean of the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs at UIC and chair of the 2012 Urban Forum. “Cities have been challenged by the Great Recession unlike any time in the post-War era and today’s Forum calls on elected and community leaders to come together and share ideas for coping with and improving quality of life.”

The Forum opens with remarks by Chancellor Allen-Meares and Christopher Kennedy, Chairman

of the University of Illinois Board of Trustees, followed by two back-to-back sessions entitled, “Chicago’s Metropolitan Resilience: Redefining the new normal,” and “Emerging from the Great Recession: How cities respond to and thrive during challenging economic times,” featuring elected officials from across the country.

Afternoon sessions focus on four white papers, each paper the topic of one of the panel sessions, and featuring the white paper author alongside a variety of civic, business and community leaders. Topics include: Interjurisdictional Competition and Inequities; Economic Development in Times of Growth and Scarcity; Social Safety Nets and Quality of Life; and Legacy Costs of Earlier Financial Decisions. To view the full white papers, visit: www.uicurbanforum.org/issues

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood closes the Forum providing a special address entitled, “A Conversation with Secretary Ray LaHood: MAP-21 and What’s Next for Urban Transportation Funding.” The discussion will be moderated by Steve Schlickman, Executive Director of UIC’s Urban Transportation Center and former Executive Director for the Regional Transportation Authority. Secretary LaHood and Mr. Schlickman will engage the audience for a dynamic discussion on the new MAP-21 legislation, the future of transportation funding and how it affects metropolitan vitality.

“Strong cities are crucial to a successful American economy, and the Obama Administration is absolutely committed to making sure they have the strong transportation networks they need in order to grow and thrive,” said Secretary LaHood. “Over the last four years, we’ve repaired streets and bridges, modernized and expanded transit systems, and improved passenger rail to move people more quickly and affordably from city to city. DOT will continue to work closely with all of our city and state partners to build on that momentum.”

The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) has hosted an annual Urban Forum since 1995 when the first Forum convened under the auspices of the Great Cities Institute. Called the Winter Forum, it featured scholars, public intellectuals, policy makers and elected officials from the Chicago region and other parts of the country.

Between 2005 and 2010, UIC in partnership with the City of Chicago, hosted the Richard J. Daley Urban Forum, which was designed as a collaboration aimed at convening key public, private and non-profit leaders in an academic arena to discuss, analyze and propose pragmatic and innovative solutions that will enhance the lives of city-dwellers around the globe.

The UIC College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA) is the primary internal partner for the Urban Forum. The academic strengths of the College allow the Urban Forum to conduct policy-relevant research, examine possible policy approaches to improve the condition of urban regions, conduct public symposia, engage policy officials and academic experts and provide training to the next generation of urban leaders.

Sponsors for the 2012 UIC Urban Forum include: Abbott, Baxter, BMO Harris Bank, The Chicago Community Trust, ITW, The MacArthur Foundation, UIC’s College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs, UIC’s Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement, Walgreens and WBEZ.

For more information on the UIC Urban Forum, visit www.uicurbanforum.org. To follow the Forum on Facebook, visit www.facebook.com/uicurbanforum and on Twitter [@UIC_UrbanForum](https://twitter.com/UIC_UrbanForum).

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