###FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE###

From: Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP)

Contact: Jemilah Magnusson, ITDP Communications Manager jemilah.magnusson@itdp.org

 Mobile: (917) 539-6074

**Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo Win 2015 Sustainable**

**Transport Award**

*10th Annual Award Gives First 3-way Tie to Three Brazilian Cities*

Washington, DC (January 13, 2015) – The Sustainable Transport Award Committee gave its tenth annual award to Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo, the first ever award to result in a three-way tie, giving credit to the scale and substance of Brazil’s achievements in increasing mobility and enhancing quality of life in its major cities.

The Sustainable Transport Awards were accepted by Mayor Marcio Lacerda of Belo Horizonte, Laudemar Aguiar, Head of International Relations for Rio de Janerio, and Ciro Biderman, Chief of Staff for SPTrans. The program featured a keynote address by Timothy Papandreou, director of strategic planning and policy of SFMTA, who accepted the award on behalf of the city of San Francisco in 2012.

In 2014, Belo Horizonte implemented the first projects of their comprehensive Mobility Plan: a new, gold-standard bus rapid transit system, MOVE BRT, began operation on two corridors covering 23 km. The city also revitalized its downtown, creating pedestrian-only streets, and implementing 27 km of their planned bikeway network.

Mayor Lacerda thanked the committee for recognizing Belo Horizonte’s achievements. "We in Belo Horizonte are working every day to make life better. We understand that good transport is fundamental to improving life for everyone in our city. This award means so much to us because it indicates that we are getting better, and that the work is worth it."

Rio de Janeiro has massively invested in public transportation over the past few years. In 2014, the city opened the second of four BRT systems planned ahead of the 2016 Olympics, Transcarioca. The new, 39 km corridor draws 270,000 daily users, keeping the city on track to achieve the goals of its mobility plan by 2016.

At the ceremony, Mr. Aguiar demonstrated the massive work the city has accomplished already, and how much more was planned. “Rio is transforming. By 2016, 60% of Cariocas will have access to mass transportation. In 2009, that number was only 18%. Every day we are building more BRT, more LRT, more metro, connecting the city, and making it better for everyone."

São Paulo massively expanded its cycling network in 2014, and implemented 320 km of exclusive bus lanes, increasing average bus speeds by 21 percent. The city is on track to have 400 km of cycle lanes implemented in 2015, part of an overall 500 km network. These are just the first steps in an ambitious master plan, which has made São Paulo the first megacity to eliminate parking minimums and replace them with parking maximums citywide.

When accepting the award, Mr. Biderman commented that lack of money is not always what prevents this type of progress. "Too many cities say they don't have enough money for transport projects, but it isn't about the money. Building bike lanes doesn't cost much. It's about being willing to have the fight to get it done. It's about political will."

Established in 2005, the Sustainable Transport Award has been given annually to a city that has implemented innovative and sustainable transportation projects in the past year. These strategies must improve mobility for all residents, reduce transportation greenhouse and air pollution emissions, as well as improve safety and access for cyclists and pedestrians. Finalists are selected by an international committee of development experts and organizations working on sustainable transportation.

The Sustainable Transport Award finalists and winner are chosen by a Committee that includes the most respected experts and organizations working internationally on sustainable transportation. The 2015 Committee represents:

* Institute for Transportation and Development Policy
* EMBARQ, The World Resources Institute Center for Sustainable Transport
* The World Bank
* Transit Center
* GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)
* Clean Air Asia
* Clean Air Institute
* Transport Research Laboratory (TRL)
* ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

Past winners of the Sustainable Transport Award are: Buenos Aires, Argentina (2014); Mexico City, Mexico (2013); Medellin, Colombia and San Francisco, United States (2012); Guangzhou, China (2011); Ahmedabad, India (2010); New York City, USA (2009); London, UK (2008); Paris, France (2008); Guayaquil, Ecuador (2007); Seoul, South Korea (2006), and Bogotá, Colombia (2005).

*The* ***Institute for Transportation and Development Policy is a global nonprofit that*** *works with cities around the world to design, build and implement transportation solutions that cut greenhouse gas emissions, reduce poverty, and improve the quality of urban life.* [*www.itdp.org*](http://www.itdp.org)

###