

## Obama stimulus plan could have a immediate impact on local projects



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LOUISVILLE, KY (WAVE) - According to Mayor Jerry Abramson, President Obama's stimulus plan could bring nearly 20,000 jobs to Louisville. Two days before leaving to meet with the president in person, Abramson talked to WAVE 3 about how this plan will impact Louisville.

Abramson said he has a list of \$650-million worth of ready to go projects that fit the requirements in President Obama's stimulus package.

"We've got our project shovel ready. We'll go through with a team approach," said Abramson. "Projects that within the next 90 to 120 days can be let and will be completed within the next 24 months."

The projects include water and sewer improvements, road and bridge work, along with improvements to transportation, libraries and public housing in the city which would create nearly 18,000 jobs.

While some of the money will go directly to cities, much of the money will flow through states to cities and other community agencies. State lawmakers are considering spending priorities as well. \$421-million could go to state roads and bridges.

"Ohio River Bridges Project is one of the most important projects in this country for regional transportation and interstate commerce," said Joe Reagan with the Build the Bridges Coalition.

It is also a very expensive and long term project. The \$4.1-billion plan would add two river crossings and redesign the Spaghetti Junction interchange in Louisville. Supporters are pushing for a share of the state's stimulus funds to speed up construction.

"Thousands of high paying jobs that can be created now with getting this project going it makes a compelling case of why it needs the attention and money right now," said Reagan.

But city and state transportation officials do not see money coming right away to the Ohio River Bridges project because the entire plan cannot be done in two years. While it is too early to tell, there is a way the Ohio River Bridges Project could still get some funding from the stimulus package because of an allocation that set aside about \$5 to \$6 billion for "nationally significant infrastructure projects." Those are long term projects that the Build the Bridges Coalition and the mayor say they will be perusing aggressively.

Abramson also added that they are working to put together a team that will handle accountability and standards to see how jobs are created and how to handle the money. Abramson will meet with Gov. Steve Beshear on Thursday to discuss job creation.