TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES OF METROPOLITAN AREAS

(110–110)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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April 7, 2008

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER

TO: Members of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

FROM: Subcommittee on Highways and Transit Staff

SUBJECT: Hearing on "Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas"

PURPOSE OF HEARING

The Subcommittee on Highways and Transit is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, April 9, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building to receive testimony on the transportation challenges of metropolitan areas. The Subcommittee will hear from a transportation expert from the Metropolitan Policy Program at The Brookings Institution, the President of the Regional Plan Association in New York, the County Executive from King County, Washington, the Assistant Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation, the Executive Director of Sacramento Regional Transit District, and the Transportation Director of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

This hearing is the first in a series of hearings exploring emerging themes in transportation policy and practice, the needs of our national surface transportation system, and the reauthorization of our surface transportation laws. The Subcommittee will continue this series by holding hearings in the near future on the issues surrounding freight access and goods movement, infrastructure preservation and modernization, highway safety, mobility and connectivity of rural areas, and other issues.

BACKGROUND

Our world has reached a momentous milestone: for the first time in history, more than one-half of the human population is living in metropolitan areas. The United States Census Bureau defines a metropolitan area as a large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core. Metropolitan areas are most often

comprised of several counties, cities, suburbs and towns which have commuting ties to an urban core. Metro areas can also cross state lines, and can vary in population size from 50,000 inhabitants to several million.

According to the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission ("Commission"), which Congress created to analyze and provide recommendations regarding the transformation of the surface transportation system, roughly 60 percent of the population of the U.S. lives in metropolitan areas of more than one million people and another 20 percent live in smaller metro areas. The Commission's report states that the majority of our nation's economic activity is occurring within metro areas, with 60 percent of the value of all U.S. goods and services being generated in urban areas. Further, over 85 percent of our nation's market share of critical transportation infrastructure exists in metro areas. The report makes clear that our economic and social well being depends on the investments that we have made in our metropolitan area transportation infrastructure and services.

These findings by the Commission comport with recent studies undertaken by the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program ("Brookings"). In its 2007 report, "MetroNation", Brookings defines metro areas in terms of their employment figures, and finds that fully 65 percent of the United States population lives in the 100 largest metropolitan employment areas. Brookings states that transportation infrastructure in metro areas is of vital concern to the Federal Government because most national economic activity is generated therein. Although the largest metro areas comprise only 12 percent of the nation's land, these areas generate 75 percent of total U.S. gross domestic product ("GDP"), thereby yielding large economic returns to the nation. Reliable and predictable transportation networks in our metro areas form a critical part of our just-in-time economy. Because our nation – and our economy – is increasingly metropolitan, the U.S. has a vital interest in guaranteeing the success of our metropolitan areas.

Metropolitan areas face enormous transportation challenges, such as increasing infrastructure maintenance and investment needs, increasing traffic congestion, meeting environmental compliance goals, planning transportation projects in a coordinated manner, land use and growth issues, and diverse traveler needs. High-quality, multi-modal transportation infrastructure – particularly systems that mitigate congestion, are in a state of good repair, comply with environmental standards, and are well coordinated and planned – is essential to providing the public with reliable travel options to and within metropolitan areas. As such, this hearing will explore the transportation challenges of metropolitan areas and the Federal role in partnering with metro area to address these challenges.

Infrastructure Maintenance and Investment Needs in Metropolitan Areas

As DOT's *2006 Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions and Performance* ("C&P report") shows, transportation infrastructure in our metropolitan areas is in poor physical condition. According to the most recent figures (drawn primarily from 2004 data), only 72.4 percent of urban Interstate vehicle miles traveled ("VMT") was on pavement with acceptable ride quality, while 26.7 percent of urban bridges are deficient. The average age of urban light rail cars is 14.8 years, commuter rail passenger coaches have an average age of 20.1 years, and 48 percent of urban buses maintenance facilities are more than 21 years old.

At the same time that metropolitan transportation facilities are aging, the demand for transportation services in our metro areas continues to rise. Brookings has calculated that the 100 largest metro areas account for 95 percent of public transit passenger miles, while the American Public Transportation Association documented that Americans took 10.3 billion trips on public transportation in 2007, the highest level in 50 years. According to the Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA"), VMT has grown three times faster than the U.S. population, and almost twice as fast as vehicle registrations. Given that the Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data show that the 100 largest metropolitan areas captured 76 percent of national population growth from 2000 to 2005, we can expect increases in transit ridership and VMT to continue to grow at record levels in our metropolitan areas, further straining those transportation systems.

The Commission report states that, over the course of our nation's history, all levels of government and the private sector have contributed to transportation investment, but that it is the Federal Government that should be a "full partner" in meeting the significant investment needs of our systems. The Commission report also states that increased private sector investment, tolling, and pricing mechanisms must be a part of the overall solution. The Commission identifies a significant surface transportation investment gap, and calls for an annual investment level of between $225 and $340 billion – by all levels of government and the private sector – over the next 50 years to upgrade all modes of surface transportation (highways, bridges, public transit, freight rail and intercity passenger rail) to a state of good repair. The current the annual capital investment from all sources in all modes of transportation is $85 billion.

The Commission recommends that Congress create a new national asset management program to keep America's existing infrastructure properly maintained. The Commission expects that metropolitan areas will increase emphasis on public transportation, especially electrified railways, to meet this growing demand for transit services, and suggested that maintenance be focused on the Interstate system, the National Highway System, transit assets, intercity passenger and freight rail, and intermodal connectors – all areas that the Commission identifies as having a strong Federal interest.

<u>Traffic Congestion in Metropolitan Areas</u>

Ensuring the success of our metropolitan areas requires a reliable means of public access to the important employment, medical, educational, and recreational opportunities within our metropolitan areas. Unfortunately, traffic congestion is highly concentrated in the largest metro areas. According to the Texas Transportation Institute's ("TTI") 2007 Urban Mobility Report, congestion in large metro areas has risen to an all-time high of 4.2 billion hours of travel delay resulting in 2.9 billion gallons of additional fuel used per year. This wasted time and fuel was computed into a total congestion cost of $78.2 billion for 2005. The Commission finds that if no additional investment in our nation's highways is made, congestion would be more acute in urban areas where delays are projected to grow by more than one-half by 2020, more than double by 2035, and quadruple by 2055. In an attempt to address traffic congestion in metropolitan areas, state and local governments have taken a variety of approaches including adding highway capacity, employing tolls and congestion pricing, and making additional investments in public transportation.

Most urban areas with populations of more than 3 million people have significant public transportation ridership, very large bus systems, and extensive rail systems with reliable service provided by underground and overhead rail lines that are not affected by roadway traffic congestion.

However, if these public transportation services were discontinued in our large metro areas, TTI found that commuters would have suffered an additional 541 million hours of delay, consumed 340 million more gallons of fuel, and borne an additional $10.2 billion in congestion costs. Because public transportation provides such measurable congestion mitigation, a failure to increase investment in our metropolitan transit systems would impact not only transit riders, but road users as well.

To provide congestion relief, the Commission recommends that Congress establish a new Federal program to improve metropolitan mobility. The program would include substantially increased capital investment and require comprehensive local strategies. Projects would include demand management initiatives such as congestion pricing, improved operations, increased transit capacity and ridership, and expanded highway capacity.

Environmental Issues in Metropolitan Areas

As the world's largest energy consumer and largest greenhouse gas ("GHG") emitter, the United States – particularly its metropolitan areas – face numerous environmental challenges. According to the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration, transportation represents 33 percent of all U.S. GHG emissions. The Commission report notes that the relationship between transportation and the environment has been a source of national concern for more than a half-century as we continue to better understand how vehicle operations can have adverse effects on air and water quality, noise, undeveloped land, community structures, and other resources that influence our quality of life.

At the same time, some transportation choices can have a beneficial impact on our environment. A February 2008 report by ICF International found that a person, commuting alone by car, who switches a 20-mile round trip commute to existing public transportation, can reduce his or her annual carbon dioxide emissions by 4,800 pounds per year, equal to a 10 percent reduction in all GHG produced by a typical two-adult, two-car household.. Recently, several groups including the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has called for the annual growth in VMT to be cut in one-half to lower emissions and address air quality concerns.

According to a Department of Transportation ("DOT") evaluation of the MOBILE Vehicle Emission Model used by the Environmental Protection Agency, emission factors are very sensitive to the average speed that is assumed. In general, emissions tend to increase as average vehicle speed decreases. As such, some groups have argued that road-based congestion pricing strategies and targeted capacity increases that keep car traffic moving at higher speeds also helps reduce GHG emissions and improve air quality.

Surface transportation laws contain programs designed to relieve both congestion and increase air quality at specific targeted areas. For example, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program ("CMAQ") ties transportation funding to the Clean Air Act. Funding is available for areas that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (nonattainment areas) as well as former nonattainment areas that are now in compliance (maintenance areas). CMAQ funds are largely spent on Transportation Control Measures ("TCMs") such as improving public transit service, traffic signalization and other traffic flow improvements, trip reduction and ride-sharing initiatives, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Transportation and Land Use Planning in Metropolitan Areas

The current surface transportation program requires state and local governments to undertake a comprehensive public planning process, which considers land use, development, safety, and security issues, to develop a plan to meet the region's transportation goals. Transportation planning should be a cooperative process involving all users of the system, such as the business community, community groups, environmental organizations, the traveling public, freight operators, transit operators, employee representatives, private providers of public transportation services, and the general public. State Departments of Transportation and, in metro areas, metropolitan planning organizations ("MPOs") conduct the transportation planning process.

According to DOT, land use and transportation are symbiotic: development density and location influence regional travel patterns and, in turn, the degree of access provided by the transportation system can influence land use and development trends. Choosing a land-use strategy that complements a region's transportation goals is an important part of the planning process.

Urban or "community design" can facilitate alternative travel modes. For example, a connected system of streets with higher residential densities and a mix of land uses can facilitate travel by foot, bicycle, and public transportation, in addition to the automobile. Conversely, dispersed land development patterns may facilitate vehicular travel and reduce the viability of other travel modes. The Commission notes that a number of factors will affect any trends toward increasing urban development densities in the future, including stabilization in household sizes, consumer reactions to increasing energy costs and land prices, consumer choice of independence from the automobile, national economic growth generated by and concentrated in large urban areas, and government policies to promote dense development. On the other hand, the Commission points out that real income growth, ubiquitous transportation and communications networks, an aging population less tied to workplace access in their housing location decisions, and the high costs of living in dense urban areas may counterbalance the motivations for increased population density.

The Commission recommends that future regional plans be developed to meet specific performance standards, and major projects would have to be shown to be cost-beneficial. The Commission recommends that planning activities continue to be funded through a percentage of the total authorized funding for the Federal surface transportation program.

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

On January 17, 2008, and February 13, 2008, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure met to hear testimony on the Commission Report, which focuses in part on congestion relief and mobility within metropolitan areas. On June 7, 2007, the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit held a hearing regarding congestion and mobility on our nation's surface transportation system. The Subcommittee also held a January 24, 2007 hearing regarding the nation's surface transportation system and the challenges it will face in the future, as well as to examine how the system will need to adapt to support the changing and expanding economy.

WITNESS LIST

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Washington, DC

Mr. Robert D. Yaro
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The Honorable Ron Sims
King County Executive
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Ms. Jolene Molitoris
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Ohio Department of Transportation

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Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
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HEARING ON TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES OF METROPOLITAN AREAS

Wednesday, April 9, 2008

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, the Honorable Peter A. DeFazio [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Mr. DEFAZIO. The Committee will come to order. Today is an important hearing. It is important, as we lead up to the reauthorization of the next surface transportation bill, that we begin to fully examine the major problems that are confronting our Nation and begin to hear from a range of people who can tell us how they have approached those problems, what has worked, and what hasn't worked, and how, in rewriting the bill in 2009, we might be able to remove some impediments or create new ways to deal with these very vexing problems.

Today, in particular, we are going to deal with the issue of congestion, which is something that is affecting our Nation as a whole, obviously, both in the movement of freight and goods and affecting businesses, particularly those dependent upon just-in-time delivery; and it is obviously the most obvious and most frustrating daily concern of tens of millions of Americans trying to get to work or trying to go about their daily lives. So we have an excellent panel today and I look forward to hearing the testimony.

With that, I would turn to Mr. Duncan, the Ranking Member.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you. I am pleased that we are having another hearing in preparation for next year's authorization of the National Highway Transit and Highway Safety programs, and today's hearing is going to have sort of a broad theme transportation: Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas.

We need to be having this type of hearing for many reasons, but especially because of something I read just a few weeks ago, and that is that two-thirds of the counties in the U.S. are losing population. And that surprises people because a great, great majority of the people live in our metropolitan areas, and where the fast growth is in this Country is, to some extent, in urban counties, but it is especially fast in the counties that circle or touch the urban counties, and that has, I think, very important and serious ramifications for our transportation policies both now and in the future.

In today's hearing, rather than looking at specific existing highway or transit programs and determining where they are functioning as effectively as possible, we are looking at the needs of a particular type of region, and in future hearings we will explore other general themes, such as freight access and goods movement, infrastructure preservation and modernization, mobility and connectivity of rural areas, and highway safety.

My hometown of Knoxville is considered a metropolitan area. Knox County has a population of about 410,000 now, but the SMSA, which includes some of the counties that touch on Knox County, is now 1.1 million. Of course, there are many other areas that are far bigger, but what we deal with in our area is just millions and millions of passengers or vehicles coming through on the way to Florida or to come to the Great Smokey Mountains National Park or for other reasons. We have two interstates that meet in Knoxville and a third that comes within 37 miles, and we are within 600 miles of, I think it is three-fourths of the population of the U.S. so we have far more traffic than even those population figures would indicate.

There are 452 urbanized areas in the United States that the Census Bureau says are urbanized, but they consider anything over 50,000 to be an urban area. And what we have to look at is does it makes sense to even talk about New York City in the same way as an area like Fond du Lac or certain other very small urban areas. And when we talk about the transportation challenges of metropolitan areas and discuss possible policies to address those challenges, where do we draw the line? The U.S. has 37 cities with populations more than one million, and I think everyone would consider these very big cities. They are then 113 cities that are between 200,000 and one million in population.

The other thing we need to consider is this. Some groups want gas to go up even higher so people will drive less. Yet, that would put the final nail in the coffin of some of these small towns and rural areas if that happens, and that would force more people into these urban areas, creating more congestion. So I think if some of these groups that don't want more urban sprawl and more congestion in these metropolitan areas, they are going to have to reconsider their opposition to more domestic energy production or, as I say, they are going to speed up the decline of some of these small towns and rural areas, and they are going to hurt a lot of low-income people in the process.

I think the main thing, when we develop any new national transportation policies, we must retain the flexibility to address the very different kinds of needs that these very different sizes and types of metropolitan and even rural areas have. Larger metropolitan areas have access to policy and funding options that are not available to some of the smaller metropolitan areas. For example, congestion pricing is not really an option for Knoxville. And congestion not only in housing and overpopulation in some of these areas, but the most recent urban mobility report says that we are now losing $78 billion just in traffic congestion.

So I am looking forward to this hearing. I am pleased that you would call it and I look forward to hearing from the witnesses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman for his thoughtful statement.

I believe that Mr. Space has an opening statement.

Mr. SPACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member Duncan for holding this hearing today and specifically for inviting Jolene Molitoris from Ohio to testify. Jolene is the Assistant Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation. I think she has served in that capacity for about five and a half weeks now, but she is no stranger to this Committee.

She was the former Federal Railroad Administrator under the Clinton Administration, and I believe the first woman to serve in that capacity. We are delighted to have her and her capacity in Ohio and we are delighted to have her here today. I am interested in hearing her testimony concerning the aging infrastructure in Ohio, as well as the increasing demands created by this Country's chronic under-investment in its highway infrastructure.

I am also interested in hearing about how we can better establish a Federal-State partnership so that we can meet those demands in Ohio as well as in every other State of the Country. And while I don't have any metropolitan or urban areas even under the 50,000 person criteria in my district, we do have a situation in Ohio's 18th where a lot of our folks have to drive sometimes 50, 60, 70, 80 miles a day into the urban areas just for work, sometimes to work at $8 or $10 an hour jobs, paying $3.22 a gallon for gas. So I am interested in hearing how we can better enhance those transportational options.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman.

Any other opening statements? I know, Dave, you want to introduce, but we will get to that point.

Okay, with that, we will begin the testimony, first from the Fellow from the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings would be Mr. Puentes.

TESTIMONY OF ROBERT PUENTES, FELLOW, THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION METROPOLITAN POLICY PROGRAM; ROBERT D. YARO, PRESIDENT, REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION, NEW YORK, NEW YORK; THE HONORABLE RON SIMS, KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON; JOLENE MOLITORIS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION; MICHAEL R. WILEY, GENERAL MANAGER/CEO, SACRAMENTO REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA; AND RON KIRBY, TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR, METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, WASHINGTON, DC.

Mr. PUENTES. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Duncan, Members of the Committee. I am pleased to appear before you this morning and very much appreciate the invitation.

The purpose of my testimony is to provide an overview of critical metropolitan transportation challenges. And in so doing, I would like to make the point that our metropolitan transportation challenges in many ways are our national transportation challenges.

Perhaps more than any other area of domestic policy, transportation is highly spatially concentrated and not distributed evenly across the American landscape.

Metropolitan areas are where most Americans live, work, and produce the majority of the Nation's economic output. The services and revenue they generate drive State economies and they are our front lines of competitiveness in the global economy.

As a consequence, all roads and rail and air traffic literally lead to these metropolitan engines. The top 100 metros handle 75 percent of our Nation's seaport tonnage, 79 percent of air cargo weight, 72 percent of air passengers, and 96 percent of rail travelers.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Duncan, the time is long past due for a national transportation vision that recognizes the metropolitan concentration of our economic life. But it requires an extreme makeover, with a fundamentally new approach to almost every aspect of national transportation policy: how we allocate funding, set priorities, apportion responsibilities, engage the private sector, price the system, connect transportation to other policies, and how we move from our current decision-making to empirically-grounded policy.

Fortunately, the time is ripe for such systemic reform. From genuine concern about the condition and quality of our existing infrastructure, to difficulties and lack of choices in moving people and goods, to major national problems like climate change, foreign energy dependency, and strained household budgets, there is growing recognition that, if left unchecked, these challenges threaten not only the quality of life in our metropolitan areas, but also the competitiveness of our Nation. At the same time, these debates are taking place in a fiscally constrained environment that should be the motivating factor for real reform.

Now, the problem is that the current slate of Federal policies and the lack of clear policy in specific areas actually appear to exacerbate the range of metropolitan transportation challenges. We feel there are three major policy flaws.

First, for the vast majority of the program, the Federal Government is absent, when it should be present, such as in dealing with the basic movement of people and goods across States and between metropolitan areas and mega-regions. Today, the Nation has no overarching agenda or strategic plan for coping with the projected increases in freight movement or in how passengers would travel these longer distances.

Second, as a program with its roots in the 1950s, the Federal Surface Transportation Program is woefully outdated. For one thing, the program is not attuned to the needs, problems, and challenges of metropolitan areas. Additionally, Federal Highway Trust Fund dollars continue to be distributed to its grantees based largely on consumption. More than half of the funds authorized in SAFETEA-LU are apportioned to States based on traditional factors: amount of roads, miles driven, fuel consumed, and gas tax paid. There is no reward for reducing consumption in any of these formulas; thus, investments to reduce VMT, fuel consumption, or lane miles is antithetical to how States receive funds.

The third major policy problem is that the program is under-performing and failing to maximize efficiencies. Without a vision, goals, purpose, or means for targeting, the U.S. approach to transportation has been to keep throwing money at the problems. While additional sources are certainly important, the Federal Transportation Program has almost no focus on outcomes, performance, or accountability. More fundamentally, analytical exercises are largely impossible due to the astonishing lack of data and information. Incredibly, it is easier for citizens to discern where private banks and thrifts lend than to determine where public transportation agencies spend.

Mr. Chair and Mr. Duncan, I believe we need a systemic change in the way we think about, design, and implement transportation policies. This means the development of a three-pronged strategy to lead, empower, and maximize performance across the Nation and its metropolitan areas.

First, the Federal Government should lead and develop a coherent national vision and focus on specific areas of national importance: the preservation and maintenance of the interstate system, the development of a true intermodal freight agenda, and a comprehensive national plan for intermetropolitan area passenger travel.

Second, the Federal Government should also empower major metropolitan areas by giving them direct transportation funding and the flexibility to make unbiased decisions between different modes of transportation. To ensure that States and metros can innovate, Federal transportation policy needs to be modally neutral and outcome based.

Third, the Federal Government needs to reorient transportation policy to remedy the mistakes of the past and to establish a coherent performance-based program for the future. Lost in the dominant discussion about how much money we are spending on the Federal transportation program is a frank and rigorous debate about how to spend that money better. After such a discussion, I believe all options toward reinvigorating transportation funding should be on the table for consideration.

In conclusion, I believe that during this time of economic uncertainty, environmental anxiety, and household stress, the Nation must get the most out of its largest discretionary domestic program, transportation. By focusing reforms on these three major policy areas, Federal transportation policy can move from the outdated, outmoded structure that exists today to something that actually works for the Nation and for metropolitan America.

I look forward to this Committee's ongoing leadership and I want to thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you.

Next we will have Robert D. Yaro, President of Regional Plan Association of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut. Mr. Yaro.

Mr. YARO. Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member Duncan and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today on the transportation challenges of metropolitan areas.

I am Bob Yaro. I am President of Regional Plan Association. We are America's oldest, independent metropolitan planning organization. Founded in 1922, RPA shapes the growth of the New York metropolitan region, but has weighed in on national policies at key points during our history, including participation in efforts—actually, leadership—of the National Resources Planning Board back in the 1930s during the New Deal, when our then Chairman Fred Delano chaired that Commission on behalf of President Roosevelt; and the advocacy in the 1960s that we led a campaign in support of the creation of the Urban Mass Transit Administration, now the FTA.

Now, RPA is currently engaged, and has been for the past several years, in a national initiative called America 2050, the goal of which is to develop a strategic framework for America's future growth.

Let me get straight to the point: America's transportation policy is currently not doing the job to meet the needs of America's metropolitan regions as they struggle with increased population, aging infrastructure, rising congestion, the global imperative to reduce carbon emissions. And, yet, metropolitan regions are the places where we have the best opportunity to achieve several national goals.

One is to accommodate anticipated population and economic growth; two, to compete in a global economy; three, to coordinate land use and development transportation decisions to make public transit, walking, and biking options viable and enjoyable; and, finally, in so doing, to reduce VMTs, reduce congestion on the interstate system, and on local highways across the Country and to reduce their impact on global climate change.

We believe that the Country requires a massive investment in infrastructure and that most of the need, as Rob Puentes pointed out, is in fact concentrated in the Nation's metropolitan regions. We can't, in good faith, allow our national investment in the highways, bridges, and public transportation systems to fall into disrepair, and we can't invest in new capacity projects that promote low-density, inefficient development patterns when major metropolitan economies struggle because of under-investment in their existing systems. Finally, we believe that we need a vision as a Nation for the Federal role in transportation that rises above the parochial squabbles of which State gets the biggest piece of the Federal funding pie.

America 2050 was launched in 2005 to respond to four key challenges facing metropolitan regions across the Country and the Country as a whole. First, America's population is growing. The Census Bureau has estimated that we will add somewhere in the neighborhood of 120 million additional residents by 2050, a 40 percent increase over today's levels. We have simply used up the capacity of our 20th century infrastructure systems in metropolitan areas across the region to accommodate that growth.

Second, our global competitors are investing ambitiously in 21st century infrastructure systems while we struggle to maintain a 20th century and in some cases, like the Baltimore rail tunnels, a 19th century system. The places that we are increasingly competing with—China, India, Spain, the rest of Europe, the devel-

oping countries around the world—are investing 10 percent, 8 percent, or 7 percent of their GDP—that is China, India, and Spain, respectively—on infrastructure, compared to America's 1 percent.

Third, transportation accounts for 30 percent of America's share of greenhouse gas emissions, and the share is growing due to rising VMTs. Meanwhile, we must reduce carbon emissions 80 percent by 2050 to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change.

Fourth, we are witnessing the emergence of mega-regions, and we have this image up on the charts here today, the slides that show the networks of metropolitan regions linked by economic agglomerations and transportation links. Eleven of these regions are emerging nationwide, which will absorb over 70 percent, close to three-quarters, of projected population and economic growth by 2050. These mega-regions are competing with similarly sized global integration zones—that is the European term—in Europe and Southeast Asia, where tens of billions of dollars in investments have been made in high-speed rail and goods movement systems to support the highly mobile workforce of the global economy.

Together, these challenges require a dramatic new approach and role for the Federal Government in charting an ambitious and strategic framework for the Nation's growth. It turns out—and we have done some work on this that we would be delighted to share with you—that this Country has a history of ambitious national plans which define its growth, beginning with the 1808 Gallatin Plan, which President Jefferson commissioned to look at ways to integrate the Louisiana Purchase into the rest of the Country and out of which came proposals that were implemented for a national system of roads—initially canals, later railroads—incentivized by the Federal Government in accordance with a national plan developed by Albert Gallatin, the Treasury Secretary from the Jefferson through the Madison administrations.

A century later, in 1908—and I hope these dates resonate with you, 1808 and then 1908—President Roosevelt convened the first meeting of the Governors Conference and then led, coming out of the Governors Conference, in 1908, a national plan led by Gifford Pinchot, Forest Service Director, to develop a nationwide network of resource-based economic development, resource protection, and water management projects, which became the inspiration for projects like the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Bonneville Power Administration, and these other projects, the Colorado River Project, that made 20th century America possible. Later, the interstate system, again developed in the 1930s, the concept by the National Resources Planning Board.

That brings us to 2008. So the sequence here, 1808, 1908, 2008. We need a new national infrastructure strategy building on the tradition of the Interstate Highway Act. I would like to suggest three points in developing this system. First, we need a national transportation investment plan, a physical plan for the development of the infrastructure, similar to the interstate system. Second, we need to maintain the existing system of interstate highways and transit systems. And, third, we need to direct more resources to metropolitan regions to give them the flexibility and the authority to develop these.

There is no more suitable role for the Federal Government than to chart the direction of the Nation's growth. You are standing in the shoes and in the footsteps of Jefferson and both Roosevelts and so forth, the oldest tradition in American national policy and development. Now is the time to develop an ambitious framework for these investments to shape the Nation's prosperity and sustainability for generations to come. Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Yaro.

I now turn to our colleague, Mr. Reichert, to introduce the next panelist.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to introduce my good friend, Ron Sims, who has worked tirelessly for the people of the great State of Washington and of King County, and the 8th District, which I represent, since his election to the King County Executive's Office. Actually, the County Council first in 1985 and then his appointment as King County Executive in 1996.

Ron has been a champion of mass transit innovation and reform as King County and its surrounding areas continue to growth at a breakneck pace. On a personal note, he has worked closely with the Sheriff's Office in King County, an office which he appointed me to—and I gratefully thank him for that—in 1997, an office which I held until I came to Washington, D.C. to represent the 8th District.

Ron recognized not only the need for a mass transit system, successful system not only needs to be affordable, but it needs to be efficient and it also needs to be safe. As Executive, he we charged with overseeing the fourteenth largest county in the Nation. It includes the City of Seattle and the City of Bellevue in the 8th District, with an overall population of 1.8 million people. King County is home to about 30 percent of Washington State's population and an even larger percentage of its congestion woes.

I welcome him to this Committee and look forward to Mr. Sims' testimony. Thank you, Ron, for being here.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Reichert.

Mr. Sims.

Mr. SIMS. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Duncan, and Members of the Committee and my good friend, Congressman Reichert, it is always good seeing you. I want to thank you for inviting me to testify today about the transportation challenges facing America's metropolitan areas, the economic engines of this extraordinary Country.

I am King County Executive Ron Sims. I am proud to serve as the elected leader of the fourteenth largest county in the Nation. Our county contains Seattle and Bellevue, and 38 other cities as well, farmlands and forests. It is the home to 1.8 million people and includes the corporate headquarters for companies as diverse as Starbucks, Amazon.com, PACCAR, and, of course, Microsoft.

Our region's economy and population are both growing extremely fast. The Puget Sound region is expected to add 1.5 million people over the next 30 years. I think about how the decisions I make as an elected official today will shape what our region looks like decades from now, and about whether the people living there, including my children and now my grandchildren, will enjoy well-being

and prosperity. That is why I am pleased to speak before you today about transportation, which consistently polls as one of the most important concerns of the public, especially the issues of traffic congestion.

Transportation is vital to our region's economy and metropolitan areas like mine are, in turn, the drivers of the American economy. According to The Brookings Institution, America's top 100 metropolitan areas generate 75 percent of the Nation's gross domestic product. Our Puget Sound region, made up of three counties, is the twelfth most populous metropolitan area in the Nation. About half of Washington State's population resides in the region, and just under 30 percent in King County alone. But Puget Sound accounts for more than two-thirds of the value of all goods and services produced in the State of Washington.

Based on our own experience, these economic engines could begin to sputter if we do not address two major transportation challenges facing metropolitan regions: aging highway infrastructure and crippling traffic congestion. According to the Texas Transportation Institute, in 2003, congestion in the top 85 urban areas caused 3.7 billion hours of travel delay and 2.3 billion gallons of wasted fuel at a total cost of $63 billion. In addition, the transportation sector generates 33 percent of harmful greenhouse gas emissions, and increased passenger vehicle miles traveled in idling and congestion hurts our national environmental goals.

The good news is that we have innovative approaches and new tools available for us to meet those challenges. Instead of viewing transportation narrowly as an issue of road capacity, we are gaining many benefits by taking a broad approach that looks at the whole transportation systems; that consider transportation impacts in the broader context of the economy, national security, the environment, and social needs; and that employs an integrated set of transportation management tools. Many tools are available to us. Variable tolling in combination with increased transit services hold particular promise as a tool for reducing traffic congestion and paying for infrastructure improvements. My written testimony includes two case studies that illustrate how new tools and innovative approaches can be used to replace aging transportation infrastructure and to reduce congestion; however, I am going to highlight only one of them today.

The State Route 520 bridge replacement project involves the Lake Washington floating bridge between I-5 and I-405, one of the most congested corridors in the region. This corridor connects Seattle and the growing suburban cities, linking major technologies, manufacturing, and residential centers. It is critical to our region's and our counties' economic core.

520 was built in 1963 as a four-lane toll bridge. The bridge was designed to carry 65,000 cars per day; today it carries an overage of 115,000 cars per day. State engineers gave the bridge a rating of 44 out of 100 on the recent structural integrity test. For comparison, the bridge that collapsed in Minnesota last year was rated a 50.

Last spring, King County and the Washington State Department of Transportation and the MPO, the Puget Sound Regional Council, successfully competed for the U.S. Department of Transportation's

Urban Partnership Program. Our strategy incorporates variable tolling, expanded transit technology to improve efficiency, and increased telecommuting. We estimate an increase of up to 35 percent in transit ridership, as well as reduction of vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, revenue generated by variable tolling, along with gas tax revenue, will be used to finance the replacement of this tired, aging bridge.

Last August, the Lake Washington Urban Partnership was awarded $127 million to implement this strategy, and the Washington State Legislature, in its recently completed 2008 session, passed a policy bill that will enable variable tolling to be on the 520 bridge.

I believe metropolitan regions across the Country are ready to take bold, new approaches like this to solving the challenges of critical aging road infrastructure and congestion, and we hope you will consider several key principles as you take up the matter of reforming national policies concerning Federal highway and transit investments.

First, we need a holistic approach to transportation investment. Dividing transportation funding into narrow programs and projects tends to limit thinking on the best way to solve transportation problems. Particularly in the larger metropolitan areas, we need to have the local officials who are responsible for the streets, transit, and non-motorized travel sitting in the same room with State highway officials to come up with the best transportation solutions. Transportation decisions must also take into account the broader role of transportation in the society.

Land use and transportation are inextricably linked. Reducing sprawl and long drive times can improve our quality of life and our health. For example, King County recently undertook a land-use transportation and air quality and health study that demonstrated the links between how communities' transportation systems are built and the effects on public health. Environmental impacts must also be considered in particular. The transportation sector's production of greenhouse gas emissions is critical. We need to observe those. Strategies that reduce vehicle miles, travel such as compact development, increase transit; highway pricing are essential for our efforts to combat global warming.

Our holistic approach should also employ a coordinated set of transportation strategies to improve mobility, rather than the narrow focus on roads alone.

Second, we need to reduce our dependence on unreliable sources of foreign oil. This is both an economic and a national security imperative.

Third, the principal concerns who should manage tolling projects. While I share current Administration's interest in variable tolling as a congestion relief tool, I do not support privatizing our publicly financed infrastructure assets. These assets must be managed to meet the public's transportation needs and responsibility to do so much remain with the government. At the same time, we must not divert tolling revenues to general government purposes.

Finally, we must consider social equity as we embrace variable tolling. I believe variable tolling is less burdensome to low-income residents than sales, property, gas, or car taxes. Variable tolling

also gives people choice either to travel during off-peak hours, take slower roads to reduce costs, or to pay for important trips. Low-income bus riders also benefit from faster and more reliable bus trips after tolling reduces congestion. Transit must be a variable tolling proposal. In our county, 95 percent of all residents are within one-quarter mile of a transit stop and within one and a half miles of a Park & Ride lot.

Mr. DEFAZIO. If you could summarize quickly now. You are a bit over.

Mr. SIMS. Public opinion nationally and locally indicates a strong preference for tolling over sales and other vehicle-related fees.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee, thank you very much for this opportunity to speak to you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Sims.

The next witness, as was noted by Representative Space, is no stranger to the Committee and we welcome her back in her new role as Assistant Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation. Ohio is lucky to have you. Ms. Molitoris.

Ms. MOLITORIS. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Duncan and Members of the Committee, and for your kind introduction, Congressman Space. It is good to be home, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the governor, Governor Strickland, and Director Beasley, I want to thank you for having this hearing; it is a very important one. As you have said, I am in my fifth week as the Assistant Director of Transportation, so it is good to be back.

My message to you will be really three-fold: we, Ohio, have an urgent need for adequate Federal investment. Number two, our transportation challenges in metropolitan areas are critical and we need a partner. We need a Federal partner that will work with us at all levels to solve our problems.

First of all, our highest immediate need is the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund. We face a loss of somewhere between $140 million and $400 million, and these will affect projects next year and the year after, and many of them, if not most of them, are in the urban areas. So it is a critical issue. Second, for a State that is thirty-sixth in land mass, we have a large number of metropolitan areas; seven are very large and ten small. So we are facing these critical issues all over our State. And the under-investment that has been going on for decades leaves us with a deteriorating system and one in dire need of repair.

It has to be upgraded, and some people say it is like threading an eight-lane highway through the eye of a needle because these roads are tightly woven into built areas, so everything is very, very expensive. Even on and off ramps, something as simple, apparently, as that, 30 years ago they were up to snuff; today they are not even safe by today's standards. We often try to do the repair under traffic because there are no alternatives; makes it much longer and much, more expensive.

With regard to our donor status, I have to mention that SAFETEA-LU helped some; we are at 92 now. However, every dollar we give to FTA we get 51 cents back. This is just totally unacceptable. In addition, the bias toward highway investment, with a 90 percent possible and only 50 percent for alternatives like public transportation is unacceptable for our goals in Ohio. Governor

Strickland is committed to a multimodal transportation solution. It is what we need. It is what we need to help attract jobs and retain the businesses that we have. Just last week, the governor and our legislature introduced a bipartisan economic incentive bond package of $1.57 billion, and this will be major investments in logistics, bridges, other transportation projects and infrastructure.

So I am here to say we are stepping up to the plate. We are trying to begin to create solutions at home, but we need a partner. The private sector is helping us; other public entities. My colleague, Chester Jourdan, who is President of the Metropolitan Planning Agency in Central Ohio, is here. We have broken down those divisions between us; we know that we have to work together. And we need that same kind of partnership with the Federal Government. We can't do it alone; we need your help.

One story, one real story. It is a simple one, but I think it really says something important. We have 59 public transit systems and we serve half a million customers every weekday, and over 60 percent are work-related trips. For Ohioans, many of them, it is public transportation or it is public assistance. That is how dramatic it is. In Cleveland, for example, ranked as the poorest city in America last year, one out of every four persons does not have access to an automobile.

Last year, a new shopping center was set to open on the site of an abandoned steel mill, the redevelopment in a core urban metropolitan area meant to bring jobs for those who didn't have them. At the new Target store, to get those jobs, they found out half the people needed public transit; they couldn't get there any other way. By investing only $200,000, the transit system in Cleveland was able to provide the service that was needed. However, they had to take it from someplace else, because they didn't even have $200,000 of wiggle room.

So the bottom line for us, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Duncan, is that we need for you to be our partner. We need realistic, adequate investment levels to get our system where it needs to be, because if we are going to be a first rate State and if we are going to be a first rate Country, we need a first rate transportation system. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you.

Next we have Michael Wiley, General Manager/CEO of Sacramental Regional Transit.

Mr. WILEY. Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Duncan, Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address you today, and also a special thank you to Congresswoman Matsui, a tremendous advocate for Sacramento and our public transit system.

I have worked for Regional Transit for over 30 years, so I have a strong familiarity with our relationships with our State DOT, as well as our local MPO. The Sacramento region's MPO, SACOG, has developed an innovative land use program called the Blueprint that integrate transit with smart growth. For this innovative plan to be successful, the partnership between Regional Transit, SACOG, and CalTrans, our State DOT, must continue to grow.

The Sacramento region's growth has exceeded both State and national averages. Development has historically relied on the practice

of building large lot, low-density housing with no integration of retail, employment, or public services. A continuation of this sprawling growth in the next 20 years will consume another 660 square miles of farmland and greenfield if allowed to continue undeterred.

In 2004, SACOG took the first big step to reverse this trend and set us on a path to a brighter future. The Sacramento region's Blueprint is intended to guide land use and transportation choices over the next 50 years as the region's population grows from 2 million today to more than 2.8 million. SACOG crafted an alternative land-use vision that embraces smart growth concepts, higher density mixed use transit-oriented developments, reinvestment in existing neighborhoods, and more transit choices as an alternative to sprawl.

To compliment this new land use vision, last month SACOG adopted the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The MTP provides a new vision for transportation in our Greater Sacramento region. The combined Blueprint and MTP estimate that transit trips will increase over 600 percent. The percentage of trips taken by transit to downtown Sacramento will increase from 20 percent today to over 40 percent. To support this transit expansion, the MTP also calls for the passage of an equivalent of an additional one half cent local sales tax by 2012.

In response to this new vision and future reliance on transit, Regional Transit is undertaking a comprehensive update of our transit master plan. This update will guide RT for the next 30 years and will provide a detailed implementation strategies, programs, and projects that will assure the success of our Blueprint and MTP.

Regional Transit, SACOG, and Caltrans work closely to utilize flexible Federal funds by allowing local decision-making to apply the funds to the most urgent needs. The Sacramento region and the State of California have stepped up to provide support with local matching funds. RT's recently completed $206 million Amtrak Fulsom light rail extension is an example of this strategy, where local, State, and flexible Federal funds provided 100 percent of the project funding.

In 2009, RT will begin the construction of a one-mile light rail extension that will be the first phase of an eventual New Start federally-funded light rail project that will bring service to Sacramento's International Airport. The first phase of this one-mile extension will be funded entirely with local and State dollars.

In 2006, California voters passed over $20 billion in general obligation bonds to fund transportation improvement projects.

Regarding reauthorization, it is crucial that Congress identify a funding source that is sustainable and grows to meet the Nation's infrastructure needs. Priority for funding should be granted to those urban locations that are considered non-attainment areas for air quality. Those regions that provide local funding and commitment to land-use plans, that create more compact transit-supportive neighborhoods should be given financial incentives to continue this practice. Adoption of smart growth principles is a key step in cleaning our air and reducing our dependency on foreign oil. We must also look at more flexibility between highways and transit funding and create criteria that focuses on and rewards vehicle mile travel reduction and greenhouse gas emission reductions.

Today, in Sacramento, a productive relationship between SACOG, Caltrans, and RT has resulted in better outcomes measured by funding allocations and projection selections. By recognizing the central role of public transit in achieving critical national policy goals, including national security, cleaner air, energy conservation, and reducing dependency on foreign oil, we create more livable communities.

In conclusion, a strong partnership between transit, the metropolitan planning organization, and the State DOT will ensure that these goals are reached in a much more timely manner, and such partnerships need to be encouraged and rewarded by national policy. Thank you very much for your time.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Wiley.

The last witness will be Ronald Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, a long title. Thank you. Mr. Kirby.

Mr. KIRBY. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Duncan, Members of the Committee. I will forego repeating that title. I am the MPO Director for the Washington metropolitan area. The Transportation Planning Board, or TPB for short, is one of 385 MPOs currently serving urbanized areas throughout the Nation, and is an active member of the Association of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations nationally.

Membership of the TPB includes representatives of the transportation agencies of the States of Maryland and Virginia and the District of Columbia, 20 local governments in the Washington region, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Maryland and Virginia general Assemblies, and non-voting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and Federal agencies; 40 board members in all.

The transportation challenges facing the Washington metropolitan area are common to many large, growing metropolitan areas throughout the Country. Currently, the area is home to 5 million people, a little more than that, and 3 million jobs. Over the current planning period of 2008 through 2030, we are expecting increases in population and jobs of 26 percent and 31 percent, respectively, which will lead to additional vehicles, trips, and congestion on the region's transportation system.

Because of funding constraints, highway lane miles are expected to increase by only 13 percent over this period, while vehicle miles of travel are expected to rise 23 percent, resulting in a 41 percent rise in lane miles of congestion in the a.m. peak period. The outer suburbs will experience the most dramatic increase in congestion, with more than 100 percent increase in lane miles in congestion over this period. Transit work trips are forecast to increase by 31 percent, which will create even more crowding on the Metrorail system because transit capacity is also limited by funding constraints.

Emissions of ozone precursors and fine particulates for motor vehicles are declining steadily due primarily to cleaner vehicles and fuels, and the Washington region is on track to attain national standards for these pollutants. Carbon dioxide and other green-

house gas emissions from motor vehicles continue to increase, however, and represent a major new challenge.

Transportation revenues projected to be available to the Washington region over the period of the plan, through 2030, come from several different major sources: Federal 27 percent, State 32 percent, local government 17 percent, transit fares 17 percent, and tolls 7 percent. The share of funding from tolls has grown from just 1 percent in 2003 to 7 percent currently, due to the addition in the plan of three major new highway projects which will have tolls that vary by time and day to manage congestion.

Our studies indicate, however, that these tolls revenues will be needed to finance construction, operation, and preservation of the toll facilities, along with expanded transit services, and will not in any way substitute for other sources of transportation funding, all of which will need to be sustained and increased if the region's transportation challenges are to be addressed.

A number of proposals and recommendations are currently being advanced for refocusing the Federal Surface Transportation Program on key national priorities when the program is reauthorized next year. Three major goals stand out as national priorities around which the Federal program could be structured: firstly, preservation and operation of the existing system; secondly, high-value investments in new infrastructure capacity; and, thirdly, support for metropolitan areas to address pressing congestion, environmental, and social challenges.

With the mid-20th century goals of building the interstate highway system and recapitalizing the urban transit systems accomplished, it is time to replace the modally-oriented program delivery structure designed around those earlier purposes with a mode-neutral Federal program to support system preservation and operations, as well as new infrastructure investments aimed at critical choke points in surface, passenger, and freight transportation systems. I would agree with an earlier witness that the rail tunnel in Baltimore is one of those major choke points that needs attention.

MPOs have long believed that in addition to formula funding for metropolitan planning, the Federal transportation program should provide formula-based funding directly to metropolitan areas for project selection and implementation. Such funding would empower metropolitan areas to turn strategies developed in response to Federal planning requirements into real projects on the ground.

A relatively small scale but nevertheless groundbreaking provision of SAFETEA-LU provides a model for how a new metropolitan transportation program could be structured and administered. Prior to SAFETEA-LU, the Job Access and Revert Commute Discretionary Program administered by the Federal Transit Administration for metropolitan areas had become unwieldy and heavily earmarked. SAFETEA-LU restructured JARC along with a new New Freedom Program into formula programs allocated to metropolitan areas in accordance with urbanized area population. Metropolitan areas were required to designate recipients who could administer these programs through a transparent and competitive project selection process. The TPB was among the first of almost 30 MPOs that sought and received these designations.

This JARC and New Freedom delivery mechanism could be the basis for a much broader and more comprehensive program of project selection and implementation at the metropolitan level. A number of other disparate elements of the current Federal program could be bundled together with the JARC and New Freedom programs into a metropolitan program that would bring project selection and implementation closer to local government and stakeholder groups. Examples include funding devoted to such priorities as pedestrian safety, coordination of transportation operations and incident management, promotion of commuter ride sharing transit, bicycling and other alternatives to single occupant vehicle use, and perhaps most important of all, the coordination of transportation and land-use planning and implementation at the local and metropolitan levels.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to express the appreciation of the MPO community for the strong and growing support the Congress has provided for metropolitan transportation planning in the ISTEA, TEA-21, and SAFETEA-LU authorizations. Federal planning resources and requirements in these bills have provided a firm foundation for MPOs to assume increased responsibilities not only for planning, but also for some key new components of program delivery.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to testify before you this morning.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Kirby.

We will now proceed to questions. I guess my first question, particularly directly to Mr. Sims and Mr. Kirby, but others can certainly have an opinion on this and I would be happy to hear from them, is on the issue of imposing tolls on a system previously not tolled and/or congestion pricing on that. I guess my concern is about the viability of alternatives.

I think someone raised, I can't remember who it was, the social equity issue. I think that was Mr. Sims also. I mean, the question would be imposing congestion pricing or tolling. And someone else testified as to how there are many people—and I think it might have been, I can't remember, Ms. Molitoris or Mr. Wiley—about what percentage of people had current access to transportation alternatives.

How are you approaching that, Mr. Sims, given those equity issues?

Mr. SIMS. Mr. Chairman, in our county, because we are very similar to Oregon in regards to how we have developed, we have a defined urban area, under 1.8 million, and in that urban area 95 percent of our people have access to transit, as well as within a mile and a half of a Park & Ride lot.

We did a pretty definitive study on race and equity, a pretty blunt study that I think stunned our community in regards to the impacts of what was happening to the people of color in our community and poverty in our community, and we have said that we have to increase what we call the options of choice. Variable tolling does that for us because we believe variable tolling coupled with the ability to use tolling revenues to increase your transit capacity is key.

Mr. DEFAZIO. And what would be the sequencing? Would you have to impose the tolling and then a few years later you enhance transit, or would you enhance transit before you do the variable tolling, or at the same time?

Mr. SIMS. We are doing it at the same time. We already have a very robust transit system; we are the seventh largest in the United States.

Mr. DEFAZIO. But when you talk about people having access, the question is do you measure the elapse time. I mean, okay, you have access to an option, 95 percent of the people have access, but does that access mean three changes of lines and does it take them an hour and twenty minutes to get to work versus what if they drove themselves, even with congestion? Do you compare those things?

Mr. SIMS. We compare those things, but the way our system is designed, in fact, we can provide ready choice. Our issue is the expansion of transit using tolling revenues, because right now, as gas prices have gone up, we have seen that people who are poor, in particular, desiring to actually have increased transit access. The way we do it right now in our county is through a sales tax.

Using tolling for the purposes of financing expanded transit to us is very, very important. What we found in all of our polls was that poor people actually had the strongest views on variable tolling, its desire to see it used for expansion of transit. They wanted that choice and that option. So, to us, variable tolling in this day and age as a method of financing transit expansion is critically important, particularly if you are talking about equity issues.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Okay. Anyone else on that issue? Mr. Kirby?

Mr. KIRBY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I alluded to three major projects that we are moving forward with in this region with congestion tolls. All of them are new lanes or conversion of HOV lanes, existing lanes, so that no one is going to be tolled on a lane that is currently free. That makes it much easier to deal with the equity issue. Two of the projects, all of the toll revenues will be required for construction and operations of the lanes. On one there will be surplus revenues which is going to be put into bus transit, and that was a very important component of that project.

We have looked at the potential for pricing existing lanes in certain choke point areas of the region. There are a number of locations where it is not possible to build new capacity and the key there is going to be provision of alternatives to those who are tolled.

The rationale for tolling is easily explained: it is where the revenues are devoted and how various groups will be impacted. That is the issue. In London, which is a model we have been looking at, major investments in transit were the key to maintaining total person movement into the central area; they shifted people from driving to transit, and that is the kind of the model we have been looking at.

Mr. DEFAZIO. But as the Committee found in our recent visit to London, before the cordon pricing, 85 percent of the people were using mass transit and the cost to park an automobile on a daily basis in downtown London was somewhere around $75 or $80 U.S., which meant we aren't dealing with middle-class people commuting to work here, it is the guy with the chauffeur driving the Bentley,

maybe, who is going to now wonder about whether or not he should be doing that. So there is an equity.

Mr. Yaro, you also had a comment?

Mr. YARO. Yes, just three points. One, this year marks the fortieth anniversary in the New York metropolitan area of using essentially cross-subsidizing transit investments and maintaining our transit system from toll revenues, toll facilities through the Metropolitan Transportation Authority that was established by Governor Rockefeller to do that. As you know, we came very close this year in Albany to get a congestion pricing system in place; we didn't succeed.

We have done a tremendous amount of analysis that I think has concluded that congestion tolling is actually a very progressive way of financing transit investments. You don't need the experience in London, the plans of New York; you don't need to wait years to make these investments. In fact, the most important investments in London were investments in new bus services, and that was what we have planned and are actually moving ahead with portions of in New York.

I guess the final thought is just when you look at what our competitors are spending in metropolitan regions and mega-regions around the world, these are the places that are beginning to knock our socks off economically. They are investing several times what we are as a percentage of GDP. We are going to have to find these revenues one way or another, and tolling and user fees may be something we have seen in our region and I think in other parts of the Country that in fact the public is ready for this and understands the connection between using a facility, paying a fee, and having those revenues be dedicated towards transportation expansion and transportation improvements.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I would address this again to anyone who wants to respond, but several of you brought up this point, and since you just made that point. The current Transportation Secretary says we should freeze the current levels of Federal investment, which is essentially phase out Federal investment over time, ideally, in her mind, and just do everything with tolling and congestion pricing.

But a number of you made the point that the tolling and congestion pricing, either as Mr. Kirby said, in two out of three cases it is just going to go for the project itself, and is not going to supplement the greater system. And I think you and others are making the point you may look at alternatives, they may be viable in certain areas, but the tolling and congestion pricing will still need more support, whether it is sales tax, gas tax, or other investments.

Mr. YARO. I think there is no question that this would be a contributor to a larger and much more robust set of public investments. I think there is room for private investments and new highway facilities, expanded highway capacity and so forth, but I think our conclusion has been—and we have been working on this in New York and New Jersey—that this is going to be a relatively small part of what is going to be needed. There is going to have to be a much more robust public investment. Simply relying on private investments or user fees and so forth, that sounds like the kind of Argentinean strategy for economic development. Do we

really want to be like Argentina when we grow up? I don't think so.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Sims.

Mr. SIMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Variable tolling is one of our tools; it is not our exclusive tool. We like a tool kit, because we have used gas taxes in our region, we have used sales taxes in our region. We just look and say variable tolling is key for us as another tool to use for financing, particularly if we can couple it with expanded transit investments.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Okay. Anybody else? Okay, Ms. Molitoris.

Ms. MOLITORIS. I just want to comment on having the devolution of a Federal partnership. We are going to be looking, in fact, announcing this week, a 21st century transportation task force called by the governor and the director and the business plan, and it is really the people's task force; the department will support and enhance and so on. But there are really two questions: what kind of system do we really need to have, and how are we going to pay for it?

I will wait to sort of report to you the results in September, but I cannot imagine that it is possible to do it without the Federal partnership. I think all the data shows that; certainly the Surface Transportation Policy Commission report shows it strongly. I think it is critical now and going forward that you are our partner.

Mr. DEFAZIO. All right, thank you. Okay, quickly, Mr. Wiley.

Mr. WILEY. Very quickly. I would absolutely agree, we cannot look to have the Federal Government eliminate their partnership. We need a toolbox and we need to grow the toolbox; we don't need to reduce the toolbox. We are looking for resources from many different avenues. In California and in our region, developer fees play a significant role, for example, in funding the capital investment, and we use those revenues from throughout the toolbox to match those Federal revenues so we are stretching those dollars as far as we possibly can. We don't want to reduce the pie; we need to grow the pie.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you.

Mr. Duncan.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The National Surface Transportation Commission has reported that the average major highway project now takes about 13 years, and we had a hearing a few months ago about either a 9-or 12-mile project in California that started in 1990 and was hoped to be completed by 2007. I don't know if they actually completed it or not. We are hearing that in every aspect of this Committee. The main runway at the Atlanta Airport took 14 years from conception to completion; it took only 99 construction days. In water transportation projects, the Kentucky Lock authorized in 1996 was supposed to have been completed in 2008; now the completion date is 2014. The Homestead water project, the original cost estimate was $775 million; now we are up to $2.1 billion on just that one project.

What I am getting at is this: the other developed nations in the world are doing these projects two or three times faster than we are, and almost all of the delays seem to be on the environmental rules and regulations and red tape and paperwork that is not adding anything to the project except cost. We tried to put environ-

mental streamlining provisions in the last highway bill, and I don't know if they are doing much good yet or not, but, Mr. Puentes, do you see any way that we can speed up those types of rules and regulations and delays, or do you even think we should?

Mr. PUENTES. I certainly do. Thank you, Ranking Member. I certainly do believe that we should. There is no question that we are having difficulty getting transportation projects built, good projects and otherwise, and the inflationary costs are driving up the costs of these projects. This is an untenable situation right now. I don't think there is any doubt about that.

The question about what is responsible for the delay I think is a difficult question to answer. We do know that the environmental regulations certainly do impose some kind of extra process in there; whether it is delays or not, that is a question. I think that more to the point is that we see that the lack of coordination, the lack of real comprehension of what these projects are supposed to be doing is also responsible for a considerable amount of delays.

The partnership that we just talked about between the Federal, State, local, metropolitan governments is not clear right now, so who is initiating these projects, where they are coming from, what plan they are adhering to, all these questions in some places are very difficult to determine. So when these projects get built—some are controversial, some are not—roadblocks get thrown up and the project delays take a number of years.

Mr. DUNCAN. I guess the problem we are dealing with is this: if a project ends up costing three times more than it should, then that means you can only do one project, where you could have done three; and it makes for more fatalities, it makes for higher taxes and so forth.

I don't have much time, so I am going to try and move on. Mr. Yaro, your testimony describes the current Federal highway enforcement and transportation planning process as giving States a blank check to build bridges. It says, "giving States a blank check to build bridges to nowhere and highways that enable sprawl development." Do you mean by that do you favor a more top-down approach and do you think that the Federal transportation people are somehow more knowledgeable than the State or local transportation people? I wonder what you mean there.

Mr. YARO. Well, I think what I am getting at there is that in fact we would like to see responsibility devolved from—and you are talking about highways, but I think it is probably across the board that we have these array of siloed agencies in U.S. DOT. I think one of the things we are learning from our investigations of the way that our competitors around the world are doing these things is that, increasingly, they are breaking down the barriers between the funding silos and so forth and, increasingly, they are devolving responsibility to regions for decision-making about projects, but instituting return on investment outcome-based measures to do project selection. So it eliminates the—I shouldn't say eliminates, but it reduces the temptation for projects that might be showboat projects, as opposed to projects that might deliver real utility on the ground.

Just a quick response also to your last thought about the delays of permitting. I think it is absolutely fundamental that we get our

arms around this one, and I think it is not just environmental regulations, I think there should be ways to streamline those regulations, to streamline environmental reviews, but it is also procurement policies, it is the red tape of dealing with Federal agencies, and there has to be, again, more devolution of responsibility.

I know when we built the 1 and 9 subways lines after 9/11, we went from a destroyed transportation system to a functioning one in less than a year because FTA fast-tracked the reviews that ordinarily take two or three years, but in that case there was a real focus on doing that. So we know we can do it in an emergency. We have to treat every one of these projects as an emergency.

Mr. DUNCAN. Okay. Thank you very much.

Executive Sims, I was fascinated by your statement in which you say that 78 percent of the people in King County favored tolling, because just a few days ago, as I was along in Knoxville, there is a husband and wife team that has a very popular radio talk show in our area, and they were talking—the Tennessee legislature is considering going to tolls, and we don't have any tolls anyplace in Tennessee as of yet—and they said that they thought 90 percent of the people were against tolls; and you have 78 percent in favor. Do you think that there is nationwide support for more tolling or do you think this is just sort of unique to your area and your people?

Mr. SIMS. Congressman Duncan, I think that what we are finding right now is that people are moving toward variable tolling. I have to clarify this. If you talk about just putting tolls on like you are doing an ATM machine, there isn't a lot of support; it will look like one more tax. If you are looking at variable tolling and you are looking at coupling that with what people call congestion relief improvements—whether that is transit, whether that is bridge repair—then you see that as the preferable method of financing those.

So I think in our area we are pretty typical, I think, of many urban areas throughout the Country where people are looking at variable tolling as the preferable financing mechanism in lieu of tax increases. You can avoid a toll; you can never avoid a tax increase. When taxes are there, we are very good at collecting them, and we think that people want a choice.

Mr. DUNCAN. All right, thank you.

Ms. Molitoris, Mr. Puentes has said that the Transportation Department is doing too much funding based on consumption and it needs to go to newer ways of funding highway projects. Now, you testified that Ohio has a real interesting or unique mix of very large metropolitan areas and very small metropolitan areas. How do you go about making your funding decisions? I know you are new, but I know, even in the short time you have been there, you have studied the way the Department is operating. Are you going with traditional ways of funding or are you trying new innovative type approaches?

Ms. MOLITORIS. Mr. Duncan, our 21st century transportation task force that will be announced this week is really all about the business of recreating the process. Right now we have a turnpike, which is our toll road, and we have the gas tax, and then we use the monies that are available to us from the Highway Trust Fund

and other FTA and so on. But I personally, Mr. Duncan, think that this opportunity—that is why I am so excited to be back—this opportunity in the next authorization is to really, from the bottom up, recreate our process. I believe we can get some nimble kind of simultaneous processes going because we are suffering in Ohio from this tremendous added expense of very, very long processes, where there is duplicative things. In fact, I went to the district deputies in our State and I asked them what are the big things that are tough, and this whole consensus building that is the process that we are encouraged to do, we do it and then we are questioned about whether we really did it well enough.

And that is this partnership that I really am urging the Committee and the Congress and all the partners and stakeholders to commit to, a partnership that gets things done, a partnership that is about thinking how does business do it, these opportunities for design/build/operate/finance. There is an improvement in timing. We can learn to do that. This is a partnership that can happen. I am looking forward to presenting to the Committee the results of our people's task force, because it is not the Department's.

Mr. DUNCAN. I know we are dealing with very difficult problems. I mentioned in my opening statement that two-thirds of the counties are losing population. And it is not just the counties; I read recently that Detroit has gone from 2 million population a few years ago to 800,000 now, and a lot of the people that are left—you mentioned Cleveland, where you said one in four don't have access to an automobile.

Ms. MOLITORIS. That's right.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, what you are left with in those rapidly declining population areas frequently are lower income people. So, can you justify increasing the funding to areas that are losing population, as opposed to giving to areas like mine that are just growing by leaps and bounds? In fact, all the people I represent wish I could put up walls and just keep anybody else out; it is just getting amazing.

Anyway, I don't have——

Ms. MOLITORIS. Can I just make one more comment?

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes.

Ms. MOLITORIS. If I may. The State of Ohio is still an agriculture State, and we have many, many rural areas, and we are as responsible for them as we are for the Columbus-Central Ohio area that is growing. So our answers have to be for all the people.

Mr. DUNCAN. I have a couple questions for Mr. Wiley and Mr. Kirby, but I have gone way over my time, so I will just stop now and come back later.

Mr. DEFAZIO. We will certainly give you an opportunity in the next round.

We would go in the order in which people appeared on our side, so Mrs. Napolitano would be next.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate your holding this hearing because my area is a metropolitan area, the San Angeles County, southern California; it is one of the most congested, one of the most under-funded in terms of upgrade of transportation systems. And while I have heard a great deal of information from you and I agree with most of you, tolling won't work in

my area, I am sorry. People are used to driving cars. We have a love affair with cars. We need to get those individuals off the cars or provide some mobility, because we have one of the largest parking lots in the sky, and that is Highway 5, Santa Ana Freeway.

What I think I am hearing from you, especially Ms. Molitoris, is the excitement to see something evolve in this next TEA-LU and be able to put all the heads together, have interagency cooperation to cut the red tape. If we can do it in New York, we should be able to do it in every other State. But it is up to the agency. If the agencies were businesses, how would you want them to function? That is a question I have for you. Because, in the end, we can put all kinds of money into all these different programs, and even if we put new programs together, are we getting the others enough funding to be able to operate properly, to be able to help and prioritize, to be able to look at the growth States and still help the rural areas? All of those are questions that are in my mind.

Over 40 to 50 percent of the Nation's goods travel through my whole district. I have 34 grade separations that are not being funded; 20 may be funded. That is going to cause a lot of grief in my communities not only for public safety, but pollution; and that is coming to the rest of the Country coming through my area. I have a great concern.

But until we sit and be able to actually work together and be able to figure out—because it has to come from you and others like you, to tell us where the administration, where the agencies, DOT, all those silos that you mentioned, work together to be able to come up with a faster way of approving your projects and not second-guess what you, the ones that are at the bottom line, know needs to happen.

Again, if you had a crystal ball, what would you have this next TEA-LU accomplish?

Mr. PUENTES. Thank you. I think that if it was run like a business, clearly, we would have a business plan. There should be a purpose for the National Surface Transportation Program, and I think that it is arguable that there isn't a clear purpose or vision for the program today. The program seems to be strangely adrift and out of touch with the needs of this Nation; not just Metro areas, but rural areas in general. The conversation around the transportation program, though, revolves almost exclusively around funding; the questions we have had addressed here today have been around funding. And I am not naive enough to think funding doesn't matter, but, again, back to your question, if it was a business, the last thing you would do to a business that was failing would be to keep pumping more funds into it. You would need to restructure, you would need to reassess, and you would need to find a new purpose for that business, and I think that analogy works very well for the program today.

Mr. YARO. I think your point about the critical role that Los Angeles and perhaps a dozen other global gateways across the Country play in the national economy, national mobility systems needs to be reflected in the next transportation act. It is very clear that if the Port of Los Angeles and the connections through your district aren't working, it is going to take a bite out of the national economy, a bite out of the national logistic system, and we can't allow

that to happen; it will have repercussions through the entire Country.

Now, I will add that the Port of New York and the concentration of seaports and airports around New York, the international gateways north of Seattle and the airports and seaports in Seattle and Tacoma and so forth, there are about a dozen of these places that are competing globally that are the key to the national transportation system. And this is a place going back to what Mr. Duncan asked earlier, about whether there needs to be a national framework or not. I believe that there does need to be a national framework, a prioritization of projects that really represent the keys to the whole national transportation system in which there needs to be a national plan, a business plan or a national plan and a prioritization of those investments.

Then we need to push responsibility down to the regions to manage those projects. The second-guessing that goes on on the part of the Federal agencies of what ought to be the prerogatives of the authorities that build and operate these facilities, that is what we have to cut out.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. I am running out of time, sir, so do you mind, Mr. Sims? Thank you very much. I agree with you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentlelady, as usual, for her astute questions and her experience.

I would turn now to the former Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Young, to see if he has questions.

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the mentions of TEA-LU. We tried in that bill to get some things done we were unable to do. One was projects of national significance, and that was a major project of the congested areas, because I believe this year we will spend $100 billion or more in congestion. It was $78 billion in 2005.

That is a terrible waste, and we do have to address this issue and I do agree with the idea of having a model on how we address this issue because we have so many different people playing in this game. We have troubles within the State, Mr. Chairman, with the State Department of Transportation second-guessing communities, which bothers me a great deal because it is in the capital and they do have the purse strings within the State even though the dollars we get, we earmark dollars and I am proud of that, but they sometimes run the earmarks if we don't solve this problem.

And you may think what has Alaska got to do with this. Well, even in my State, the least populated State in the union, we have tremendous congestion problems in Anchorage right now—huge—and it is going to get worse, and we have to do something about that. It is going up to 166 percent in 10 years and we recognize that within the community. We are trying to address it. We have some—you have heard about the bridges to nowhere. That was really a relieving a congestion problem. And I think each community should address that, bring this to the Congress and see if we can't address the major bottlenecks in this great Nation of ours and solve these problems.

I just have one question. We are facing a different era of time. In your thinking, have you put into this equation the change in the way we are going to move in the next 10 years? Because I believe

that is going to change. We will still have some of the things we have now, including these big mammoth cars, but has anyone thought about parking lots and highways and right-of-ways, et cetera, with a smaller vehicle, possibly, maybe running on different forms of fuel? Anybody crank that into your equations? Anybody want to address that? Mr. Sims, you are from Seattle; you ought to know.

Mr. SIMS. Congressman Young, yes, we have. We actually went to 2050 and have gone backwards. So instead of planning forward, we decided to say here is the world in 2050, and you are going to have different options, so you are going to have to have—you are going to have alternative fuel vehicles, you are going to have electric vehicles.

So you are still going to have people in cars in many respects. You are going to have to have your light rail systems, very efficient bus rapid transit systems; you are going to have to have even more buses; you are going to have to have transit-oriented development. You are going to have ability to move freight, because that is still going to be the way that we see the benefits of commerce, and you are going to have to have very, very efficient movement of freight systems particularly when they are tied to ports.

So we think you are going to see changes more in the technology side, but not on the basic movement of people. You will see more dense areas because that will be very, very efficient.

The one thing that I have really got to say is that, at the local level, we don't sense that people—let me back up a little bit. The Federal agencies, I don't think, share our urgency at wishing to have mobility. My wife grew up in the Philippines, and I went to visit where she grew up, and I always say that the Philippine economy is burning up on its roadways. Our economy is beginning to burn up on our roadways and the kind of need to really declare an emergency so that the metropolitan areas can have their mobility, can move the commerce, I just think it is——

Mr. YOUNG. I appreciate your saying that, but I have to tell you that is because, very frankly, the bottleneck areas have not made their voices heard. And if you do that—I am going to be a little political here, Mr. Chairman. I haven't heard any of the presidential candidates talk about transportation congestion; solving the problem. Talk about energy, they are wasting the biggest part of this energy right now sitting still. I have been saying this for 10 years. And it is time that you start telling the public this is what has to be done and we should do it, and we will respond. But until that happens, we are going to sit here and twiddle our thumbs. This is the closest thing we have come to solving this problem today with this hearing, because no one is paying attention. You are because it affects you. But we ought to make this the number one issue. This and energy in this Country should be the number one issues because the two are tied together. Our economy is based on the ability to move product and move goods to and from, and we can't do that when we are congested. So I compliment all of you for bringing this to the forefront. If we can get something out of this Committee, if any one thing, let's make this the number one issue, solving this congestion problem for the good of the Country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the former Chairman for his remarks. I too am disappointed at the lack of robust discussion by the presidential candidates, and hopefully we can engender some of that as we move toward the fall. Certainly we congratulate the gentleman for his past efforts to shine a light on this and enhance the funding, which, of course, although we approached that on a bipartisan basis, was shot down by the current Administration.

With that, we will turn next to Ms. Matsui.

Ms. MATSUI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much for holding this hearing today.

First of all, I would like to welcome Mike Wiley to our panel today. Mike has just recently been promoted to be our General Manager at Regional Transit. The interesting thing about Mike is he is homegrown and he has been in Regional Transit for 30 years, so he has seen all the challenges along the way and now has a chance to really look ahead to really kind of implement his vision.

We are expanding and Sacramento is sort of a test case of what we are trying to do here, I hope, in the rest of the Country with a lot of light rail. We saw this 20, 30 years ago. We have a golden opportunity to do things right and I am looking forward to working with the Committee to ensure that we truly capture the benefits of transit.

To that end, Mike, in your 30 years at Regional Transit, in your opinion, have you seen a change in the perception of transit from the MPO and DOT perspective? Also, how does the recent Sacramento Area Council of Governments' recently approved MTP, the new transit plan for 2035, play into that perception?

Mr. WILEY. Well, thank you very much, Congresswoman Matsui, for your kind remarks. There has been a tremendous change in how we collectively view transit within our State DOT, within our local MPO, and within our region. I talk to people often, individual citizens throughout Sacramento, and the number one complaint or criticism that I receive about public transit is when are you going to build a light rail system, a light rail line to my area? When are you going to get that line to the airport? When are you going to get south? It is not a criticism of how we operate or what we do, it's would you hurry up and get it done sooner.

We have recently adopted a new MTP that is a visionary document that is tied to our Blueprint land-use vision. Every jurisdiction in our region is going through a process of updating their local general plans to reflect this new 50-year land-use vision for development, and we are really talking about massive change in how we grow and develop. We are looking at growing and developing in a smart manner, not in a leapfrog typical pattern that we are used to. We found that, in all the analysis we have done, this new higher density, smart growth development tied to extensive expansion of public transit reduces total trips per household, it cuts it in half. People will walk more, they will bike more, they will use public transit. They reduce their dependency on the automobile tremendously. You talk about reducing congestion. That is a tremendous way to reduce congestion. We don't have to build these massive freeways if we look at how we develop and grow.

And that is what we are doing locally in Sacramento, we are matching our updated transit master plan with the MTP and this

new land-use vision for the greater Sacramento area. And it is not just within Sacramento County; it is throughout the region.

Ms. MATSUI. And I understand it is a six-county region, too, so it is a whole region that we are talking about. I know that you have also had some success in providing transit options for students as a way of getting more people involved. Can you expand on the partnership between transit and higher education in Sacramento?

Mr. WILEY. Certainly. We have a tremendous relationship with our local community college system, Los Rios Community College district, as well as the State university; we have a campus in Sacramento called California State University-Sacramento. Both of those institutions' student bodies have assessed themselves, they voted to tax themselves, if you will, through their student body registration fees to provide access universally to all students that are registered students to our entire system. They pay through their registration fees an increased fee to provide access to 100 percent of the student bodies. So they have unlimited use of our system, both bus and rail, throughout our service area. Most recently, Los Rios Community College students actually passed a 10-year measure that keeps that provision in place for the next 10 years. Consequently, Los Rios Community College has updated their master plan such that all future campuses will be built at existing or future planned light rail stations.

Ms. MATSUI. Thank you very much.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentlelady.

Mrs. Schmidt?

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

And thank you, panel, for coming. I am going to direct my question to Ms. Molitoris, not only because she comes from the great State of Ohio, but because she hit on something that I have a direct experience with.

In your testimony—and I read it—you talked about the fact that we micro manage up here and sometimes drive up costs. When you have your panel back home, I would suggest that you look at the Fog Road issue in Pike County as a direct example of Federal overreach. My predecessor, Rob Portman, got the money for the Fog Road expansion, but it was tied up. By the time I got here, it was tied up with a Federal bureaucracy that would have made the cost twice what the original estimate was. What we did, working through the Ohio Department of Transportation and the county engineer in the respective counties, was to get that money into the hands of the State of Ohio, and the project manager assured us, because it was local, that it would be done on time and that we would open that on Thanksgiving, and the day after Thanksgiving we ribbon-cut and we drove that road. So it is an excellent example of how we can give you the money and let the State of Ohio, which might be a little bit more efficient because it is more local, handle it in the best and appropriate manner. So I would suggest that you use that as an example with your working group.

Ms. MOLITORIS. Thank you, Congresswoman Schmidt. I appreciate it. I don't know about it, but I certainly will learn about it.

But I think that there is another point to weave into this. When you read the policy commission report, for example, and you think about how do we get from where we are to where we want to be—and I don't know if 108 to 110 is the right number for the kind of programmatic organizational structure we would have, but there is an issue of culture.

It has been since Eisenhower that all of these things have developed, and I think the fine people who work at the Department of Transportation here in Washington, at the State levels, they can learn a new way, but we have to give them the opportunity to learn from the best. So I think it needs to be a part of the answer.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. I couldn't agree with you more, and I wish you well on your working group.

Ms. MOLITORIS. Thank you so much.

Mr. DEFAZIO. We will now go to Ms. Richardson.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to thank the Chairman and also Mr. Duncan for conducting this hearing. I, like my friend here from Southern California, Representative Grace Napolitano, can attest to the fact that there is no greater concern that we have from an infrastructure perspective than the congestion and the traffic delays that we experience in Los Angeles County. As stated earlier, the Texas A&M study concluded that Los Angeles, in fact, has the Nation's longest delays for commuters, with an average of 56 hours a year on the highway. So that is the framework of my questions that I have for you.

Number one, Mr. Sims, would you mind providing this Committee a copy of that study that you did? I thought you called it Race Inequity or something like that. If you could provide this Committee a copy.

And I would like to build upon the comments of what our Chairman said, as well as Ms. Napolitano, regarding your variable tolling idea. In your statement you say that it would be less burdensome to low-income residents, and that is on page 6 of 7 of your comments. I would like to also further drive home the point of I really don't understand the connection, and let me tell you why. In my district, I would say that lower income constituents have to typically drive more and drive a further distance, as well as more often, several times in a day. A lower income constituent in my area might be a gardener, might be a plumber, might be someone who has several accounts of where they are going to, versus someone who is driving from their home to downtown Los Angeles; and I think a lower income individual has less flexibility in terms of the hours that they work.

So when you talk about variable pricing, it might be one thing to say, oh, give us options, but usually a person of a lower income doesn't have the type of job where they can go in and tell their supervisor, okay, I want to work from 10 to 6 instead of 9 to 5. Usually, that person is lucky to have a job, period, let alone to determine some sort of flexibility in hours that they might greater take advantage of your presentation of variable tolling. So I just wanted to hear more from you of why you really think that this is beneficial to lower income constituents.

And I would further say an example in Los Angeles that we had in California, if someone purchased a Prius, a hybrid Toyota vehi-

cle, or any—I think it was-hybrid and had the decals on their car, they could then, even if they were a single driver, due to the less emissions that they were doing, could go through the car pool lanes. Well, I can tell you there were not low-income individuals who were buying Priuses and Toyota Camrys, et cetera, because those cars cost more on the front end. So things where your analogy is saying would be beneficial for lower income constituents, what I have heard from my colleagues is completely the opposite. So I wanted to push a little further to get your thoughts on that point.

Mr. SIMS. Congresswoman, I will get that report to you on race and poverty in King County, which was a very sobering report for us. But what we found is that variable tolling actually reduces what we call traffic volume normally about 15 to 20 percent, and the reason why that was so critical for us, because time was very, very important in the lives of low-income people. So if you look at the existing system we have today, you basically tell poor people that you have a limited job range. Variable tolling, because it increases the efficiency of a roadway and reduces traffic, actually extends that job range. So in our county, for instance, if you are low-income or poor, your access to the higher paying opportunities or more moderate paying opportunities on the east side of our county are far more limited, so our issue is are we going to continue to have a system that right now confines mobility and limits the ability of low-income people to access to jobs, or are we going to actually strike out and change that; and we believe that variable tolling, because it creates efficiencies on the roadways and reduces traffic volume and, therefore, increases speed, provides an opportunity for people to access jobs that are right now denied them.

If you look at the sub-prime failures that have occurred, you find a lot of low-income people moving to the edge cities because they were assuming that moving out to the edge they would have greater access to those jobs that previously had been foreclosed to them by the existing system of transportation in this Country.

We had a program where we had a call center on the east side; it paid very, very well. We were bussing people there out of a very poor area through our Metro transit system. The program worked for 60 days because we couldn't deal with one issue: the traffic volume was so significant that we couldn't get people back to child care by 6:00, which was key, and their employer was not providing it. So, to us, variable tolling lessens traffic and, therefore, extends the reach of employment opportunities and housing opportunities that are right now foreclosed to poor people.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay.

Mr. Chairman, my time has now expired. I would just suggest that we get a very balanced, at some point, have a discussion about this whole congestion pricing idea.

I hear what you are saying, sir, but on the flip side what I would say is even if the congestion on the highway is then thereby reduced because other people are taking advantage of this variable tolling, that lower income person then still has to pay that higher rate to travel on that particular highway, and that is the point of question that we have here. And that is our concern, is ensuring that everyone has the ability to, in an equitable fashion, travel.

And if a person has to pay more, then that is where the issue of constituents' access really comes in. But I look forward to further discussions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I think the gentlelady's questions are very thoughtful, very well put, and I share a number of concerns she has raised. I am intrigued by Mr. Sims' response in the Seattle case. But this certainly does merit more scrutiny. The Administration has been very cavalier about this and we did, prior to your election, delve into this issue a bit, but I believe it warrants more focus and discussion and understanding for the full implications, so I thank you for that particular line of questioning.

We will now go to Mr. Baird.

Mr. BAIRD. I thank the Chair.

I want to particularly welcome County Executive Sims, who is not only a leader on transportation issues, but health care as well. It is good to see you again, Ron. In your testimony, Mr. Sims, you raise the issue of a holistic approach, and others have talked about this. And you alluded in one of your comments to a sense that the Federal Government doesn't have the sense of urgency about the congestion problem. I have that sense of urgency, but I will tell you that, as a lawmaker, the experience tends to be this: counties, municipalities expand either in their industry or residential zones, and then come to us post-hoc and say can you give us money to relieve the congestion that our development has created; that there is not in fact a holistic effort in general where people say, look, if this many people are going to move here, we are going to need X amount of dollars to transport them and they will end up flowing into the broader down-river transportation streams.

So I would ask all the panelists, how do we get there? I have tried unsuccessfully to initiate this in my county and it was one of these games where everybody was pointing fingers and saying, well, so and so is taking care of it, so and so is taking care of it, et cetera But I will tell you, at a time when we are being beaten up for earmarks on the one hand and asked for earmarks at every turn on the other hand—and the earmarks are usually behind the wave, not in front of the wave—I would welcome any thoughts about how we can do that and how that can be incorporated in our next transportation bill.

And I will start with Executive Sims, but after that I would welcome any other comments.

Mr. SIMS. If I had my dreams, I would—the Federal Government has a series of siloed pots of money, and it would be so nice for that money to be given without all those silos, more in terms of a block grant, allowing the region to figure out how it wishes to distribute and how to invest, and in what order to do that. Right now, sometimes we believe that even within those silos, they don't talk to each other, so we wish that they did.

But our experience has been that technology money stays on this side and they have their formulas, and then you have the roads money, then you have your various pots of transit money. I would just love to see it given in one single block grant, without all of the strings, without all of the conditions, allowing us to say these are the investments we are going to make for our mobility.

Mr. BAIRD. There is merit to that, but how would that address the other issue I talked about, in terms of sprawl and management? Mr. Yaro?

Mr. YARO. Well, here is a choice. In much the same way that the Congress created a modest incentive for States to adopt a national drinking age or a national seatbelt law, why not say that 1 percent, or something like that, of Federal transportation dollars will be added or withheld from regions that—let's say added for regions that have coordinated land-use and development strategies on the one hand and transportation strategies on the other? And we know from the experience with seatbelt laws and the national drinking age that a very modest incentive could in fact achieve that desired result.

Mr. BAIRD. Or perhaps grant the flexibility that Mr. Sims has alluded to as the reward for this for. In other words, maybe not adding extra money, but saying we will give you more flexibility if you incorporate this.

Mr. YARO. That would work as well.

Mr. WILEY. Mr. Baird, let me give you a specific example that we have implemented in Sacramento. In 2004, we renewed our local sales tax for transportation improvements. However, tied to that is a requirement that all jurisdictions, in order to participate in receipt of those funds, must have a specific developer fee in place to help fund those improvements as well. If they don't have the developer fee in place that help mitigate the impacts that they are creating to the system, they don't get access to that local sales tax at all. So there is a tremendous incentive for the jurisdictions and every jurisdiction is stepping up to the plate to renew their developer fees specifically for those transportation improvements.

Mr. BAIRD. How did you pull that off? Because any mention of development fees back home raises an enormous firestorm politically.

Mr. WILEY. Well, I guess locally we know that, as you indicated, growth and new development has a tremendous impact on the existing system, and that we need to make improvements to the existing system not just to extend to those areas that might be in new growth areas, but also to make improvements to the existing system to expand the existing system to handle that additional growth. So it is something that we have built up over the years in terms of increasing the knowledge and awareness of the impacts that that development has. So we have as a requirement that they must in fact have developer fees in place, so they are paying their fair share. They are not paying 100 percent of the cost of the improvements, but they are paying their fair share because we know that existing development and existing users take advantage of that enhanced system as well.

Mr. SIMS. If I may, Congressman Baird, talk about what Mr. Yaro was talking about. In King County, we have actually combined our transportation system as a part of our comprehensive strategies on land use, on health, on carbon reductions. So you end up having to constrain your growth. So you are going to have people move, but our idea is to reduce sprawl.

I was asked to speak to the CDC in Atlanta, Georgia two weeks ago, and I pointed out to them the greatest threat to public health

care in the United States today is sprawl and our transportation systems, so what we try to do is calibrate them based upon public health issues as well as carbon reduction issues.

Mr. BAIRD. Thank you.

Mr. Kirby?

Mr. KIRBY. In the Washington region we have already a very extensive Metrorail system, the best in the Country, I would say, a very extensive commuter rail system. One of our main priorities of the MPO process is to encourage the right kind of development around the stations in that system, and we have a planning incentive program, Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC), where we provide technical assistance to support local planners in getting the right kind of development. You don't want a Home Depot next to a big Metrorail station, and a lot of the action is really working at the local level, local planners and landowners and so forth. And if we could follow up that planning assistance with some funding for projects, which sometimes are not that expensive—street lighting, sidewalk support and so forth—we could incentivize those kinds of projects. We are looking out to 2030 and we see a lot of our rail stations with relatively little development forecast around them, rail stations that are there now. So that is really a major priority for us.

Mr. BAIRD. Thank you.

Mr. PUENTES. Thank you, Mr. Baird. I am pleased to go last.

Mr. BAIRD. Very briefly, yes. Go ahead.

Mr. PUENTES. Just to reinforce the point that what you have heard here are excellent examples of the innovation that is happening in metropolitan areas all across the Country. As we move to authorization to the next bill, we need to recognize that there are places where the Federal Government should lead some of these broad, national goals and there are a lot of places, where you just heard, where we should get out of the way, quite frankly, and let these metropolitan areas innovate and provide some kind of grants incentives so they can do these right things—break down the modal silos, break down the funding silos that prevent these things from happening—but allow a lot of these innovations you have heard here to flourish. There is so much going on across the Country to deal with some of these questions that we should let metropolitan areas do them.

Mr. BAIRD. I thank the Chair for any indulgence.

I thank the witnesses.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Boozman?

Mr. BOOZMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just very briefly.

I think you, Mr. Sims, were you the one that was talking about the tolling? Okay. When you did the tolling, was that based on new roads or tolling old roads, or both? New construction versus putting tolls on roads that were already there? Did you break that down?

Mr. SIMS. Congressman Boozman, it was the replacement of a major bridge, the I-520 bridge, so it was tolling on an existing bridge now for purposes of being able to generate the capacity to replace it in the future, along with the use of gas tax. It also was a public transportation enhancement as well.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I would be surprised. I really shared the same apprehension that Mr. Duncan had, as far as Arkansas doesn't do

tolling now, and we are looking at possibly tolling perhaps the first area in the State. But I would think that—again, I am a person that feels like giving you all the ability to toll new roads is a good thing. I have a lot of concern about tolling roads that are already in use.

Mr. Puentes, you mentioned about a strategic transportation plan. How would you prioritize projects? Somebody mentioned outcome-based things. Do you have any other ideas as to how you prioritize what projects the Federal Government should be involved in?

Mr. PUENTES. Thank you. I think that there should be some prioritization based spatially. We know that these metropolitan areas, metropolitan engines really are the driver force to the Nation's economic, environmental, and social health today, and we have ignored them for too long. So I think there needs to be some kind of reorientation that recognizes how profound these places are for the national economy. So it matters that the Port of LA-Long Beach, it matters to Arkansas that these places are functioning. It matters to the Nation broadly that some of these gateways and hubs are functioning. So I think there needs to be a very frank, rigorous, and clear debate about which places matter disproportionately, quite frankly, to the American economy. We should invest in those places.

When it comes to projects, I think that it is the way that you phrased the question. It is not about the projects themselves, but about the outcomes, and what kind of performance we want and what we want the system to look like. So backing into it from a project focus or framework I think is the wrong approach. I think we need to figure out what we want the system to do and then figure out which projects are going to get us there. This is the whole idea about being modally agnostic and just choosing the right mix of projects and modes that will get us to these certain objectives.

At this point, I am not agnostic, but what those outcomes are, but I would like to see that debate happen here in these halls, in the leadership of this Committee, about what the national priorities should be and how we structure the program to get to those priorities.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Very good. I agree.

I think most of the people on the Committee on Transportation push hard to get as much funding as we can in the system, and I think that most Members of Congress are very friendly towards transportation spending on our infrastructure. The reality is, though, hopefully we can get some more money, but I was visiting with Dan Flowers, our head of transportation in Arkansas, and he was saying that in the last 15 years he has lost 65 percent of his purchasing power. So even if we get significant funding back into the stream, it is going to be difficult just to keep up. So I would really encourage you all—and you have given us some good ideas today, and I hope you will continue to do that, because the funding issue, regardless of our commitment, is just a major problem. So, again, I appreciate your testimony, it was very helpful. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Arcuri.

Mr. ARCURI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for conducting this hearing, and thank you to the panelists for being here.

I have a concern that I would like to bring up, and I hear it sometimes throughout my district, which is rural, and I would call it—I am not sure if it is an urban legend. I don't want to call it an urban legend; I will call it a rural legend because it is really out in the rural areas more than anything else—and that is this: that as the tolls on the New York State thruway continue to rise, that more and more truckers and more and more drivers use local roads, and as they use local roads they put more and more stress on the local roads. And my concern is that as we raise tolls and as we have this congestion pricing, are we then going to have—is this going to be counterproductive, because are we going to have really just people using local roads and abusing roads that aren't intended for the kind of traffic that will result in it? I just would like your thoughts on that. Yes, sir.

Mr. KIRBY. We just completed a study looking at impacts around the Washington region and potential tolling, and one of the major lessons was that this is very location-specific, the impacts, and you have to look at not only the people that are going to be affected by the tolls, but the ones you mentioned that will be affected by diverted traffic. And rather than focus on the efficiency arguments, we looked at a report which I would commend to everyone interested in congestion pricing. It was written in 1964. It is called The Theory of Congestion Pricing: The Tolled, The Untolled, and the Tolled-Off.

And the entire article is devoted to tracking through the distributional effects of tolling projects, and it deals with spillover traffic on other roadways and it deals with alternatives to those that are affected, and it is a lot more complicated, cost-benefit analysis than is often presented when you really dig into it. And their conclusion is these sorts of projects have to be looked at in the context of the community fabric, the local conditions, all of those things. This is not a kind of a theoretical silver bullet that you can apply everywhere.

And we don't have any examples in the United States right now of putting a toll on an existing roadway, and there is a good reason for that: it is pretty hard to do. Very few places around the world have done it just because of these reasons; the impacts are so complex that it is very hard to go around and compensate all the losers, potential losers. Very difficult to do.

Mr. ARCURI. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman.

And that is an interesting study that we will have to—I am not familiar with that—follow up on.

Mr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, members of the panel. I apologize for not being here for all of your testimony, but this is a major concern of mine and I am grateful for our Chairman Oberstar for creating a real vision for the new authorization of some $500 billion, and I think that probably might not adequately meet all the needs, but it certainly will address more of the concerns than we have had in any other authorization bill.

My question is—or my general observation is, and I will just open it up to all the members of the panel for whatever conversation you might have—not since 1954 have we had a vision for expanding the interstate system. Since then, there has been a great population shift from the northeast to the south and to the coast. It seems everybody wants to live within 50 miles of the ocean, or at least come visit, which puts a tremendous burden on the infrastructure of those regions. With that said, do you agree with me we should take a new look at our interstate system? I believe we should create new corridors to address this new shift of population and find funding to make it happen.

Mr. PUENTES. Thank you, Mr. Brown. I think that one of the prime purposes of the Federal program in its next iteration should be the preservation and the maintenance of this tremendous asset that we have built. That was the result, frankly, as we pointed out, of general consensus 50 years ago. We had a vision, we had a purpose. The interstates were not particularly controversial, as I understand. We went out, we have done it, we built it, and we have what we have today. I think that whatever the iteration is of the next bill, the next law, preservation and maintenance of the existing system should be a fundamental role for the Federal Government. So there are certain areas where only the Federal Government should lead, and that is one area in particular.

I think that your point is well taken, that this Country is going to grow by 120 million people very quickly. I don't think that this Nation is equipped to handle the next 20 million, no less 120 million. So understanding where those growth patterns are occurring—and we know the south and the southwest in particular are places where we are going to need to accommodate a lot of growth in this Country and other places, quite frankly, are not. So how the interstate system plays out in that larger growth scheme is something we need to have a very frank and rigorous discussion about.

Mr. YARO. I would just add that I think we are going to need new capacity in all of these systems. We will need new capacity on the interstate system. But one of the things we have learned, I think, in a number of places is that we can't simply add capacity and build our way out of this problem. My favorite example is the Katy Freeway. What are we up to, 16 lanes on the Katy Freeway? And it is still tied up in knots. So, in fact, we are going to have some more creative solutions. It is going to have to be a mix of modes.

And I think the point you are hearing from everybody today is that within the metropolitan regions it is not Federal bureaucrats who are going to make those decisions, it needs to be people who are on the ground, in fact, who can coordinate the land-use and development patterns and the transportation investment so that we really do give people choice and we really do create the capacity that is needed in all of these systems.

Mr. BROWN. And that is exactly my sentiment. I think that we just can't continue to keep adding lanes; I think we have to find alternative routes and even alternative means of transportation, to be quite honest. Thank you.

I still have another minute. Anybody else have any other comments? Okay.

Mr. YARO. I have one last thought, and that is that in New York we have added a million residents in New York over the last 20 years. We are expecting another million over the next 20 years. We looked at alternatives of getting people in and around the city and from the north we looked at two alternatives, and one of them was a transit alternative: 2nd Avenue subway that will carry over a million passengers a day when it is completed; now under construction.

The alternative was 26 new lanes of limited access highway. And I think everybody looked at that and said we are probably not going to squeeze 26 new lanes into the lovely island of Manhattan. So transit can provide that capacity and, again, there are plenty of places where there needs to be new roadway capacity as well.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I think Mr. Kirby had also a comment.

Mr. KIRBY. If I could make one brief comment. In the Washington region, must of the congestion on the interstate highway system is due to local development and local traffic. The Capital Beltway in Northern Virginia, Tysons Corner area is a very good example, and I remember vividly at one meeting a local planner saying the problem with the Capital Beltway is there is too much interstate traffic on it, and I think that is a part of the issue. And you cannot address the interstate congestion problem in metropolitan areas without dealing with the land development problem, and there is a tension there between local decision-making in State and Federal decision-making, which really has to be addressed.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you.

I turn now to the Chairman of the Full Committee, Mr. Oberstar.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And, Mr. Duncan, thank you for your steadfast participation in these hearings. And for our colleagues, both sides of the aisle, we have had very thoughtful observations today. Mr. Boozman, I appreciated your observations. Mr. Brown, I concur with your thoughts about new thinking, new development, new ideas. That is the purpose of these hearings, all through last year and all through the balance of this year, as the Subcommittee reviews existing law, SAFETEA-LU, and reviews the implications of and the recommendations of the National Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission.

We have a very distinguished panel here today. I particularly welcome Ms. Molitoris, whom I knew when she was the head of the Federal Railroad Administration and imposed a culture of safety on Federal Railroad Administration and the railroads, a culture that we are now trying to inculcate into the FAA.

And the subject of today's hearing brings together these distinguished panelists on the challenges of transportation in metropolitan areas. The Commission's report set forth some facts that we know, but just restating it was important: that 60 percent of the value of all goods and services in the United States are generated in urban areas; 85 percent of the Nation's market share of critical transportation infrastructure exists in Metro areas; and it is these metropolitan areas that face the most complex and vexing transportation challenges—aging infrastructure, the need for investment to update and upgrade our portfolio of facilities built decades and decades ago, more congestion, environmental compliance require-

ments, air quality needs, planning for transportation projects in a coordinated way.

And as was just said, the diverse needs, and even into signage. Do you put the signs up to accommodate the long distance travelers using the interstate system to get through your local area, to his or her ultimate destination, or do you sign for local residents who really know where they are going but they need just a little better signage? Those are big challenges.

And we haven't talked much, although I have been in and out of the hearing today, but I read the testimony ahead of time, about land-use planning and housing needs and economic development initiatives that have to be a part of the overall transportation plans.

Now, Mr. Sims I have known as Executive of King County and the work that he has done there, he pays attention. Each of you has had to deal with these issues in varying degrees. That is where we have to go in this next transportation legislation.

Now, I want to make some observations and read from a very intriguing text: "For more than half a century, the context in which public transportation operated was increasing suburbanization called sprawl, driven in part by government policies and in part by human desire for space, privacy, safety, and more and more people moved out of cities and towns into suburbs. There they lived in single-family homes on lots large enough for the children to play on. Low-density population. They shopped in centers miles from their homes; schools well beyond walking distance. They worked even further away. And most Americans live that way today.

As conservatives, we do not join the left in condemning suburbs. We understand why people want to live in them; they are good places to have children, raise a family. Most American families will want to continue to live in suburbs. But over the past decades, two important counter-trends have developed, trends that provide a new context for bringing back streetcars.

Quoting the mayor of Milwaukee, John Norquist, said, for years I advocated in my community a light rail project and people said, no way, what do we want to do with that. But then when I said let's bring back the streetcar, everybody said, I am all for streetcars. Change the wording, change the name, change the image and you change people's attitudes.

The most important development and trend of current times—in this report that I am reading from—is the recovery and restoration of city centers. Why? Because even when people live in suburbs, they want a physical center to their lives that offers more than a shopping center can. That is what metropolitan areas offer. Those are the opportunities."

This document I am reading from is entitled A Conservative Vision of Tomorrow's Urban Transportation by Paul Weyrich of the Free Congress Foundation. A new urban view, a refreshing look at America's past that we need to bring back to America's present and future.

So, as we go through this hearing and to the thoughts that each of you has presented, that our Committee Members have reflected on, we have to look at these alternative transportation initiatives in addition to roadways as, as Mr. Brown said just a moment ago

and as was cited from the witness table, are you going to build 12 lanes of freeway or one lane of rail?

Just a week or so ago I was in Hawaii for a conference on China, but took the opportunity to visit with the mayor of Honolulu and our Committee colleague, Ms. Hirono, on Honolulu's light rail—it is called a streetcar—project. Forty-two miles in an area that is growing at—well, expects to add 50 percent more population than they have today. They have a narrow corridor. They have mountain on one side and ocean on the other, and nowhere to go. You can't add more lane miles. Trip times have increased 20 to 30 minutes in the last 10 years. They have the highest parking fees of any metropolitan area in the Country. That is pretty hard to do when Minneapolis-St. Paul has probably the first or second highest. People in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metro area are spending $2 billion a year just to park their cars. Why not keep the car out of the center city and use the light rail? Well, they finally have a light rail, 20 years later than they should have.

But here is Honolulu planning a 20-foot elevated light rail that will avoid grade crossings, that will accelerate movement of people throughout this whole urban corridor. They can't build more lane miles of roadway, as the panel has suggested. They have taken upon themselves the initiative to tax themselves, provide a dedicated revenue stream out into the future for building the facility and assuring its operating costs, and what they need is the partnership with the Federal Government.

What has to happen in metropolitan areas is increased intergovernmental relationship—city, counties, State government, Federal Government—all working together and then developing your plan, your vision for integrated transportation systems that must include light rail, streetcars, commuter rail, whatever you want to call it, in order to move the greatest number of people most efficiently, the least impact on quality of life and, in fact, benefitting air quality.

I think the vision set forth in the Bring Back the Streetcars document from the Free Congress Foundation is an instructive road map for the future and an incentive for us to move vigorously ahead.

The challenge that I think we face is what should be the degree of pass-through of Federal funds to metropolitan planning organizations and what should be the degree of dependence upon the State to use the funds and allocate, and what are the conditions precedent to a pass-through. You are all practitioners of the art. I want your thoughts about this.

Mr. Sims, I am going to start with you, since everyone else is reluctant. They are all sitting back praying. Come on.

Mr. SIMS. For metropolitan areas, if we are going to look at a fully integrated transportation system, the MPOs and our interface with the State would be important. For instance, Puget Sound differs from Spokane, where I grew up, which is a smaller community, or differs from Clark County. So the ability to have an integrated approach that is locally bought off and implemented, free of the Federal silos, would be very, very good for us.

And you can condition that; you can say, these have to reflect reduction of carbon emissions; these have to reflect land-use decisions; they have to reflect health decisions. But it would be nice if

it was, it is not that we are asking the Federal Government to write a check. The Federal Government can set the terms.

But the vision should be something, I believe, that is constructed locally, because it is going to be that local implementation and enthusiasm. We are growth management accounting. Ninety-eight percent of all our growth goes into the cities. But the city of Seattle's central core, the city of Bellevue's central are growing substantially, they are the two fastest-growing areas of the entire county.

So to us, being able to direct density it important, and to be able to have transportation systems that make living in a dense area efficient is critical. But also the ability to achieve our goals of 80 percent reductions and to reduce what we are really worried about now, which is the disparity issues and access to employment issues as well as what we call the significant ramifications on public health. We could marry all of those. But I would love to have our local vision and what we call the good handshake and buy-in from the Federal Government would be great.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Well, and it is good to talk about silos in the Federal Government's transportation structure, but there are State silos as well.

Mr. SIMS. Oh, yes.

Mr. OBERSTAR. There are loads of silos. There are divisions and divisiveness and overlapping jurisdictions and I will just cite from the Twin City metropolitan area. We have the metropolitan council that has a certain role to play. We have the city of Minneapolis, we have the city of St. Paul, we have the State department of transportation. When it came to developing our first, finally, light rail project, Hiawatha, there was big squabbling over who was going to get the funds, who would be the operating agency, who would issue the contracts, who would oversee the contracts.

Do you have those issues resolved in Washington?

Mr. SIMS. No, Congressman. In King County, as a matter of fact, there is an effort right now by a group of people to actually create that governance authority, to finally marry the land use applications along with transportation governance. I think we've been able to work through it, through a series of agreements. And the agreements depend upon personalities. I think as long as we are in a cooperative mode, it works.

But there isn't kind of the structural way of doing it. We have an excellent MPO that has laid out a vision that everybody has agreed to. Our issue now is how to fund that vision and whether they should be the group that receives the money to process it for the rest of the region. This group that has emerged and said, yes, why don't we merge the transportation funding authority with our local MPO and they will direct the funding on a regional basis.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Since the development MPOs over 20 plus years ago, and their growth in skill, in professionalism and staffing and local resources, there has been an increasing demand to have a pass-through of Federal funds, bypass the State department of transportation, send the money directly. But yet we find divergent conditions all across the Country. Now, U.S. Department of Transportation is exploiting those conditions locally and driving a policy

that is at odds with existing law, in fact, on the cost-effectiveness index for transit projects.

Let me ask others to comment. Ms. Molitoris.

Mr. MOLITORIS. Mr. Oberstar, it is very interesting that you raise this point, for two reasons. First of all, in 1910, the State of Ohio had an inter-urban system. It went 90 miles an hour and it went to every town of 5,000 or more. So talk about what is old is new. And the mayor of Columbus just announced a streetcar project to be ready for 2012 bicentennial.

Right here is Chester Jourdan. I mentioned him while you were out of the room, sir. He is the President of our Central Ohio MPO, MORPSI [phonetically]. And one of the things I brought up is, it is incumbent upon us to create the partnerships that work. That is what is occurring. We are going to have our 21st century transportation task force. Chester is a steering committee member. And on his own dime, Chester is creating a State-wide coalition of his peers to help us promote the resolutions and recommendations from that.

To me, that is real partnership and I believe it will succeed every time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Kirby?

Mr. KIRBY. Congressman Oberstar, I think one of things we try to do is to create these coalitions. Because the reality of major projects is that there are a lot of different players who have to be participants. The local governments control the land use decisions. State DOT may control the highway decision. The regional transit agency controls the transit decision. There's also the citizens and interest groups who have an important role to play.

But if the common interest and vision is there, which I think you have heard from a number of panelists today, these visions have been developed at the metropolitan area. You can build these coalitions and agreements. They are very customized, case by case, in each area. But if, as we have in the metropolitan planning program, formula funding with a set of requirements that we accomplish, but not money packaged in all kinds of different pots, we can work through those issues likely. If we had implementation money of that character, where we were given performance standards and goals, then we can work the details locally. And the planning program, we have a lot of flexibility on how to use our money. But we don't have the flexibility to ignore air quality conformity, or congestion or the safety issues that are in the planning regulations. We are monitored by the Federal Government, by our citizens. We have to address them. But the emphasis varies from one area to another. Baltimore is very focused on its port. We don't have a port in the Washington area. So they use their resources differently.

I think it is a very good model that can be built upon.

Mr. YARO. Chairman Oberstar, I would like to first congratulate you on that opening statement. I hope that the final legislation next year reflects that progressive outlook. It is really what we need, I think, as a Nation.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Believe me, it will.

Mr. YARO. We are confident that you will pull it off. The future of the Country, I think, rests in part on our ability to do that.

One of the things that is happening, and I have been teaching regional planning, I have been a regional planner for 40 years now, and I really do believe that regional planning and these metropolitan planning organizations are coming of age across the Country. But there are groups, and not all of them, but a number of them are really achieving a level of maturity, credibility, professionalism and so forth, political support, that I think bears investing in. I think there are ways that the Federal Government can incentivize the strengthening of those committees.

In a former life, I worked with Mike Dukakis in Massachusetts, and we created the Cape Cod Commission. I remember when we started this thing, the chief elected officials for the advisory regional planning agency wouldn't show up at a meeting of the Cape Cod Commission, and you would get all three members of the planning board, lowest form of municipal life. And then Mike Dukakis said, we are going to put some teeth into this thing. And the decisions of the commissioner would be binding on municipalities.

All of a sudden, 15 chief elected officials started showing up at meetings. They started taking this thing seriously. I think some modest incentives from the Federal Government can in fact incentivize that growth, that maturity and so forth.

Then finally, I really do believe that the responsibility for coordinating the land use and development and the transportation investments has to happen at the metropolitan level. I think the kinds of partnerships that have been mentioned here today happen at that level, and they can also coordinate up to State governments where the State DOTs will always have responsibility for managing highway systems and so forth.

So I think there is a way that this Committee, in the next bill, the next piece of legislation, can in fact promote the maturity and the success of these metropolitan planning efforts.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you. Mr. Puentes.

Mr. PUENTES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the risk of being redundant, I would like to thank you both for your leadership and for your comments on the need for a better partnership between the Federal Government, the States and the metropolitan areas. I think a clear articulation of roles that recognizes the primacy of metropolitan areas, but also the differences in this broad Country are critically necessary. I think that would help get us to issues like environmental streamlining, which we talked about, project delivery, all these things would come out of a very clear articulation of what these roles are and a better partnership between the Federal Government, the metros and the States.

And in that regard, I think there are clear areas where the Federal Government should lead, on interstates, intermodal freight, inter-metropolitan area passenger movement. But then there are some ares where we should kind of flip the pyramid and empower States and metropolitan areas to do many more things, that we should take the experiment that began in 1991 and carry it much further. I think that only haltingly recognized the primacy of metros. It dealt them a very weak institutional hand in terms of the institutional MPOs, really didn't empower them to fulfill the vision that was laid out in 1991.

So to your point about pass-throughs, you could call it different things. But I think we do need to increase the amount of money that is sub-allocated to the metropolitan areas and to the MPOs. We need to give them more ability to make decisions based on these issues that are so critical to metropolitan areas.

But it is not just about money for these places. There are certain areas where we need some kind of Federal guidance in terms of pricing, as we have heard here today. We need to level the modal playing field between highways and transit, so they are not operating on an un-level playing field with different requirements, different regulations for one mode and different regulations for another.

Then this whole issue of sustainability grants to enable metropolitan areas to create this visions like we have seen in Washington and Seattle and Sacramento, all down the line here, they are critical areas that metropolitan areas need this kind of Federal support in order to do their own thing and to have these bottom-up visions.

But all that money should be tied to something. There should be a purpose for the Federal program, and we need to optimize the, as it is, almost $300 billion program, and there probably will always be more at some point. So we need to commit to a real evidence-based program that is tied to performance measures and outcome orientation. I think looking at metropolitan areas as the lens to do that will enable us to achieve broad national visions.

Thank you.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Wiley?

Mr. WILEY. Chairman Oberstar, thank you so much for your comments. They were right on target. And I have to share with the remaining Members of the Committee as well as the panel that we take very good care of Mr. Oberstar's son and daughter-in-law and children in Sacramento. They use our system frequently. And we are very pleased to be helping to raise his grandchildren.

[Laughter.]

Mr. OBERSTAR. You are, indeed.

Mr. WILEY. I think we have a model in Sacramento, and I have shared that earlier, that we can demonstrate to the remainder of the Country, frankly, in terms of how we have allocated the decision-making to our local MPO for the allocation of transportation dollars, both Federal flexible transportation dollars as well as State flexible transportation dollars. We have established criteria that are tied to smart planning, blueprint, smart growth principles that in order to receive those transportation dollars, you have to have projects that are completely consistent with that new, emerging vision.

Also in California, we have modified the allocation of State funds, such that the real decision-making for State funding is occurring with the MPO and not at the State level. Our California transportation commission, which is responsible for State-wide transportation planning, must accept entirely our local transportation improvement program or reject it entirely. They cannot pick out or cherry-pick individual projects. They must accept or reject the entire program. Our program must be completely consistent

with our metropolitan transportation plan in order for it to go forward.

So I think what we have done is we have tied all those together, including smart growth land use planning with transit, and prioritized the allocation of those dollars to those projects to support that vision.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Wiley, and thanks to each of the panelists and to our colleagues for their forbearance on going a little longer on this matter.

California is, I think, the only State in its transportation commission that combines housing, land use in the overall agency. And that is a good model for the rest of the Country. Mr. Chairman, I think we are writing right here a chapter for the next transportation bill. And it is one that needs to be refined. This issue of the MPO, the relationship to local, other local government units, to the State department of transportation and the role of both Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, this critical thrust, to shape a grant revision.

As you think through how that should be structured, that relationship should be structured in the next legislation, include also non-motorized transportation. Include also rails to trails and scenic byways, which each of you do in sub-allocations. Make that a major part of your overall thinking. We want to do this right. And I think as Mr. Puentes said, we have gotten away from the I of ISTEA, the intermodalism of ISTEA. That is coming back in the next transportation bill. That is going to be a centerpiece. And under Mr. DeFazio's leadership, the hearings we have been holding, he has been hearing and Mr. Duncan as well, we are shaping the future of transportation.

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Brown?

Mr. BROWN OF SOUTH CAROLINA. I was just going to say, it seems like to me we found that person with a vision. I thank you all for helping me identify him.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I just have one quick last question, we don't need to go through another entire round. Mr. Yaro, you touched in your testimony on the failure of the cordon pricing for New York. I guess my question would be, I am somewhat familiar with the plan they had proposed. And it has tremendous merit, far beyond this particular aspect of it. Is it your understanding, the same as mine, that basically since this Administration really doesn't care about congestion, but what they really care about is pushing a neo-conservative principle, that New York is going to be deprived of any funds because of the failure to adopt the cordon pricing? Is that correct, under this program?

Mr. YARO. That is my understanding, yes. I would say this also, that at least at RPA, we have been at this for about 15 years, promoting a congestion pricing system in New York. We think there is a place for it. It has nothing to do with a neo-con agenda or anything else, it is just that we think we have a problem of congestion, we need to manage it. We have a problem of financing our transit system and expanding it, and there is a connection between the two.

Mr. DEFAZIO. But you have been working on a local solution and not blackmail. What I am pointing to is your plan includes far more than congestion pricing, yes, congestion pricing was in favor of some elements of the plan. But the point is, if they were truly concerned with congestion pricing, I think they would say, oh, gee, well, New York being the largest urban area and most congested, or second most congested, I don't know if you are first or second in terms of congestion.

Mr. YARO. I think our friends from L.A. get the blue ribbon on this one.

Yes, it turned out that it wasn't a sufficiently large incentive to get the legislative action that we were hoping for. We will be back, this is not going away. There will be a renewed attempt to manage congestion in New York and to finance our transit system. I think what everyone does understand and what came out of this debate is just how important those investments are to the future of New York and I would argue to the future of the Country.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you.

I thank all of the participants for your fine testimony. It definitely will help us with building blocks as we move toward reauthorization.

With that, the Committee is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:35 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

HEARING ON "Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas"
Wednesday, April 9, 2008

Statement – Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04)

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio, for holding this hearing to discuss the transportation challenges facing metropolitan areas. I look forward to hearing from our panel today and exploring the role the federal government will play in addressing these challenges.

Currently, almost 60 percent of the U.S. population lives in metropolitan areas with a population of more than one million people and each year more and more people are migrating to metropolitan areas. This influx in population is resulting in more traffic and a greater need for better transportation infrastructure.

The transportation system in my district in western Pennsylvania is in dire need of sustained investment. Many roads are filled with potholes and hundreds of bridges have been identified as structurally deficient. In three counties in my district there are 1,795 state-owned bridges, out of those bridges 577 are structurally deficient. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission estimates that we will need over $30 billion over the next 25 years to properly address our transportation issues.

In 2006, the Department of Transportation conducted a study that found the transportation infrastructure in metropolitan areas to be in poor condition. As the condition of our transportation system deteriorates, people living and traveling to metropolitan areas will continue to pay the price in wasted time and fuel costs. The Texas Transportation Institute found that congestion related travel delays increased to an all-time-high of 4.2 billion hours – resulting in 2.9 billion gallons of fuel used per year. With gas reaching $4.00 a gallon, American's can't afford the delays our transportation system is causing.

Thank you Chairman DeFazio, for holding this hearing, the subject matter is extremely important to me and my constituents.

Statement of Rep. Harry Mitchell
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
Hearing on Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas
4/9/2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As you know, Arizona is now the fastest growing state in the nation. Since 1970, our population has more than tripled.

The Phoenix metropolitan area, long the largest in our state, is now one of the largest in the nation. According to the U.S. census, our metropolitan area is now the 13th largest in the nation, just behind San Francisco and Boston.

Not surprisingly, all this growth has created an urgent need for new transportation infrastructure- not just highways, but public transportation as well.

According to a recent Federal Highway Administration traffic congestion report, the portion of I-10 that runs through the Phoenix metropolitan area has some of the worst bottlenecks in the country.

Congestion caused by construction is further hampering our ability to get around efficiently.

Light rail is expected to begin operating in December of this year. This project is expected to carry 26,000 people daily and 47,000 people by 2020.

Light rail will do a lot to alleviate this congestion, but we must find other alternatives to ensure our roads can meet the needs of our rapidly growing community.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on how we can solve current and future congestion issues.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Harry E. Mitchell

STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE JAMES L OBERSTAR
HEARING ON TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES OF METROPOLITAN AREAS
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
APRIL 9, 2008

- I want to welcome the witnesses and thank you all for being here today. We look forward to hearing from The Brookings Institution and from state and local officials of transportation agencies and planning organization regarding the transportation challenges of our metropolitan areas.

- This hearing is the first in a series of hearings exploring emerging themes in transportation policy and practice, the needs of our national surface transportation system, and the reauthorization of our surface transportation laws.

- The Committee will continue this series by holding hearings in the near future on the issues surrounding freight access and goods movement, infrastructure preservation and modernization, highway safety, mobility and connectivity of rural areas, and other issues.

- I believe that we are now on the cusp of a truly transformational moment in the evolution of our surface transportation program. We face challenges in

determining what the shape of our system should be and how best to finance it.

- While the U.S. transportation network remains the envy of the world, we are losing ground. Without a renewed commitment to providing the vision and leadership needed to rebuild and expand this network:
  - congestion will worsen,
  - goods will move more slowly,
  - air quality will continue to deteriorate,
  - the number of roadway fatalities and injuries will continue to stagnate, and
  - our quality of life will be diminished.

- It is necessary to create a surface transportation system that will serve as an engine of sustainable growth, underpinning and enhancing the greatest economy in the world – <u>an economy which is driven in large part by the cities, suburbs and towns in our metropolitan areas</u>.

- According to the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission ("Commission") which Congress created to analyze and provide recommendations regarding the transformation of the surface

transportation system, roughly 60 percent of the population of the U.S. lives in metropolitan areas over 1 million and another 20 percent live in smaller metro areas.

- The Commission's report states that the majority of our nation's economic activity is occurring within metro areas, with 60 percent of the value of all U.S. goods and services being generated in urban areas.

- Further, over 85 percent of our nation's market share of critical transportation infrastructure exists in metro areas. The report makes clear that our economic and social well being depends on the investments we have made in our metropolitan area transportation infrastructure and services.

- Metropolitan areas face enormous transportation challenges, such as
    - increasing infrastructure maintenance and investment needs,
    - increasing traffic congestion,
    - meeting environmental compliance goals,
    - planning transportation projects in a coordinated manner,
    - land use questions and growth issues,
    - and diverse traveler needs.

Today's hearing will explore the transportation challenges of metropolitan areas and the federal role in partnering with metro area to address these challenges.

OPENING STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE ELLEN TAUSCHER (CA-10)
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Hearing on
Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas

Wednesday, April 9, 2008
2167 Rayburn House Office Building

Chairman Oberstar, thank you for allowing me to make a brief statement and for holding this important hearing on transportation challenges in metropolitan areas.

Metropolitan congestion is *the most important* issue as we prepare to write a new surface transportation bill. I do not make this statement casually as I know that our transportation system faces numerous challenges. However, the concentration of people and goods in cities and the current and future levels of congestion pose the greatest threat to our nation's economic growth and environmental stewardship.

Today, the status of our metropolitan transportation systems is dire. Metro areas of more than one million people represent roughly sixty percent of the U.S. population. However, these cities also account for ninety-seven percent of traffic congestion and ninety-two percent of transit ridership.

In San Francisco, we are expecting one and a half million additional residents and one and a half million new jobs in twenty years. This increase will add thirty-one percent to the region's current trips per day – resulting in twenty-eight *million* trips per day by 2030. I think we all know that the current system cannot handle that impending growth in traffic.

So what do we do about these challenges?

In its report, the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission focused on the need for Metropolitan Mobility. I concur with the Commission that a distinct program should be created to fund intermodal projects in metropolitan areas. We should tie this funding to congestion reduction performance-standards and require that projects are developed with a regional focus.

The benefits of such a program are clear and quantifiable.

The health of the nation's economy is significantly linked to metropolitan areas. Increased congestion will prevent the movement of goods and will suppress future economic growth. The Texas Transportation Institute estimates that congestion cost our nation seventy-eight billion dollars in wasted time and fuel in 2005. The benefits will also be seen in environmental stewardship. Future population growth will increase surface transportation contributions to

greenhouse gas emissions. At a time when we are debating how to cut greenhouse gas emissions, we cannot allow surface transportation to increase its negative impacts on the environment.

This committee faces many challenges as we seek to produce a new transportation plan. I would like to note that this hearing is the first in a series of hearings that will explore emerging themes in transportation policy. I would like to thank the Chairman for demonstrating that he understands the importance of metropolitan mobility by choosing this topic as the focus of the first hearing. I look forward to working with him to address these issues.

With my statement, I would like to submit the reauthorization goals of the Metropolitan Rail Discussion Group, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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Metropolitan Rail Discussion Group
Federal Transit Program Authorization Goals

We are a discussion group of large transit systems that have come together to find common principles and goals for the new authorization of the federal transit and highway programs. Participating in our group discussions have been leaders from transit authorities in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New Jersey, Boston, San Francisco, Washington, Atlanta, Cleveland and Pittsburgh. We represent metropolitan areas where transit use is intensive, high capacity rail and fixed guideway networks are critical, and the existing transit infrastructure is in dire need of reinvestment. Our areas' share of national ridership far exceeds our share of federal funding. Federal funding for transit must increase, and the share of that funding going to transit systems in major metropolitan areas must grow. Several issues relating to these areas need to be addressed in the upcoming reauthorization discussion, including:

- Eliminating our backlog of necessary capital investments in order to bring the infrastructure of the older rail systems to a "state of good repair."
- Ensuring that both older and newer systems, which have been in operation for at least seven years, have adequate funding to maintain the renewed and/or new infrastructure in a state of good repair.
- Providing funding to expand existing rail and other fixed guideway systems and increase facility and vehicle capacity on those systems. Existing systems were not designed for current levels of service and ridership and need to be redesigned and expanded to meet anticipated growth.

The Metropolitan Rail Discussion Group believes that the newly authorized federal surface transportation program should include the following:

1) There should be sufficient federal investment to modernize and expand our nation's public transportation systems given their significant impact on issues of national importance such as climate change, congestion relief and economic development.

2) Funding within the federal transit program should be allocated according to need in order to achieve the maximum impact on issues of national importance.

3) Financial support for the vital modernization needs of the nation's existing transit rail infrastructure should be strengthened and increased. The share of the overall transit program dedicated to rail modernization has declined. At the same time, the proportion of rail modernization funding going to older rail systems has fallen as additional systems have aged sufficiently to become eligible for such funding. Rail modernization funding must increase to modernize, bring to a state of good repair, and maintain existing transit systems.

4) Major capacity expansion projects on existing rail lines should also be eligible for New Starts funding. Additional funding should be provided, and there should be appropriate criteria in the New Starts Program, for such projects.

5) The §5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program should be evaluated to address the needs of the transit systems in major metropolitan areas.

6) Transit systems in major metropolitan areas operate both bus and rail systems, and it is critical that bus needs be met as well as rail needs. The method of allocating bus funding should be evaluated.

March 6, 2008

Mr. Young's statement for the record

MEMO

110th Congress

DATE:	April 8, 2008
TO:	DY
FROM:	Jeremy
RE:	Highways and Transit Hearing on Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing on transportation challenges of metropolitan areas and thanks to the witnesses for their testimony.

According to the Surface Transportation Planning and Revenue Study Commission, roughly 60 percent of the nation's population lives in metropolitan areas of 1 million or more while an additional 20 percent live in smaller metro areas. With $78 billion in wasted time and fuel because of congestion in 2005, it is clear that increased investment must be made to alleviate these bottlenecks that delay the movement of people and goods.

Some may think congestion is not an issue in my home of Alaska but even in my sparsely populated state, we face similar challenges that large metropolitan areas are faced with. Over 50 percent of the state's population resides in Anchorage and the surrounding communities. This region is expected to increase by 166 percent over the next 2 decades and already there is little land left to develop single family homes in the City of Anchorage.

While serving in Congress over the last 35 years, I have seen us make great strides in transportation investment. We have increased our focus on inter-modalism, diverted

more resources to light-rail and bus transit systems, identified highly-congested corridors, encouraged private investment through public-private-partnerships, laid the groundwork to provide new high-speed rail routes in America, and signed the largest transportation spending bill ever into law.

Still, we have much more to do. The Commission calls for an annual investment level between $225 billion and $340 billion over the next 50 years from the public and private sector. This may seem daunting when SAFETEA-LU authorized just over $250 billion over 5 years. As chairman of this great committee, I was fortunate to see the benefits of bipartisanship as we all worked together to overcome the challenges America's deteriorating infrastructure faces.

As SAFETEA-LU expires next year, I'm certain we can come together again to achieve a common vision for America's future and provide an even greater investment than ever before. Some of us may disagree on the way we pay for this infrastructure investment, but we need to put all of our cards on the table and explore all options.

I'm proud to be an original cosponsor of Ranking Member Mica's High-Speed Rail Initiative and am hopeful the Chairman will include it in upcoming surface transportation legislation. I look forward to hearing from the panel and members of the committee and reserve the balance of my time.

"Transportation Challenges in Metropolitan Areas"

Testimony before the
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

Ronald F. Kirby

Director of Transportation Planning
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Wednesday, April 9, 2008

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Ronald Kirby, and I am the Director of Transportation Planning for the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). I greatly appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today.

The Transportation Planning Board was formed in 1965 in response to a requirement of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 for the establishment of official Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). In 1966 the TPB became associated with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, which provides support for the TPB's MPO activities and responsibilities in the Washington Metropolitan Area. The TPB is one of 385 MPOs currently serving urbanized areas throughout the nation, and is an active member of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO).

Membership of the TPB includes representatives of the transportation agencies of the states of Maryland and Virginia and the District of Columbia, 20 local governments. the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies, and non-voting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and federal agencies; 40 board members in all. Most board actions are taken by one vote per voting member, although a population-weighted voting procedure is used if requested by any voting member.

The long-range transportation plan developed by the TPB must meet several federal requirements related to the federal SAFETEA-LU transportation authorization bill passed in 2005. The bill established new requirements and reaffirmed existing rules for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in developing long-range transportation plans. Key planning requirements are:

- Financial Constraint:

  The long-range plan must be based on revenue sources that are "reasonably expected to be available."

- Air Quality Conformity:

  Projects in the plan taken collectively must contribute to air quality improvement goals for the region.

- Public Participation:

  Adequate information and public comment opportunities must be provided.

- Environmental Justice:

  The plan is assessed for impacts on low-income, minority and disabled populations.

- Congestion Management:

  The plan includes strategies to ensure that existing and future transportation facilities are used efficiently in order to reduce the need for highway capacity increases for single-occupant vehicles.

- Transportation Safety:

  SAFETEA-LU added safety as a separate factor to be considered in the creation of the plan.

- Freight Planning:

  Full consideration is given to freight and goods movement.

- Environmental Consultation and Mitigation:

  Natural resource, conservation, environmental protection and historic preservation agencies are consulted regarding the development of the plan.

The transportation challenges facing the Washington Metropolitan Area are common to many large growing metropolitan areas throughout the country. Over the current forecast period of 2008 through 2030, increases in population and jobs of 26 percent and 31 percent respectively will lead to additional vehicles, trips, and congestion on the region's transportation system.

Given funding constraints, highway lane miles are expected to increase by only 13 percent, while VMT is expected to rise 23 percent, resulting in a 41 percent rise in lane miles of congestion. Nearly all of this increased congestion will occur in the suburbs, with the inner suburbs experiencing the worst congestion in the region. The outer suburbs will experience the most dramatic increase in congestion, with a more than 100 percent increase in lane miles of congestion by 2030. Transit work trips are forecast to increase by 31 percent, as an increasing number of people are expected to use transit to commute to work. This will create even more crowding on the Metrorail system, since the ability of the region to expand transit capacity is limited by funding constraints.

Emissions of ozone precursors and fine particulates from motor vehicles are declining steadily due primarily to cleaner vehicles and fuels, and the region is on track to attain national standards for these pollutants. Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles continue to increase, however. While the recently adopted CAFÉ standards will reduce the rate of growth in greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles, future emissions will still be well above current levels unless additional reduction strategies are adopted. To achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gases, such strategies must include a combination of more fuel-efficient vehicles, alternatives to petroleum-based fuels, and changes in travel behavior. We have yet to identify a set of strategies that will come close to achieving the reduction in greenhouse gases that we are told will be needed over the next several decades.

In order to ensure that long-range transportation plans meet the SAFETEA-LU financial constraint requirement, MPOs conduct comprehensive analyses of the construction, preservation, and operations costs of all existing and new facilities in their plans, as well as of all the revenues that are "reasonably expected to be available." In the Washington region, 70 percent of all available revenues are needed for system operations and preservation; only 30 percent can be applied to new capacity. One of the major challenges currently facing states, MPOs, and transit agencies is rapid escalation in construction and maintenance costs. Cost increases of 13 percent per year over the past few years have in many cases more than offset the modest increases in overall transportation funding levels during that period. Since operations and preservation are top priorities, cost increases and funding limitations result in fewer resources for new capacity.

Transportation revenues projected to be available to the Washington region over the period of the long-range plan come from several different sources: federal (27 percent), state (32 percent), local government (17 percent), transit fares (17 percent), and tolls (7 percent). The share of funding from tolls has grown from just one percent in 2003 to seven percent currently due to the addition of three major new highway projects which will have tolls that vary by time of day to manage congestion: the Inter-County Connector in Suburban Maryland, and High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes on the Capital Beltway and I-95/395 in Northern Virginia.

While the TPB is currently analyzing future scenarios with more extensive use of highway pricing, our studies indicate that toll revenues would be needed to finance construction, operation, and preservation of the toll facilities, along with expanded transit facilities to provide alternatives to travelers unwilling or unable to pay the tolls. Such toll revenues would not in any way substitute for other sources of transportation funding, all of which will need to be sustained and increased if the region's transportation challenges are to be addressed.

The federal share of the overall funding stream plays a critical role in supporting the preservation, maintenance, and expansion of major highway and transit facilities throughout the region. The TPB is counting on a continuing strong federal role and partnership to address the region's transportation challenges.

A number of proposals and recommendations are currently being advanced for refocusing the federal surface transportation program on key national priorities when the program is reauthorized next year. From the perspective of the Washington region three major goals stand out as national priorities around which the federal program could be structured:

- Preservation and operation of the existing system.
- High value Investments in new infrastructure capacity; and
- Support for metropolitan areas to address pressing congestion, environmental and social challenges.

Ensuring the structural integrity, safety and reliability of the nation's primary highway, transit and intercity freight and passenger rail systems is essential to economic growth, environmental quality, and social development. States and local governments need the strong financial support and partnership of the federal government in preservation and operations of existing systems, most of which were built largely with federal funding. In the Washington region increased federal funding and participation is urgently needed to help preserve and maintain the Metrorail system, upon which much of the region's commuting and other economic and social activity depends.

The nation currently lacks a rational, robust program structure for prioritizing and providing financial support to high value investments in new infrastructure capacity. With the mid-twentieth century goals of building the Interstate highway system and recapitalizing urban transit systems accomplished, it is time to replace the modally-oriented program delivery structure designed around those earlier purposes with one suited to the challenges of today and tomorrow. A mode-neutral federal discretionary program is needed to select and support infrastructure investments aimed at critical chokepoints in surface passenger and freight transportation systems. "Mode-neutral" is essential for this program: sometimes the best investment to address a highway congestion problem may be new transit capacity or relief of a bottleneck on the inter-city freight rail system. It makes no sense to try to address the challenges of a major urban corridor with separate modal programs, each with its own evaluation criteria and program requirements.

In the Washington region we would welcome the opportunity to submit to the US Department of Transportation multi-modal investment packages for evaluation under comprehensive benefit/cost criteria which reflect national as well as state and local priorities. Federal financial participation and partnership is critical to the provision of major infrastructure improvements such as the Woodrow Wilson Bridges, extension of Metrorail to Dulles International Airport, support for major BRAC-related land development in the region, and even for some tolled facilities such as the Inter County Connector. Setting up a new federal mode-neutral discretionary program to replace

the current patchwork of modal programs and earmarks is certainly a major undertaking. However, there is an abundance of expertise, experience, and interest within the transportation community and other public and private sector programs which could be focused on this endeavor as part of the coming reauthorization cycle.

MPOs have long believed that in addition to formula funding for metropolitan planning, the federal transportation program should provide formula-based funding directly to metropolitan areas for project selection and implementation. Such funding would empower metropolitan areas to turn strategies developed in response to federal planning requirements such as those listed earlier into real projects "on the ground."

A relatively small-scale but nevertheless ground-breaking provision of the SAFETEA-LU legislation provides a model for how a new metropolitan transportation program could be structured and administered. Prior to SAFETEA-LU the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) discretionary program administered by the Federal Transit Program for metropolitan areas had become unwieldy and heavily earmarked. SAFETEA-LU restructured JARC along with a new "New Freedom" program into formula programs allocated to metropolitan areas in accordance with urbanized area population. Metropolitan areas were required to designate recipients who could administer these programs through a transparent and competitive project selection process. The TPB was among the first of almost 30 MPOs that sought and received these designations. As a result, for the first time in its forty-year history the TPB is now a direct recipient of federal program funds for the implementation of capital and operating projects, and can move forward directly with strategies developed in response to the planning process and stakeholder input.

While these JARC and New Freedom programs are quite small in dollar terms (just a few million dollars annually for the entire Washington region), they have led to the creation of a program delivery mechanism that could be the basis for a much broader and more comprehensive program of project selection and implementation at the metropolitan level. A number of other disparate elements of the current federal program could be "bundled" together with JARC and New Freedom into a metropolitan program that would bring project selection and implementation closer to the local government and stakeholder groups who are their main constituents and beneficiaries. Examples include funding devoted to such priorities as mobile source emissions reduction; pedestrian safety; coordination of transportation operations and incident management; promotion of commuter ridesharing, telecommuting, and other alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle; and, perhaps most important of all, the coordination of transportation and land use planning at the local and metropolitan levels.

The forthcoming reauthorization of federal surface transportation legislation provides an opportunity to replace the current overly complex, unwieldy, and outdated program structure with a new program structure designed to respond to current national, state, and local transportation priorities. I hope my suggested "three-goal"

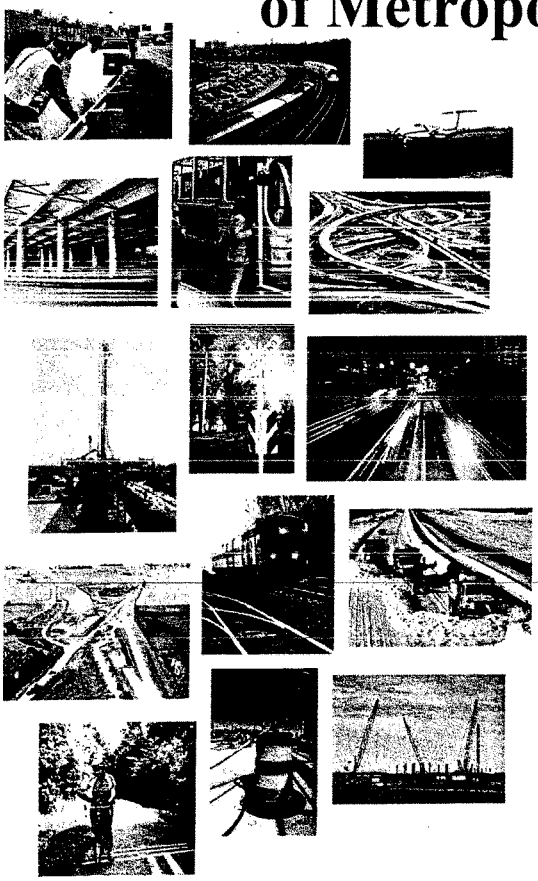
program structure will make a constructive contribution to the extensive ongoing discussions already focused on redesigning and streamlining the federal surface transportation program.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to express the appreciation of the MPO community for the strong and growing support the Congress has provided for metropolitan transportation planning in the ISTEA, TEA-21, and SAFETEA-LU authorizations. Federal planning resources and requirements in these bills have provided a firm foundation for MPOs to assume increased responsibilities, not only for planning but also for some key new components of program delivery that could help in the near term to address the transportation challenges facing our metropolitan areas.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to testify before you this morning.

Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas in Ohio

April 9, 2008



Testimony of
Jolene Molitoris
***Assistant Director,* Ohio Department of Transportation**
to the U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

Testimony of the Ohio Department of Transportation to the U.S. House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas in Ohio

April 9, 2008

Good morning Chairman DeFazio and members of the Committee. On behalf of Ohio Governor Ted Strickland and Director James Beasley of the Ohio Department of Transportation, I thank you for asking me to share Ohio's transportation story. I am Jolene Molitoris, Assistant Director for Ohio's Department of Transportation.

Few people realize that Ohio - only 35th in the nation in terms of land size - has the 2nd largest inventory of bridges, the 4th most operating rail routes, the 4th largest interstate system, the 7th largest state highway network and the 12th most transit ridership. Ohio has seven major metropolitan areas: Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, Akron, Youngstown and Toledo, as well as ten smaller metropolitan centers. All these cities have transportation challenges that can be improved by changes at home and in Washington.

Ohio's most pressing federal financial challenge is the immediate need to ensure the solvency of the nation's Highway Trust Fund. The latest figures from the Congressional Budget Office forecast a potential loss of between $140 million to $400 million for Ohio alone, representing a major blow to projects planned for as early as 2009 and 2010.

The country's underinvestment in transportation for many decades has resulted in an aging infrastructure with dramatically increasing demands and many needs. Ohio is no exception. A significant increase in federal transportation dollars and fair distribution of those dollars is critical. Ohio's donor status did improve to 92% for highway dollars under SAFETEA-LU, but most undesirable is the fact that Ohio receives a mere 51% return on each dollar contributed to the Mass Transit Account.

Under Governor Strickland, a strong and efficient multi-modal transportation system in Ohio is a priority to retaining and attracting the jobs and businesses we need. Just last week, Governor Strickland and the State legislature announced a $1.57 billion bipartisan economic stimulus package which includes major investments in logistics, infrastructure, bridges and other transportation projects. 57,000 new jobs are anticipated. We are acting at home to create transportation solutions, but the state and the private sector alone cannot resolve our transportation challenges. We need an effective federal partner.

Let me touch on a few challenges standing in the way of that partnership.

(1) The first is a better recognition that urban projects, by their very nature, cost significantly more. Like threading a needle with an eight-lane highway, we are trying to modernize roadways tightly woven in a built environment. Modernizing off-ramps and on-ramps - once acceptable but now deemed dangerous by today's standards - is not only complicated, but in some cases, the fix can have unseen economic consequences on downtown livelihood. In an urban setting, right of way costs soar. And some projects come to a grinding halt when historic properties stand in the way. Even just the maintenance of traffic during construction adds significant cost, as work must be pieced together in small sections over long periods of time.

(2) While the government has little power over basic construction costs, our partnership could see a more effective use of its dollars with less federal micro-management. Oversight of project development continues to be lengthy and bureaucratic. Amendments in SAFETEA-LU were intended

to improve efficiency in project delivery, but actual change has been modest. Ohio is a leader in environmental compliance and construction mitigation. But this higher review forces all state DOTs to produce more detail and paper than needed, often times simply to address a federal reviewer's comments instead of project needs.

A prime example of both these issues is the reconstruction of Cleveland's I-90 Innerbelt. What started as a $500 million replacement of an aging bridge was stretched by federal expansion of the project's scope and by this process-oriented delay. Fixing the Innerbelt stands now, at least, at $1.4 billion, and growing each month. For our metropolitan projects, we should explore putting federal approvals and state accountability at the program level - not at a time consuming project by project detailed analysis.

Somewhat connected is a second challenge: the use of one-size-fits-all programmatic approaches to address project level mitigation needs. Rather than the current prescriptive remedies, a menu of green options could give states flexibility while still protecting the environment. Imagine, instead of following today's impact-for-impact mitigation logic, that preservation opportunities can be explored that would allow States to focus on the most important needs of that region, such as farmland preservation. In some urban settings, wetland mitigation simply brings flocks of geese to downtown streets, instead of addressing the larger issues of climate change.

(3) On the topic of "greener" alternatives, a third challenge continues to be a lack of federal incentive to help cities pursue alternatives to the automobile. Simply put, federal transportation funding favors highways over other transportation modes. The Federal Highway Administration will contribute up to 80 or 90 percent for highway improvements but only 50 percent for transit projects under the Federal Transit Administration's New Start Program.

(4) Another point on the transit disincentive is FTA's ever-changing criteria. In Columbus, a passenger light rail project did not meet FTA's New Start criteria, even though Columbus is now the state's most populous city and one of the few growing regions in the Midwest. It has become almost impossible for most cities to introduce passenger rail projects - commuter rail, light rail, or streetcar – with federal help. One could interpret the constantly moving target as a technique to reduce FTA's investments in these alternative transportation options.

Finally, a story underscoring the need for transit: In Ohio, our 59 public transit systems serve half-a-million customers every weekday. More than 60% of all those trips are work related. For many Ohioans, it's public transportation or public assistance. In Cleveland, ranked last year as the nation's poorest city, one in four citizens do not have access to a car. Last year, a new shopping center was set to open on the site of an abandoned steel mill. The redevelopment in a core urban area meant jobs for many who had none. At the new Target store, to get to those new jobs, more than half of the applicants needed bus service that wasn't currently available. By investing just $200,000 more annually, the regional transit authority expanded its service to run a half-hour after the store closes, but at the cost of cutting service to other parts of town. The story is repeated time and again in several of Ohio's major cities.

The bottom line for Ohio and its transportation system: the proper level of investment, wisely and fairly made, with the leveraging of private dollars, our own state commitment and an effective federal partner who helps us solve rather than exacerbate our challenges, will give us the transportation system we so urgently need. A first rate multi-modal transportation system is key to the success of Ohio and the nation.

"Beginning Again: A Metropolitan Transportation Vision for the 21st Century"

Congressional Testimony of
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Presented before
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
April 9, 2008

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear before you this morning and very much appreciate your invitation.

The purpose of my testimony today is to provide an overview of critical metropolitan transportation challenges. In so doing, I would also like to make the point that our *metropolitan* transportation challenges are really our *national* transportation challenges. Perhaps more than any other area of domestic policy, transportation is highly spatially concentrated. It is not distributed evenly across the American landscape. Today, in our post-agricultural, postindustrial, innovation-dependent economy, the roads to prosperity inevitably pass through a few essential places: our nation's largest metropolitan areas.

1. INTRODUCTION

Metropolitan areas are where most Americans live, work, and produce the majority of the nation's economic output. The services and revenues they generate drive state economies. These places gather and strengthen the assets that drive American prosperity—innovative firms, educated and skilled workers, institutions of advanced research, specialized legal, technology and financial firms—and are our front lines of competitiveness in the global economy.

As a consequence, all roads (and rails and air traffic) literally lead to these metropolitan engines, drawn by the clustering of people, the movement of goods and the agglomeration of economic activity. The top 100 metros handle 75 percent of the nation's seaport tonnage, 79 percent of air cargo weight, 92 percent of air passengers, and 96 percent of rail travelers.

The time is long past due for a national transportation vision that recognizes the metropolitan concentration of our economic life and responds accordingly. It requires an extreme makeover, with a fundamentally new approach to almost every aspect of national policy: how we allocate funding; how we set priorities, how we apportion responsibilities; how we engage the private sector; how we price the product; how we connect transportation to other policies; how we structure the national government; and how we move from our current decisionmaking to empirically-grounded policy.

Fortunately, the time is ripe for such systemic reform. From genuine concern about the condition and quality of our existing infrastructure, to difficulties and lack of choices in moving people and goods, to major national problems like climate change, foreign energy dependence, and strained household budgets, there is growing recognition that, if left unchecked, these challenges threaten not only the quality of life in our metropolitan areas but also the competitiveness of our nation. At the same time, these debates are taking place in a fiscally-constrained environment that should be the motivating factor for real reform.

Mr. Chairman, I believe we need to throw out the 1950s-era transportation program and replace it with one that reflects the distinctive realities of our moment: fast-moving, hyper-competitive, super-volatile, and metropolitan-focused.

II. TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES OF METROPOLITAN AREAS

Against this backdrop, the massive demographic, economic, and social changes underway today present the nation with a complex and, at times, conflicting set of transportation challenges that continue to plague the largest metropolitan areas.

First, a collective "infrastructure epiphany" has arisen about the need to reinvest in metropolitan America. In its most recent Conditions and Performance report the U.S. DOT estimates that, based on vehicles miles traveled (VMT), only 34.1 percent of roads in urban and metropolitan areas are in good condition compared to 58.0 percent of those in rural areas. Moreover, the percent of good quality rural roads actually increased since 1995 from 46.3 percent while the percent in urban areas declined from 35.2 percent. Based on use, the discrepancies between rural and urban roads are even more pronounced.[1]

Our nation's transit infrastructure is also reaching the end of its useful age. In 2005, 45 percent of the nation's subway cars were over 20 years old. Excluding New York's extensive system (which recently replaced a large portion of its fleet), 53.3 percent of rail cars have been operating for more than two decades. Half of those are over 25 years old which is when the Federal Transit Administration recommends replacement.[2] A recent federal assessment similarly judged the nation's bus fleet to be "moderately defective."[3] A 2008 performance assessment by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget found that the condition of Amtrak-owned equipment, while improving five-fold since 2002, is still falling well short of expectations.[4]

Potholes, rough surfaces, and rusting bridges are the physical manifestations of a deteriorating system. Most investigations into the state of U.S. transportation infrastructure today quickly reveal a network that is crumbling, obsolete, and outdated.

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[1] U.S. Department of Transportation, *Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: 2006 Conditions and Performance Report to Congress*, exhibit 3-11.

[2] Federal Transit Administration, *National Transit Database*, Table 2: Revenue Vehicle Inventory, 2004.

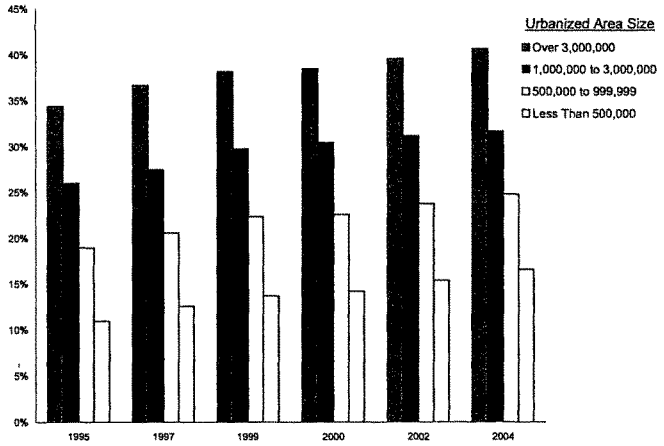
[3] Richard Steinmann and Robert Tuccillo, "Transit in the U.S.: Conditions, Performance, and Finance," Briefing for the National Surface Transportation Revenue and Policy Study Commission, June 27, 2006.

[4] Office of Management and Budget, "Detailed Information on the Amtrak Assessment," 2008, available: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/detail/10004000.2005.html.

Second, the movement of people within and between metropolitan areas has become challenging and options for travelers are limited. At its most basic, transportation is critically important to the U.S. economy for its ability to move people across and between metropolitan areas. Unfortunately, even this function is under threat due to ever-present traffic congestion, lack of travel choices, and unconnected modes.

In recent years, U.S. residents have come to regard traffic congestion as one of the most serious problems in the nation. However, one point often overlooked (perhaps due to its simplicity) is that traffic congestion is predominantly a *metropolitan* phenomenon and is especially acute in the very largest places. Certainly smaller areas jam up in tourist zones and accidents can shut down rural interstates for miles. But there is no doubt that the most important national trend regarding congestion is that for every year studied, and for every measure, the problem of congestion increases as metropolitan area size increases. Figure 1 illustrates this trend.

Figure 1: Average Daily Percent of VMT Under Congested Conditions, by Urbanized Area Size, 1995–2004



Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, *Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: 2006 Conditions and Performance Report to Congress*, exhibit 4-2.

This should not be surprising as the vast majority of travel occurs in just a few places in general relationship to the population there. Nearly 8 out of every 10 vehicle miles traveled occurs in metropolitan areas and about 6 in 10 are in just the 100 largest.[5] Twenty percent of the costs associated with traffic congestion are concentrated in just two metropolitan areas: New York and Los Angeles.[6]

[5] This analysis uses raw county level data from the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Highway Performance Management Systems (HPMS) aggregated up to the latest metropolitan area definitions. Note that this is different from urbanized areas which the FHWA also uses.

[6] David Schrank and Tim Lomax, 2007 Annual Urban Mobility Report (College Station, Texas Transportation Institute, 2007), Summary Table 2.

Unfortunately, many Americans do not have access to a range of travel options to avoid traffic congestion. Information drawn from the three most recent years of the American Housing Survey shows that only 55 percent of respondents reported that transit is even available to them. More disturbing is that only one-third of respondents in newly-constructed housing reported that transit was present.[7]

Table 1: Response to American Housing Survey: Is There Public Transportation for this Area?

		Access to public transportation		
		Yes	No	Not reported
Housing	Total occupied units	55.2%	41.8%	3.0%
	Owner	47.6%	49.4%	3.0%
	Renter	71.2%	25.7%	3.1%
	Newly constructed	33.2%	62.1%	4.7%
	Moved in past year	59.3%	35.7%	5.0%
Demo-graphics	Black	70.5%	27.2%	2.3%
	Hispanic	71.7%	26.0%	2.3%
	Elderly	53.3%	45.1%	2.5%
	Below poverty level	58.0%	38.9%	3.1%
Geographic	Central cities	81.9%	15.3%	2.7%
	Suburbs	51.9%	44.5%	3.5%
	Rural	15.7%	81.9%	2.4%
	Northeast	66.3%	30.9%	2.8%
	Midwest	53.5%	43.2%	3.3%
	South	39.8%	56.9%	3.3%
	West	72.6%	25.0%	2.4%

Source: Brookings Analysis of American Housing Survey, 2002-2004

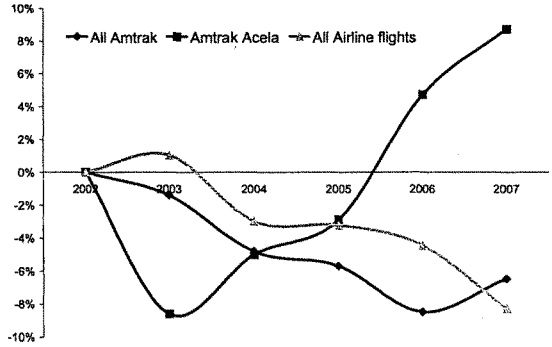
Based simply on the amount of transit infrastructure available, 55 of the 100 largest metropolitan areas do not have any rail service and also have a bus volume per capita ratio lower than the average for the top 100 metropolitan areas. By far, most of these metropolitan areas – 28 – are found in the south. Seven are in Florida alone. Eleven are found in the Midwest, 9 more in the northeast, and only 7 are found in the west. All told, 90 million Americans live in metropolitan areas with substandard transit including a range of large places like Detroit, Indianapolis, Orlando, and Virginia Beach; fast growing places like Raleigh and Jacksonville; and slow growing places like Youngstown and Rochester, NY.[8]

Americans are also struggling with trips *between* metropolitan areas. While about 9 in 10 long distance trips (over 50 miles) are taken by personal cars, by 2010 most of the nation's metropolitan and interstate highways will exceed or be at capacity. Unfortunately this delay is occurring at the same time capacity in air and train travel between metropolitan areas also appear to be suffering. Figure 2 shows rapid declines in the percent of intermetro air and rail trips that arrived on time since 2000. The only positive trend is Amtrak's Acela service between Boston and Washington.

[7] Data from 2002, 2003, and 2004 are examined for the nation and for the 32 metropolitan areas surveyed during those years. This is similar to the approach in Paul Weyrich and William Lind, "Does Transit Work? A Conservative Reappraisal," Free Congress Research and Education Foundation,1999.

[8] Brookings analysis of Federal Transit Administration data from the National Transit Database.

Figure 2: Percent Change of Inter-metro Trips that Arrive on Time, by Mode, Since 2002



Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, "On-Time Performance - Flight Delays at a Glance," 2008, available: http://www.transtats.bts.gov; and Office of Management and Budget, "Detailed Information on the Amtrak Assessment," 2008, available: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/detail/10004000.2005.html

A healthy national economy depends on healthy metropolitan economies—and mobility for residents is a critical component. Therefore, for our transportation system to continue to provide a competitive edge, improving the movement of people by multiple means both within and between metropolitan areas should continue to be an explicit national priority.

Third, the interstate and intemodal movement of goods is projected to get more difficult. The changing nature of the American economy—particularly increased overseas manufacturing and "just in time" delivery supply chain operations—directly impacts America's infrastructure needs especially when it comes to the movement of goods by freight. Metropolitan transportation infrastructure is critical for advancing American prosperity, and for the nation to compete we need to be able to move goods and people between metropolitan areas by truck and rail, as well as intermodally.

Although trucks only make up about 7 percent of all vehicle miles traveled in the U.S. in 2005, U.S. DOT statistics show that on about one-fifth of the Interstate network, truck traffic accounts for more than 30 percent of the vehicles. [9] That number is expected to grow substantially over the next 20 years. Those portions of highways designated as truck routes are already consistently more congested than the overall network. [10]

[9] U.S. Department of Transportation, *Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: 2006 Conditions and Performance Report to Congress*, Chapter 14.

[10] Michael Meyer, "Road Congestion Impacts on Freight Movement," in *The Future of Urban Transportation II*, Eno Transportation Foundation, Washington, DC, 2008.

Table 2: Congestion on Sample Sections for the Urban NHS Network

Metropolitan Area	Percent of roadway sections that are congested	
	All	Truck Routes only
Atlanta	63%	75%
Baltimore	45%	52%
Dallas	46%	68%
Detroit	50%	64%
Houston	45%	66%
Los Angeles	76%	87%
Miami	67%	78%
New York	50%	55%
Philadelphia	56%	64%
San Diego	57%	62%
Seattle	26%	27%
St. Louis	25%	32%

Source: Michael Meyer, "Road Congestion Impacts on Freight Movement," in *The Future of Urban Transportation II*, Eno Transportation Foundation, Washington, DC, 2008.

Trucks are also frequently used to pickup and deliver freight and other products to and from ports to large distribution centers and warehouses. So the major issue with trucks and congestion is not simply their experience on the major roadways but how they intersect intermodally with facilities like sea and air ports. Indeed, metropolitan congestion in and around the nation's major ports – such as Los Angeles, New York, Miami, San Francisco, Seattle, and Portland, OR – is widely recognized as the most critical issue facing the shipping industry because lengthy delays can eliminate the cost benefits of intermodal movements of freight.[11] In 2005, 95 percent of our nation's total trade moved through metropolitan areas and more than one-third through just the 10 largest.

Fourth, while transportation has a vital role to play in supporting economic growth it is becoming clear to many that true prosperity also requires sustainable growth. Through the lens of the metropolitan transportation network, there is growing concern about the twin challenges of climate change and energy independence for our nation's economic future.

The U.S. transportation system is almost entirely dependant upon petroleum-based fuels. As such, it is the predominant reason for the nation's overall oil dependence.[12] This of course impacts Americans' checkbooks as oil prices rise, but also affects the world's climate as emissions from transportation increase.

While emissions of other pollutants—such as volatile organic compounds (VOC) and nitrogen oxides (NOx)—has fallen over time as a result of engine and fuel policies, emissions of carbon dioxide (CO_2) continue to rise with VMT.[13] Thus, the nation's contribution to climate change from transportation continues to worsen. As a result it appears that the continued growth in driving cancels out both the improvements in vehicle efficiency and fuel alternatives.[14]

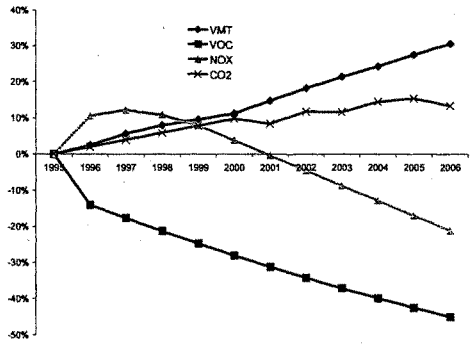
[11] HLB Decision Economics Inc., "Public Policy Impacts on Freight Productivity," 1999.

[12] David Greene and Andreas Schafer, "Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from U.S. Transportation," Pew Center on Global Climate Change, 2003.

[13] U.S. Department of Transportation, "Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Vehicle Emissions," 2002. Because CO_2 emissions are dependant primarily on MPG and VMT, and because MPG remains relatively constant, any increase in VMT coincides with a proportionate increase in CO_2 emissions.

[14] See: Reid Ewing and others, *Growing Cooler: Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change*, Urban Land Institute, 2008.

Figure 3: Change in Transportation Emissions 1995-2006



Source: EPA and FHWA

A recent examination of the energy consumed and the CO_2 emitted in the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas shows that many of these places emit less carbon from auto and truck transportation on a per capita basis, and especially on a per dollar of gross metropolitan product (GMP) basis than smaller and non-metro areas. Per capita VMT, fuel and energy use, and carbon emissions are all higher for the U.S. as a whole than in the 100 largest metropolitan areas.[15]

However, carbon emissions per person and per dollar of GMP vary a good deal across metropolitan areas. As might be expected, metropolitan areas with a higher percentage of trucking activity tend to have higher carbon footprints, especially if their annual VMT profile exhibits a larger than average share of combination truck miles of travel, a good deal of which may involve low mpg trips that either start and/or end outside the metropolitan area's boundaries. Metropolitan areas such as Riverside, Toledo, and Jacksonville, FL rank among the highest in terms of their amount of carbon emissions per capita. New York, Los Angeles, and Portland, OR rank among the lowest.[16]

Of additional concern is the issue of energy independence. The U.S. does not come close to producing the oil it consumes and that figure is declining over time, decreasing 17.0 percent since 2000.[17] As Table 3 shows, only one-quarter of the crude oil consumed in the U.S. is domestically produced. Twice as much is imported and the majority of that from countries considered to be in danger of "state failure" based on a range of social, economic, and political factors.[18]

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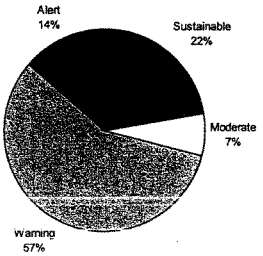
[15] Marilyn A. Brown and Frank Southworth, "Shrinking the Carbon Footprint of Metropolitan America," Brookings, *forthcoming*.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Energy Information Administration, "U.S. Imports by Country of Origin," Available: http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/pet_move_impcus_a2_nus_ep00_im0_mbbl_m.htm.
[18] The rankings come from the 2007 Failed States Index prepared by The Fund for Peace and *Foreign Policy* Magazine. The index employs a rating of 12 social, economic, and political/military indicators as well as other assessments of institutional capabilities. Available: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3865&page=0.

Table 3: U.S. Crude Oil Imports and Domestic Production (Annual - Thousand Barrels)

	2000	2007	Change	Country's Stability Ranking
Domestic Production	2,130,707	1,862,441	-12.6%	
Total Imports	4,194,086	4,905,234	17.0%	
Top 10 Import Sources				
Canada	661,351	885,366	33.9%	Sustainable
Mexico	502,509	559,676	11.4%	Warning
Saudi Arabia	575,274	543,508	-5.5%	Warning
Venezuela	565,865	496,984	-12.2%	Warning
Nigeria	328,079	413,184	25.9%	Alert
Algeria	82,345	244,590	197.0%	Warning
Angola	110,321	185,130	67.8%	Warning
Iraq	226,804	177,009	-22.0%	Alert
Russia	26,382	150,594	470.8%	Warning
United Kingdom	133,799	101,570	-24.1%	Moderate

Source: Energy Information Administration, "U.S. Imports by Country of Origin," Available: http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/pet_move_impcus_a2_nus_ep00_im0_mbbl_m.htm.

Figure 4: Share of U.S. Crude Oil Imports by Country's Stability Rating, 2007



With the nation's transportation challenges escalating at the same time global climate change and energy independence issues are on the rise, more and more observers believe a "perfect storm" is on the horizon.

Fifth, for a large portion of the American workforce, job access and household spending are dominant concerns. As economies and opportunity decentralize and the working poor remain disproportionately centralized, a "spatial mismatch" arises between jobs and people in metropolitan areas. In suburbs entry-level jobs abound in manufacturing, wholesale trade, and retailing and hold out opportunities for people with basic education and skills. However, the absence of viable transportation options—combined with persistent residential racial segregation and a lack of affordable suburban housing—effectively cuts off many inner-city workers from regional labor markets. As such, the working poor spend a higher proportion of their income to commute (6.1 percent) than other workers (3.8 percent). The working poor that commute using their own car spend the most: 8.4 percent.[19]

But the problem of transportation costs on household budgets is not just an issue for low income families. The dominant pattern of suburban growth—low-density housing, a sprawling job base—has made residents and commuters completely dependent on the car for all travel needs. Partly as a result of this dependency, household spending on transportation has risen across the country. Transportation is now the second largest expense for most American households, consuming on

[19] Elizabeth Roberto, "Commuting to Opportunity: The Working Poor and Commuting in the United States," Brookings, 2008.

average 20 cents out of every dollar. Only shelter eats up a larger chunk of expenditures (27 cents), with food a distant third (11 cents).[20]

III. THE POLICY PROBLEM

A growing mountain of evidence and analysis shows that the current slate of federal policies—and the lack of clear policy in specific areas—actually appear to exacerbate the range of metropolitan transportation challenges.

First, for the vast majority of the program the federal government is *absent* when it should be present. This includes functional areas such as the interstate system that was created by a bold federal vision. It also includes the basic movement of people and goods across states and between metropolitan areas and mega-regions. Today the nation has no overarching agenda or strategic plan for coping with the current challenges or projected increases in freight movement, or in how passengers will travel these longer distances.[21]

But the federal transportation program is also absent in providing leadership and direction on issues only addressable on the national level such as broad economic prosperity, environmental sustainability and climate change, as well as safety and security. These issues transcend state and metropolitan boundaries and can only be dealt with on the large scale.

Instead of being present each reauthorization cycle is dominated by parochial interests around funding. In particular are the debates over donors and donees; that is, the desire for each state to receive a level of federal transportation funding that matches the federal gas tax and other revenues that are collected within their state borders. This approach is anathema to achieving a true national purpose and vision—and turns the program into one of revenue distribution instead of one designed to meet national needs.[22] The U.S. Government Accountability Office found that the federal transportation program is functioning to some extent as a "cash transfer, general purpose grant program."[23]

Second, as a program with its roots in the 1950's the federal surface transportation program is woefully *outdated*. For one thing, the program is not attuned to the needs, problems, and challenges of metropolitan areas. The intent established in 1991 to elevate the importance of metropolitan areas to better align the geography of transportation decisionmaking with the geography of regional economies, commuting patterns, and social reality has largely been subverted. Federal transportation policy has only haltingly recognized metropolitan areas' centrality to transportation outcomes, and continues to assign states the primary role in transportation planning and programming.

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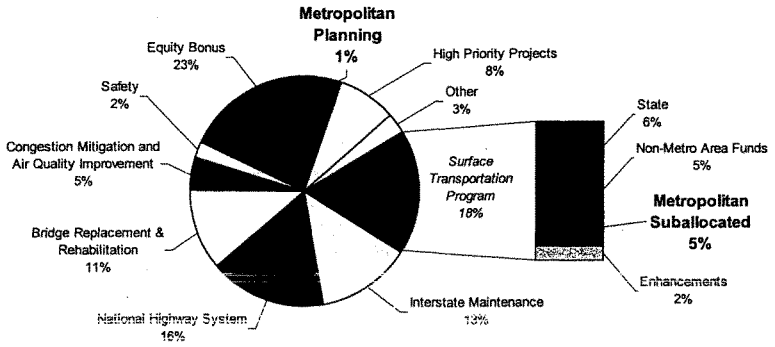
[20] Center for Housing Policy, "A Heavy Load: The Combined Housing and Transportation Burdens of Working Families," Washington, 2006.

[21] The 2006 *National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America's Transportation Network* comes close. However, that plan is focused only on strategies ostensibly intended to reduce traffic congestion such as toll roads and methods such as congestion pricing. While important, this does not represent a comprehensive approach to the nation's transportation challenges. U.S. Department of Transportation, "National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America's Transportation Network," 2006.

[22] Thomas M. Downs, "Is There a Future for the Federal Surface Transportation Program?" *Journal of Transportation Engineering*, Vol. 131, No. 6, June 1, 2005. 393-396

[23] U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Federal-Ad Highways: Trends, Effect on State Spending, and Options for Future Program Design," GAO-04-802, 2004.

Figure 5: SAFETEA-LU Authorizations, Title I – Federal-Aid Highways, FY 2005-2009



Source: Brookings Analysis of Federal Highway data

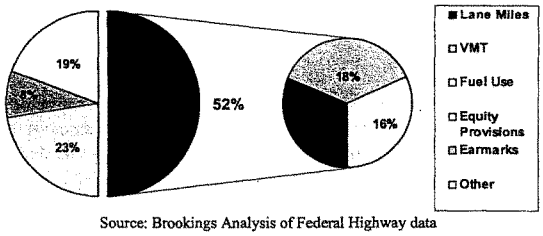
Funding analyses in several states show how these biases harm metropolitan areas.[24] These areas contribute significantly more in tax receipts than they receive in allocations from their state's highway fund or through direct local transfers. In other words, although the donor/donee debate is alive and well on the national level *between* states, that same logic has not permeated the debate on the subnational level.

Additionally, federal highway trust fund dollars continue to be distributed to its grantees based on archaic funding formulas based largely on consumption. More than half of the funds authorized in SAFETEA-LU are apportioned to states based on the traditional factors: amount of roads, miles driven, fuel consumed and/or gas tax paid. Less than one-fifth comes from other measures of need such as number of deficient bridges, roadway fatalities, or population in air quality non-attainment areas.

While this may seem intuitive on some level, it also presents obvious problems in that it sets up an insatiable desire for more funding as the roadway networks expand. There is no reward for reducing consumption in any of these formulas. Thus, any investment in transit or promotion of land use to reduce VMT, reduce fuel consumption, or be a substitute for lane miles is antithetical to how states receive funds.

[24] See: Robert Puentes and Linda Bailey, "Improving Metropolitan Decision Making in Transportation: Greater Funding and Devolution for Greater Accountability," in *Taking the High Road: A Metropolitan Agenda for Transportation Reform*, B. Katz and R. Puentes, eds., Brookings, 2005.

Figure 7: SAFETEA-LU: Highway Apportionment Formulae Categorical Factors, FY 05 - 09



Source: Brookings Analysis of Federal Highway data

Another outdated flaw that adversely affects metropolitan areas is that the rules governing transportation policy continue to favor roads over transit and other alternatives to traditional highway building. This unlevel playing field has profound effects on metropolitan America and, by extension, on the economic competitiveness of the nation.

While states do not seek permission to build highway projects, this is dramatically different from the situation that applies when areas want to construct rail or certain bus projects. The federal transit new starts program is totally discretionary and highly regulated by the DOT—and because of incredibly high demand new transit funding is oversubscribed and competition for these funds is intense.[25]

More inequity exists in terms of what the federal government is willing to contribute to investments. Federal law created 50 years ago establishes 80 percent to 90 percent of the funding for highway projects. For transit investments, the contribution is much lower — just 48 percent, according to the Office of Management and Budget.[26]

Taken together, these biases ensure that state transportation policy pursued under federal law works against many metropolitan areas' efforts to maintain modern and integrated transportation networks.

The *third* major policy problem is that the lack of a 21st century approach to government means the program is underperforming and failing to maximize efficiencies. In short, the federal government is not getting the most out of its current $286 billion investment in transportation.

Without a vision, goals, purpose, or means for targeting the U.S. approach to transportation has been to keep throwing money at the problem. While additional sources are important, little attention is being given to managing the demand for revenues, how existing funds are spent and for what purpose, or how these spending decisions affect our metropolitan areas and ultimately the economic, environmental, and social goals of our nation.

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[25] See: Edward Beimborn and Robert Puentes, "Highways and Transit: Leveling the Playing Field in Federal Transportation Policy," in *Taking the High Road: A Metropolitan Agenda for Transportation Reform*, B. Katz and R. Puentes, eds., Brookings, 2005.

[26] Office of Management and Budget, "Detailed Information on the Federal Transit Administration New Starts Assessment," 2008, available: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/detail/10001125.2003.html.

For one, the federal transportation program has almost no focus on outcomes, performance, or accountability. Although the U.S. DOT outlined appropriate performance measures as required by the Government Performance Results Act, it does not hold the recipients of federal highway funding accountable for their performance nor is funding linked to success. This undercuts the viability of the national program.

More fundamentally, analytical exercises are largely impossible due to the astonishing lack of data and information. The federal government requires states to build and maintain the nation's roadway network, but it does not require them to provide the public with accessible, detailed information about state investment decisions using those funds. Incredibly, it is easier for citizens to discern where private banks and thrifts lend (thanks to the federal Home Mortgage Disclosure Act) than to determine where public transportation agencies spend. The tools that are employed today for tracking federal transportation spending are archaic and out of step with today's needs and are unequipped to handle performance data.

Ultimately this lack of transparency reduces the ability of employers, workers, and citizens in general to influence the metropolitan transportation systems that so strongly shape economic competitiveness, environmental quality, and the nation's quality of life.

IV. TOWARDS A PROSPEROUS TRANSPORTATION AGENDA FOR AMERICA

One thing is abundantly clear: If national transportation policy is going to achieve critical national objectives (e.g., advancing competitiveness, promoting sustainability, enhancing security) in an era of fiscal constraints it is going to need to focus and prioritize.

Simply put, our nation can no longer afford to subscribe to the current transportation theology of business-as-usual. The current system is fundamentally broken and major, not incremental, solutions are required to extend the envelope on next generation solutions. Transportation policy is littered with small, precious, ill-funded efforts to address everything from metropolitan congestion, to deteriorating air quality, to spatial mismatch, to funding concerns. But our nation must recognize that we are on the cusp of a new wave of transportation policy.

The starting point from the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission's 2008 report *Transportation for Tomorrow* is exactly right: **we need a new beginning.**[27]

Transportation policy and program governance currently favors particular modes but is indifferent to substantive outcomes. We need a single minded focus on achieving the declared national priorities with indifference to the modal means of achieving them. The nation should settle for nothing less than evidence-based, values-driven decision-making.

Mr. Chairman, I do not believe the national goal should be a transportation goal, nor should it be to deliver transportation projects faster. Transportation is a means to an end, not the end itself. Yet the challenges discussed previously are not resolvable through micro initiatives. It will only come through systemic change in the way we think about, design, and implement transportation policies

[27] National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, *Transportation for Tomorrow*, 2008.

and how we connect those policies to other aspects of metropolitan growth: housing, land use, and economic development. This means the development of a three-pronged strategy for our national transportation program:

First, the federal government must lead where there are clear demands for national uniformity or else to match the scale or geographic reach of certain problems. I want to add my voice to the growing chorus and recommend that the federal government define, design and embrace a new, unified, competitive vision for transportation policy. Our nation desperately needs a new paradigm for transportation – its purpose, its mission, its overarching rationale. This paradigm must be rooted in the empirical reality of a changing nation and a globalizing economy. It must be grounded in what we know about the relationship of infrastructure to community building and economic prosperity. It must be cognizant of what other nations are doing, particularly in the industrialized West. And it must be respectful of the wide variance in population and economic growth between disparate parts of our nation.

The federal government should lead the national transportation program, develop a coherent national vision, and focus on three specific *program* areas of national importance: the preservation and maintenance of the **interstate** system, the development of a true national **intermodal** freight agenda, and a comprehensive national plan for **intermetro** area passenger travel.

The *second* point is that there are other aspects of transportation policy where metropolitan areas should lead – where we should, in essence, "flip the pyramid," and put the federal government squarely in the service of state and local leaders whose quintessential knack for solving problems are driving this country forward. We need a new federal partnership with state and metropolitan leaders, along with local governments and the private sector, to promote environmental sustainability and strengthen metropolitan economies.

The federal government should provide the major metropolitan areas more direct funding and project selection authority and hold these places accountable for advancing a tailor-made, bottom-up vision. Yet it should also become a permissive partner and empower states and metropolitan places areas in areas like congestion pricing, providing a range of transportation choices by pursuing a strategy of modality neutrality, and connecting infrastructure investments to housing and land use.

Third, the federal government needs to re-orient transportation policy to remedy the mistakes of the past and establish a coherent performance-measured and outcome-based program for the future. Lost in the dominant discussion about how much money we are spending on the federal transportation program is a frank and rigorous debate about how to spend that money better. After such a discussion, all options toward re-invigorating transportation funding should be on the table to meet the transportation challenges of the future while also ensuring financial revenues will be available.

Therefore, the first order of business is to re-orient transportation policy so the federal government and its state and metropolitan partners are purposeful, accountable, and outcome-based. In order to rebuild the public trust, the rationale for the federal program should be abundantly clear to the American people to which a tangible set of outcomes must be explicitly tied. The recipients of federal dollars should then be held accountable for meeting these goals.

This is not a new idea and is one that was embraced by the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission in their call to "begin anew." This is not a call for rigid, uniform rules but for an **intentional, evidence-based program** structured around broad national goals. It should be up to the federal transportation partners on the state and metropolitan level to demonstrate how they will meet or exceed those goals.

V. CONCLUSION

During this time of economic uncertainty, environmental anxiety, and household stress the nation must get the most out of its largest discretionary domestic program – transportation.

By focusing reforms on these three major policy areas, federal transportation policy can move from the outdated, outmoded structure that exists today to something that actually works for the nation and metropolitan America. Emphasizing better spending and accountability would enable policy makers to regain credibility and open the door to proposals for increased funding. Developing a coherent national purpose and targeting spending would help establish transportation as a true national priority program that focuses on congested areas, gateways and corridors, and freight hubs. Unleashing market dynamics would address finance, demand, and operational efficiencies and enable important ideas like congestion pricing to thrive.

Mr. Chairman, I believe these are important reforms that can go a long way to providing a metropolitan framework for the nation's transportation program. No doubt, even these modest reforms will not come easily to the transportation sector. Yet change must come if our nation is going to invest transportation resources in a way that ensures the metropolitan vitality and competitiveness of the U.S. economy, our cities, and our families.

The views expressed in this testimony are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent those of the staff, officers, or trustees of The Brookings Institution.

Written Statement of

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Before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
United States House of Representatives

Legislative Hearing on
Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas

April 9, 2008

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify today about the transportation challenges facing America's metropolitan areas as the economic and population centers of our country.

I am King County Executive Ron Sims, and I am proud to serve as the elected leader of the fourteenth largest county in the nation. King County covers 2,000 square miles and stretches from the shores of Puget Sound to the snow-crested peaks of the Cascade Mountains. It contains Seattle and 38 smaller cities as well as farmland and forests, four major river systems and hundreds of lakes and streams. Our county is home to 1.8 million people, and includes corporate headquarters for companies as diverse as Starbucks, Amazon.com, PACCAR and Microsoft.

The Puget Sound region as a whole is the twelfth largest in the country and includes more than 3.2 million residents and 1.7 million jobs, or about 51 percent of the population and 58 percent of employment in Washington state. Yet the region disproportionately accounts for more than 67 percent of the state's entire gross domestic product. Our region's economy and population are both growing extremely fast, forecasted to add another 1.5 million people over the next thirty years. I think about how the decisions I make as an elected official today will shape what our region looks like decades from now, and about whether the people living there—including my children and grandchildren—will enjoy well-being and prosperity. That is why I am pleased to speak before you today about transportation, which consistently polls as one of the most important concerns of the public—especially their frustration with traffic congestion.

Transportation is vital to our region's economy and quality of life—and metropolitan areas like mine are, in turn, the drivers of the American economy. According to the Brookings Institution, America's top 100 metropolitan areas generate 75 percent of the nation's gross domestic product. But these economic engines could begin to sputter if we

do not address two major transportation challenges facing metropolitan regions: aging highway infrastructure and crippling traffic congestion. According to the Texas Transportation Institute, in 2003 congestion in the top 85 urban areas caused 3.7 billion hours of travel delay and 2.3 billion gallons of wasted fuel, at a total cost of $63 billion dollars. In addition, the transportation sector generates one-third of harmful greenhouse-gas emissions, and increasing passenger vehicle miles traveled and idling in congestion significantly harms our national environmental objectives.

The public is clamoring for us to do something about these problems—now. In a recent King County poll that asked people to rank the urgency of a number of transportation issues, 55 percent of the respondents ranked reducing traffic congestion as the most urgent challenge.

An Innovative Approach

The good news is that we can meet our transportation challenges by taking an innovative approach and by using new tools that are available to us. Instead of viewing transportation narrowly as an issue of road capacity, we are finding that we can gain many benefits by taking a holistic approach that looks at whole transportation systems; that considers transportation in the broader context of economic, national security, environmental, health, and social needs; and that employs an integrated set of transportation management tools.

King County government is well-positioned to deliver the needed transportation services, in collaboration with others. We play a leading role in transportation planning, maintain roads and bridges in unincorporated areas, and own and operate Metro Transit, one of the ten largest transit systems in the nation. Metro provides a broad range of services, and has grown tremendously over the past three years—like many transit agencies across the country. Metro provided 113 million passenger trips in 2007.

King County also is excited to be a part of several national efforts to consider how to reform our federal transportation appropriations and policies, so we can put new approaches to work meeting the challenges of metropolitan regions and helping maintain America's position in the global economy.

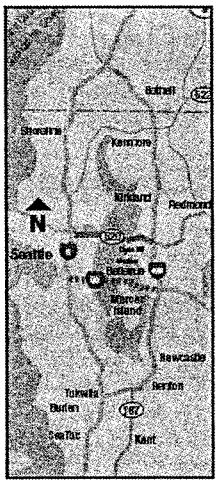
To be effective, we must consider the potential of new or non-traditional tools. Last year, King County and partner agencies were selected for a U.S. Department of Transportation "Urban Partnership" that will provide federal funding for congestion-reduction measures including variable tolling, major new transit improvements, traffic-management technologies, telecommuting strategies and other choices and incentives to influence commuters' behavior. We believe that this mix of approaches is promising. Variable tolling—in combination with increased transit services—holds particular promise in our region as a tool for reducing traffic congestion and paying for infrastructure improvements. Unlike traditional flat-rate tolling, variable tolling charges higher rates when traffic is heavy, thus encouraging travelers to drive at non-peak travel times, take transit, combine trips, or carpool.

I would like to briefly discuss two case studies in King County that illustrate how innovative approaches and new tools can be used to replace aging transportation infrastructure and reduce congestion.

State Route 520 Case Study

The first situation concerns the increasingly congested east-west corridor in the Seattle-King County metropolitan region. State Route 520, the Lake Washington floating bridge between I-5 and I-405, is one of the most congested corridors in the region. This corridor connects Seattle and growing suburban cities, linking some of the country's most vibrant technology and manufacturing centers and some of the most desirable residential areas in North America.

SR 520 was built in 1963 as a four-lane toll bridge and is now more than forty years old. According to the Washington State Department of Transportation, the bridge was designed to carry 65,000 cars per day; today it carries an average of 115,000 cars per day. State engineers gave the bridge a rating of 44 out of 100 on a recent structural integrity test. For comparison, the bridge that collapsed in Minnesota last year was rated as a 50. Replacement of the SR 520 bridge is a critical, high-priority infrastructure project.



The major population and employment centers in the central Puget Sound region are separated by Lake Washington. SR 520 and I-90 are the sole east-west connections across the lake and are heavily traveled by commuters in both directions.

Last spring, King County, the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Puget Sound Regional Council—our metropolitan planning organization—joined together to address the problems of traffic congestion in the SR 520 corridor and the shortage of funds to replace the bridge. Together, we developed a proposal for the United States Department of Transportation's Urban Partnership program that I mentioned earlier. Our strategy incorporates "Four T's"—tolling (in particular variable tolling), transit, technology and telecommuting. Implementation of this strategy should bring much-needed congestion relief to this corridor. We estimate an increase of up to 35 percent in transit ridership, as well as reduction of vehicle-miles traveled and greenhouse-gas emissions. In addition, revenue generated by variable tolling, along with state and federal gas-tax revenue, will be used to finance replacement of the bridge.

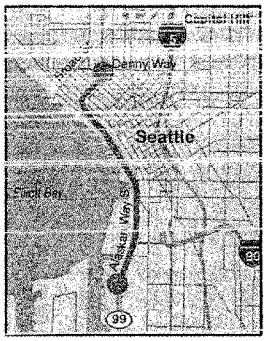
In August of 2007, King County and its partners in the Lake Washington Urban Partnership were awarded $127 million to implement this strategy. The Washington Legislature paved the way for this project in its recently completed 2008 session, passing a policy bill that will enable variable tolling on the SR 520 bridge.

Alaskan Way Viaduct Case Study

My second case study involves the Alaskan Way Viaduct, an elevated highway built in 1953 that runs along the Elliott Bay waterfront in Seattle's industrial district and downtown Seattle. It is similar in design to the Cypress Street Viaduct in Oakland that was destroyed in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. The Alaskan Way Viaduct is the smaller of two major north-south traffic corridors through Seattle; it carries up to 110,000 vehicles per day. In 2001, the Nisqually earthquake damaged the viaduct, and state and local officials were confronted with the need to replace the existing structure.

The Washington Governor and Legislature allocated $2.8 billion towards this effort. But in March 2007, city residents voted against replacing the viaduct with a new elevated structure or a tunnel.

Since that time, Governor Christine Gregoire, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels and I have been spearheading a collaborative process that can serve as a national model for solving tough metropolitan transportation challenges. Our tri-agency process locks together state highway, county transit, and city transportation professionals in an innovative, comprehensive problem-solving approach.



The Alaskan Way Viaduct runs along Seattle's central waterfront.

The first thing we agreed to do was move forward immediately with $915 million worth of work on the north and south ends of the viaduct. This was critical to keeping the structure safe and maintaining freight access to Seattle's seaport. Delay would have driven up costs and left trucks, cars and buses stuck in traffic.

Next, we redefined the purpose and need of the remaining "middle mile" of the project. Initially, planners' goal had been to move the same number of vehicles on the same alignment as the existing viaduct. They largely ignored the importance of the central waterfront as a community asset. We changed that by adopting a set of guiding principles for the project that better reflect our community's economic, social and environmental values as well as our transportation needs. We also began to look more broadly at how Interstate 5, surface streets, transit, as well as policy and management changes could play roles in solving the viaduct replacement problem. In other words, we are taking a more comprehensive approach that considers the viaduct in the context of the whole transportation system, and considers transportation for its impacts on the economy, climate change, and place-making for people.

Finally, we strengthened this approach by forming a stakeholders committee of thirty citizens representing diverse points of view to tell us their thoughts about possible solutions.

When this process is completed before the end of the year, the Governor, Mayor and I will announce our solution for the central waterfront. I believe we will have a plan that will increase our reliance on transit for travel to and from downtown Seattle, and will also make strategic investments in the broader north-south corridor, enabling us to free up precious space on the waterfront for a less intrusive and less polluting roadway solution.

Principles to Consider in Transportation Policy Reform

These two case studies show that metropolitan regions are ready to use bold new strategies to solve the challenges of critical aging road infrastructure and congestion. They also illustrate several key principles that we would like you to consider as you take up the matter of reforming national policies concerning federal highway and transit investment.

First, we need to take a holistic approach to transportation investment. Dividing transportation funding into narrow programs and projects tends to limit thinking on the best way to solve transportation problems. Particularly in the larger metropolitan areas, we need to have the local officials who are responsible for streets, transit and non-motorized travel sitting in the same room with state highway officials to come up with the best transportation solutions. We should employ a coordinated set of transportation strategies to improve mobility, rather than a narrow focus on roads alone. A report issued this year by the bipartisan National Surface Transportation Policy Commission emphasized this point.

A holistic approach also means that transportation decisions must take into account the broader role of transportation in society. Land-use and transportation are inextricably linked. Reducing urban sprawl and long drive times can improve our quality of life by easing stress and providing people more time at home with their families.

Environmental impacts must also be considered—in particular, the transportation sector's production of greenhouse-gas emissions that cause global warming. Nationally, the transportation sector is responsible for 33 percent of CO_2 emissions, and those emissions are projected to increase rapidly. Passenger vehicles—cars and light trucks—are responsible for more than three-fifths of transportation sector CO_2 emissions. As the Urban Land Institute points out in its new book, *Growing Cooler*, transportation strategies that reduce vehicle-miles traveled, such as compact development, increased transit, and highway pricing, are essential in our efforts to combat global warming.

We also need to consider how we can reduce our dependence on unreliable sources of foreign oil. This is both an economic and a national security imperative. Transportation decisions can play a critical role in reaching this goal.

The second principle concerns who should manage tolling projects. As you know, I am a strong advocate for variable tolling in our congested metropolitan areas. Variable tolling is not viable on every highway or in every region, but it has the potential to yield many

benefits for our larger metropolitan regions, including more revenue for highway and road maintenance, expanded transit service and transit-oriented development.

While I share the current administration's interest in variable tolling as a congestion-relief tool, I do not support privatizing our publicly financed infrastructure assets. These assets must be managed to meet the public's transportation needs, and responsibility to do so must remain with government. At the same time, tempting as it may be, we must not divert tolling revenue for general government purposes. The public cares how toll revenue is used, and believes tolls are transportation fees that should be reinvested in transportation projects and programs.

Finally, we must be mindful of social equity as we embrace variable tolling as a new revenue tool. I believe variable tolling is less burdensome to low-income residents than sales, property, gas or car-tab taxes. Variable tolling also gives people choices: Everyone has the opportunity to travel during off-peak hours or take slower roads to reduce costs—or they can choose to pay a fee for those important trips. Low-income bus riders also benefit from faster and more reliable bus trips after tolling reduces congestion. I must add that it would be irresponsible to price a roadway for all consumers without offering robust transit services as an alternative to paying a toll. Transit must be part of any variable tolling proposal.

Public Support for a New Approach

As policy-makers consider variable tolling and other new approaches to funding and managing roads and transit, they naturally will ask if the public is ready for such change. The good news is that the public is eager for congestion relief and supportive of tolling highways.

Nustats, a public-opinion research firm in Austin, Texas, recently conducted a review of 103 public-opinion surveys about tolling and road pricing. The firm concluded that a clear majority support tolling and road pricing.

In King County, public-opinion polling conducted in late December found a strong preference for tolling over sales tax or vehicle-related fees and taxes to finance the SR 520 bridge replacement project. Eighty-four percent of respondents favored tolling while only 10 percent preferred a sales tax. When asked about vehicle-related charges such as a gas tax or car-tab fees, 78 percent of respondents favored tolling and 17 percent favored the vehicle-related charges.

The Nustats review also discovered that the public cares about how the revenue is used. People are more supportive of variable tolling when the revenue is used to fund transportation infrastructure in their state. Support tends to be higher for highway infrastructure or public transit improvements, and/or to complete necessary transportation construction faster.

Once again, those opinions were reflected in our local public-opinion research. When we asked people if they would support tolling if the toll revenue would be invested not only in bridge replacement but also in increased transit, bicycle lanes, and technology to improve traffic flow, 74 percent supported tolling and 24 percent opposed it. When we asked people if they would support tolling if the revenue would be used for bridge replacement only, support for tolling dropped to 64 percent and opposition rose to 34 percent—a net 20 percent shift—even though respondents were told that this would result in a lower toll rate.

Furthermore, once voters understood variable tolling and its ability to ease congestion, they supported it over flat-rate tolling (69 percent supported and 29 percent opposed variable tolling, while 53 percent supported and 43 percent opposed fixed-price tolling). In our survey we likened variable tolling to the way movie theaters charge less for matinees, when fewer people come to the theater. We explained that variable tolling encourages people to drive during off-peak times, take transit, combine trips or carpool. People got it and liked it.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you about the transportation challenges facing metropolitan regions. I look forward to your efforts to consider how federal transportation policy can ensure that we employ innovative new strategies to finance our most critical road infrastructure and move people and goods more efficiently.

King County

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April 28, 2008

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman, Highways & Transit Subcommittee
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio:

It was an honor and a pleasure to testify before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit two weeks ago on the transportation challenges facing metropolitan areas. I appreciated the strong interest shared by you and the committee members in the concerns and transportation needs of America's economic engines – our metropolitan regions.

As I testified, I am concerned about the economic impacts of the challenges we face in the metropolitan Seattle region with our aging infrastructure and congested corridors. However, I believe that we have an opportunity to take a new holistic approach to our transportation policy and programs. There is a wealth of new ideas and innovative tools to begin to meet the public's expectation of safe, reliable and faster travel on America's state and national highway systems.

At the request of Representative Richardson, I have included copies of our Equity and Social Justice Report to be shared with the Subcommittee members at your discretion. I have also included the letter I sent to Representative Richardson regarding the issue of social equity and tolls. I think we agree that we need to recognize that many Americans are struggling with longer commutes to jobs where their wages are not keeping pace with the increase in the cost of living. Our huge demand for transportation infrastructure investment must not have a disproportional impact on those least able to afford an increase in their transportation costs.

More information is available regarding equity and social justice in transportation in our recently released King County Equity and Social Justice Report. This report reflects our commitment at King County to consider a new approach to addressing equity in all our policy decisions and actions throughout King County government. Inequity in our community is our biggest health risk and it is time we approached it in a comprehensive and transparent manner.

King County is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act

I look forward to a continued dialogue with you and the Subcommittee members on the many other issues that were discussed at the hearing on April 9. I would also welcome a Subcommittee field hearing in King County or visit from members interested in some of the tools and approaches I discussed in my testimony that we are working to implement in King County.

Thank you again for the opportunity to engage in an interesting and valuable debate on transportation challenges in our metropolitan regions. Please do not hesitate to contact me at ron.sims@kingcounty.gov, or 206-296-4054. Your staff can also reach out to our representative in Washington, D.C., Marek Gootman with Patton Boggs at mgootman@pattonboggs.com, or 202-457-6158.

Warm Regards,

Ron Sims
King County Executive

Enclosures

King County

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April 28, 2008

The Honorable Laura Richardson
2233 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Richardson:

It was an honor and a pleasure to testify before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit two weeks ago on the transportation challenges facing metropolitan areas. I appreciated the strong interest shared by Chairman DeFazio and the committee members in the concerns and transportation needs of America's economic engines – our metropolitan regions.

As I testified, I am concerned about the economic impacts of the challenges we face in the metropolitan Seattle region with our aging infrastructure and congested corridors. However, I believe that we have an opportunity to take a new holistic approach to our transportation policy and programs. There is a wealth of new ideas and innovative tools to begin to meet the public's expectation of safe, reliable and faster travel on America's state and national highway systems.

I know that we share a similar concern for considering the social equity impacts of a new approach for financing our federal and state road investments. In our region, the traditional tools for financing our critical transportation projects are sales tax, gas tax, and other vehicle fees. The public opinion research we have done in King County indicates that the public has made clear their preference for tolls on certain highways as an alternative to the status quo. According to our attached analysis, this preference was significant and it did not differ based on income level.

It is also clear that transit is important to our lower income commuters. Tolling proposals in our congested metropolitan regions must include increased transit, bike and other alternatives to paying the toll. This strong support for transit as a component of tolling is shared by our lower income residents as well. In fact, our research showed that given the choice between a cheaper toll that only replaced the bridge and a higher toll that included transit, 17 percent more low income respondents favored the more expensive toll with the increased transit service (see attached analysis).

I also requested our transportation staff provide me with available data on the commute behaviors of low income residents to better understand how variable tolling with higher tolls during peak commutes, in order to reduce congestion and travel time, would impact our low income residents.

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According to our 2007 Equity of Transit Service Report *(A Title VI Report of Programs and Activities of Recipients of FTA Financial Assistance),* low income routes account for 80 percent of the bus trips in King County. These routes tend to go through the highest density and most congested areas of the region. Further analysis shows that low income commuters traveling by bus have a longer commute than higher income bus commuters.

There was no difference in the commute times for those traveling by car or truck, regardless of income. And, of course, a higher percentage of low income working poor commute to work by bus.

Transit is critical to our low income residents and we must work to improve the performance of our transit system. As I stated in my oral testimony last week, within the Urban Growth Area of King County, 95 percent of residents live within a ¼ mile of a bus route or 1 ½ miles of a park and ride lot. The increased transit access and faster service that results from variable tolling, and investing toll revenue in transit, offers us a tremendous opportunity to better serve our low income workforce. It also provides them a viable alternative paying the toll.

More information is available regarding equity and social justice in transportation in our recently released King County Equity and Social Justice Report that I have included with this letter. This report reflects our commitment at King County to consider a new approach to addressing equity in all our policy decisions and actions throughout King County government. Inequity in our community is our biggest health risk and it is time we approached it in a comprehensive and transparent manner. Also, at your request, we are providing copies of the report to the entire Subcommittee membership through Chairman DeFazio's office.

Thank you for the opportunity to engage in an interesting and valuable exchange about tolling and its impacts on low income commuters. I look forward to working with you and others on the Subcommittee as you consider the social equity impacts of changes in our federal transportation policy. I suggested a Subcommittee field hearing in my letter to Chairman DeFazio and I would also offer you an opportunity to visit King County to learn more about how we are going to move forward to implement some of the new tools and approaches I discussed in my testimony.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at ron.sims@kingcounty.gov, or 206-296-4054 or Maura Brueger, Senior Advisor for Federal Relations in the my office. Ms. Brueger can be reached at 206-296-4001, or by e-mail at maura.brueger@kingcounty.gov.

Warmest regards,

Ron Sims
King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Peter DeFazio

King County Public Opinion Survey **4/25/08**
Summary of excerpts from questions related to issue of social equity and opinions of lower income respondents.

We reviewed the responses of respondents with <$65,000 annual household income as that was the lowest income level aggregated. King County median income is approximately $53,000 annually. Other categories were $65,000-$100,000 and $100,000+. The sample size was 173 for < $65,000 annual household income as compared to the overall sample of 501 respondents.

We selected several questions regarding tolls, including some specific proposals under consideration in King County. We compared respondents with <$65,000 annual household income to the overall respondents to see if there were different opinions based on the lower household income.

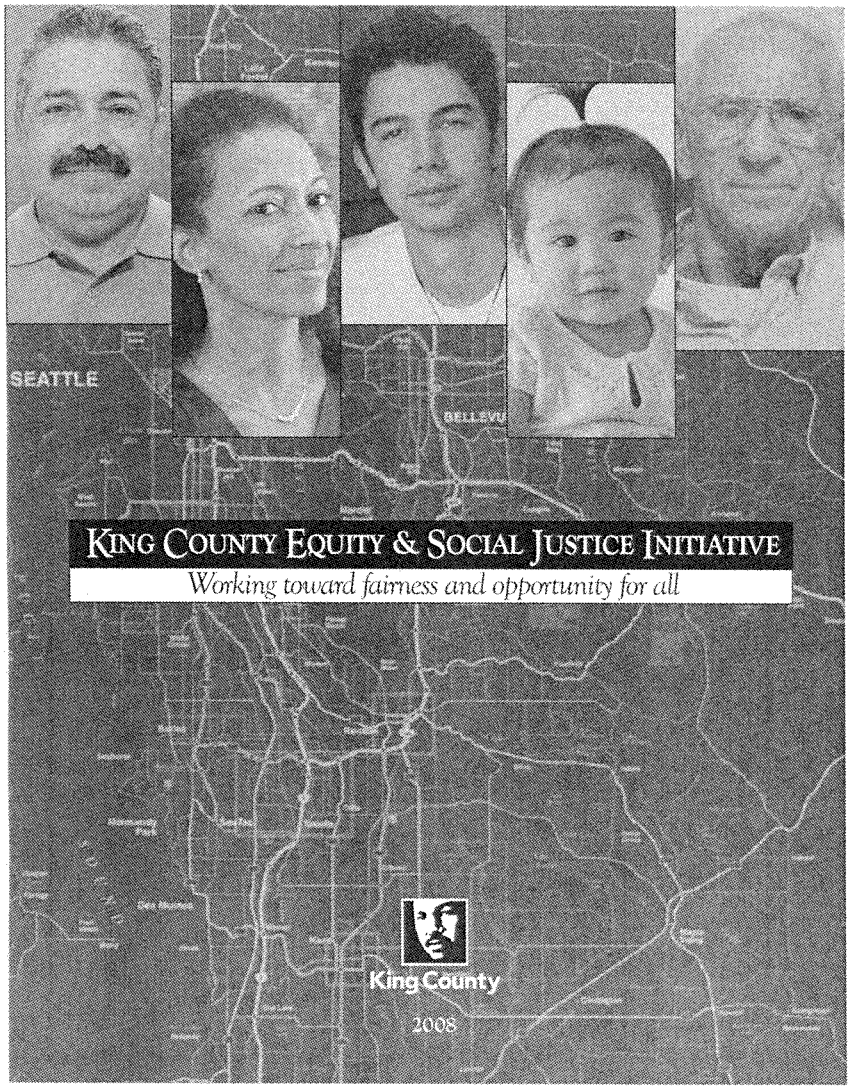
On issues related to a preference for tolls versus sales tax or tolls versus transportation related fees, there was only a 1-2 percent difference between respondents with <$65,000 annual household income and the overall respondents. **Overall, all respondents preferred tolls over sales tax 84% to10% and tolls over transportation related fees 78% to 17%.**

Our review did not find an increased opposition to tolls among lower income households. In fact, respondents with <$65,000 annual household income polled stronger in support of a specific proposal that would include a $4 toll on the lake Washington floating bridges to pay for replacement of one bridge, maintenance of the other, increased transit service and bike investments and new technology to improve traffic flow. **Respondents with <$65,000 annual household income were 77% in support and 22% opposed as compared to 74% support and 24% oppose among overall respondents.**

Interestingly, when offered the option of a smaller toll ($2.50) without money for additional transit services, **more respondents with <$65,000 annual household income were less supportive of the proposal with 60% support to 38% oppose in contrast, to 64% support to 35% oppose among overall respondents.** This is a 17% drop in support among respondents with <$65,000 annual household income from the tolling proposal that had a higher toll but included transit.

Lower income respondents were also more supportive of variable tolling than overall respondents. In fact, respondents with <$65,000 annual household incomes polled stronger in support of specific proposal that would include variable tolling on both our cross lake bridges, fund replacement of one of the bridges and maintenance on the other, and increased transit and bike investments and new technology improvements by implementing tolls that range from $1 to $7. **Respondents with <$65,000 annual household income supported the proposal 69% in support and 29% oppose as compared to 63% support and 35% oppose for overall all respondents.**

After hearing the following social equity message, *"studies have shown that variable tolling is popular regardless of income because it is less burdensome than sales, property, gas or car tabs and because it gives everyone a choice to pay a fee for important trips and low income bus riders benefit substantially from faster and more reliable bus trips"*, **respondents with <$65,000 annual household income were more likely to support tolling by 80 to 16% as compared to the overall respondents who76% were more likely to support and 18% oppose tolling.**


SEATTLE
BELLEVU
KING COUNTY EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE
Working toward fairness and opportunity for all
King County
2008

What if all residents of King County had the same opportunities regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, sexual orientation or disability?

What if all residents of King County had the opportunity to receive the same quality education, the same access to basic health care, the same opportunities to work for a living wage, the same access to affordable housing, the same ability to live in safe neighborhoods, and the same opportunity to enjoy the natural environment?

A new, better and very different King County would emerge.

We can be the catalyst for this change.

King County Executive Ron Sims

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inequities: The persistent problem

In 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. proclaimed, "I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits."

While more than four decades have passed, this nation is still burdened by vast disparities in wealth, health and opportunities. This county, named for Dr. King, is not exempt from this grim picture. Just look at the facts:

- A child in south King County is more than twice as likely to drop out of high school as one in east King County.
- A worker making between $15,000 and $25,000 a year is 10 times less likely to have health insurance than one making $50,000 or more per year.
- A youth of color is six times more likely than a white youth to spend time in a state or county correctional facility.
- A southeast Seattle resident is four times more likely to die from diabetes than a resident of Mercer Island.
- A Native American baby is four times more likely to die before his or her first birthday than a white baby.

Inequities that exist at all levels of society have persistent, profound and long-lasting effects. And people with lower incomes, people of color and those in disenfranchised communities are losing ground. They are more likely to begin their lives with inadequate infant care, to be not ready to learn when they get to school, to play in unsafe neighborhoods, to receive a lower-quality education, to be less likely to find a good job that pays a livable wage, to be less healthy, to be prone to disease and to die earlier.

The stressors of racism and discrimination may also be contributing to poor health. A highly-educated, professional African-American woman is more than twice as likely to have a child with very low birth weight, compared to a white woman with a high school diploma or less.

The gulf between the rich and the poor is widening, a fact that can be seen in the great disparities in our neighborhoods around the county. While many of our communities are thriving, some neighborhoods increasingly must confront the conditions that lead to poor health, underemployment, poor education, incarceration, loss of opportunity and an unsafe living environment.

The search for solutions

Although some have worked hard to address these issues, decades of misguided policies have also contributed to the problem -- policies that have isolated the poorest neighborhoods from economic opportunities, provided inadequate schools and services, and disenfranchised communities trying to do better.

Traditionally, many institutions have focused solely on treating the results of the problems by creating more prisons and providing more services for individuals in crisis. However, there is increasing evidence that the way to address these challenges is to focus on the root, underlying conditions of inequity and to ensure opportunities for all communities. By increasing the focus on affordable housing, quality education, safe neighborhoods, access to health care, and other underlying conditions, the individuals and families within disadvantaged communities will lead healthier and more prosperous lives.

As part of King County's effort to correct a history of inequalities, the goal must be to expand the programs and activities that have achieved the desired effect, modify existing programs to incorporate pro-equity elements, and create new programs and policies that will explicitly address local inequities.

If all people had access to the same opportunities for quality education, basic health care, good jobs and safe and affordable housing, all residents of King County would reap the benefits -- through greater economic vitality, a better educated populace, a less expensive health care system, a lower cost criminal justice system, and better government through a more engaged and representative citizenry.

Now is the time to act

The King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative takes aim at these inequities and injustices. Government is better prepared than ever before to address this problem. And correcting inequities and promoting equal opportunity for all residents are the essence of what government should do.

This is not business as usual. King County will look at new approaches and use the following principles to guide its work:

- Move "upstream" to address the root causes of inequities
- Actively seek out and promote decisions and policies aimed at equity
- Empower communities
- Work across agencies and departments
- Recognize and honor cultural differences
- Aim for long-term, permanent change

Next steps and actions

King County will make equity and social justice central to its work. The county outlines three levels of action.

- Policy development and decision-making: King County will ensure that promoting equity is intentionally considered in the development and implementation of key policies and programs and in making funding decisions.
- Delivery of county services: By working with partners and the community, King County and its departments will identify and mitigate social inequities. All executive departments will begin new activities to promote equity in 2008.
- Community partnerships: King County will be a catalyst for mobilizing the community and supporting effective partnerships and actions. Community engagement and education constitute the initial set of opportunities addressed in this report.

Collectively, great strides toward achieving equity can be made. Many efforts are already in place. But this is a complex undertaking that will require new approaches as well as consistency and dedication over the long run.

This is just the beginning. It will be a struggle, a long and hard one. But King County and its communities and residents are in it together, and there is no more important task.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

1. Inequities: A Persistent Problem

Despite broad economic and social gains in this country in recent history, major differences exist and continue to persist for significant segments of our population -- particularly for communities of color and people living in poverty -- across the continuum of measures of health, well being and quality of life.

Nationally, white residents, on average, are more likely to attend schools with small class sizes, have access to computers, go to college, earn higher salaries, keep their jobs in an economic downturn, have health insurance and access to health care, and own their own homes. Similarly, low-income residents experience a wide range of inequities when compared to other residents. *(See Appendix I for more information on national inequities)*

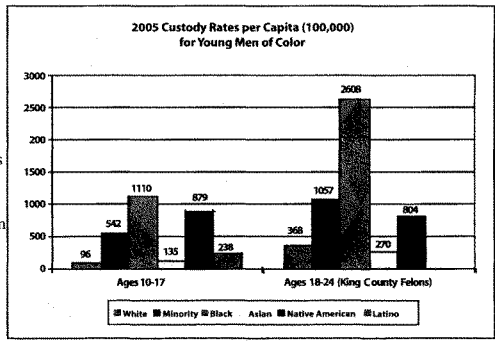
King County is not immune to the national trends despite its location in the relatively prosperous Puget Sound area. Inequities exist in King County in a wide spectrum of areas – criminal and juvenile justice, workforce and economic development, family support and child welfare, education, housing and homelessness, and health.

Workforce and economic development

- There is a growing gap between the richest and poorest in King County, as measured by income, according to the 2005 Communities Count report. More than one in five people in King County is living in a household without a living wage income (for a family of four in 2004, this was $38,600).
- The unemployment rate for white males ages 16 – 24 is 13 percent. It is 26 percent among African-American males and 27 percent among American Indian/Alaskan Native males.
- Children and adults of color are more likely to be living in poverty than whites. The median income of white households is almost twice that of African-American households.

Criminal justice

- African-American young adult men are disproportionately represented in King County's criminal justice system. For example, they are about seven times as likely as their white counterparts to be held in King County jails on felony charges.



- Similar trends can be seen for youth (under age 18) in King County's juvenile justice system. Youth of color are almost six times as likely as white youth to be held in a state or county juvenile detention facility.

Family support and child welfare

- People with incomes of $50,000 or more have higher levels of support – emotionally and practical resources – than people with lower incomes, according to the 2005 Communities Count report. People who are white report more social support than people of other groups.

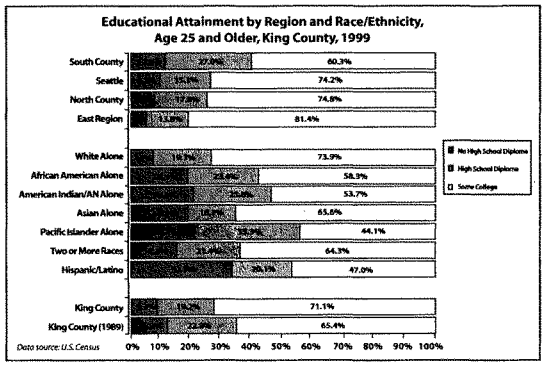
• Children of color are more likely to live in a single-parent household: white 18 percent, African American 47 percent, American Indian/Native Alaskan 47 percent, and Latino 25 percent.

• Children of color are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system. Native American children are nine times more likely than whites to be placed in foster care in King County.

Education

• Educational attainment varies by region of the county. Adults in south King County are more than twice as likely to have dropped out of high school compared to east King County adults.

• Rates of college education among people of color are much lower than their white counterparts. Twenty-three percent of African American males have a bachelor's degree, compared with 50 percent of while males in King County. Youth of color are 77 percent more likely to drop out of high school than white youth.



Housing and homelessness

• According to the 2007 One Night Count, persons of color make up 62 percent of the shelter and transitional housing population, although they represent less than a quarter of King County residents.

• In general, the lower the income, the more likely the household will spend 30% or more of its income on rent. Low income households that pay a high percentage of income on housing are at greater risk for becoming homeless.

• African Americans represent 35 percent of the homeless population, but only 6 percent of the general population.

Health

• Those living in poverty are at higher risk of poor health, including shorter life expectancy, mortality from violence, HIV/AIDS, chronic diseases such as diabetes, a lack of health insurance, obesity, and tobacco and drug use.

• An adult in south King County is almost twice as likely to smoke as an adult in east King County (21 percent vs. 11 percent).

• African American babies are twice as likely and American Indian/Native Alaskan babies four times as likely to die before their first birthdays as are white, Latino and Asian babies.

• A lower income King County resident is 10 times more likely to be without health insurance compared to a wealthier individual. In other words, 42% of adults (18-64 years) in households earning between $15,000-$24,999 are uninsured, compared to 4% of adults in households earning over $50,000.

Racism and discrimination may also be contributing to poor health. A highly-educated, professional African-American woman is more than twice as likely to have a child with very low birth weight, compared to a white woman with a high school diploma or less education.

In addition to documenting the broad differences in quality of life between wealthier Americans and that of the low-income and people of color, studies show that in many areas there has been a widening of the gap in recent decades.

From 1970 to 2000, the gap between the median incomes for African American families and the total population widened in King County. The rate of home ownership during this period declined for African American families while it remained steady for white families.

The economy bears the burden when the full potential of the workforce is not realized. And everybody pays for the excessive demand for criminal justice and other crises services. For health, everybody absorbs the cost of inequities brought about by higher disease and lack of insurance.

Clearly, not everybody feels the direct, daily pain of inequities. But everybody suffers the consequences.

"Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals." — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

2. Searching For and Creating Solutions

Despite the long list of devastating statistics and inequities, there are significant local and national efforts to search for and create solutions. Improving a community's well-being requires the recognition that a person's condition is not just the product of individual characteristics -- genetics, behavior and lifestyle choices -- but more importantly of underlying, root causes. These root causes, generally referred to as the social determinants of health, are powerful independent predictors of social outcomes.

Key social determinants include, but are not limited to: income and other forms of wealth; affordable, quality housing; quality education; employment; safe neighborhoods and community recreation sites; social support; and transportation. Social determinants, collectively, form the fabric of social and economic opportunity and a healthy environment.

Rates of illness and death increase as socioeconomic status decreases. Research shows that individual health is substantially influenced by the social and environmental context. In fact, health and life expectancy increase with every step up the social hierarchy. This means that wealthier people live longer, healthier lives. Even the middle class, as it contends with job stress, accessing health care, lower quality schools, and less healthy living environments, lives shorter and less healthy lives than the wealthy.

Racism has played a substantial historical role in the distribution of these social determinants in the United States. A consequence of this legacy of racial discrimination is that people of color are disproportionately represented among the poor. As a result, people of color are more likely to have lower incomes, a lower quality education and fewer job opportunities than whites. The long-standing pattern of racial discrimination in the distribution of key social determinants has itself become an important determinant of health.

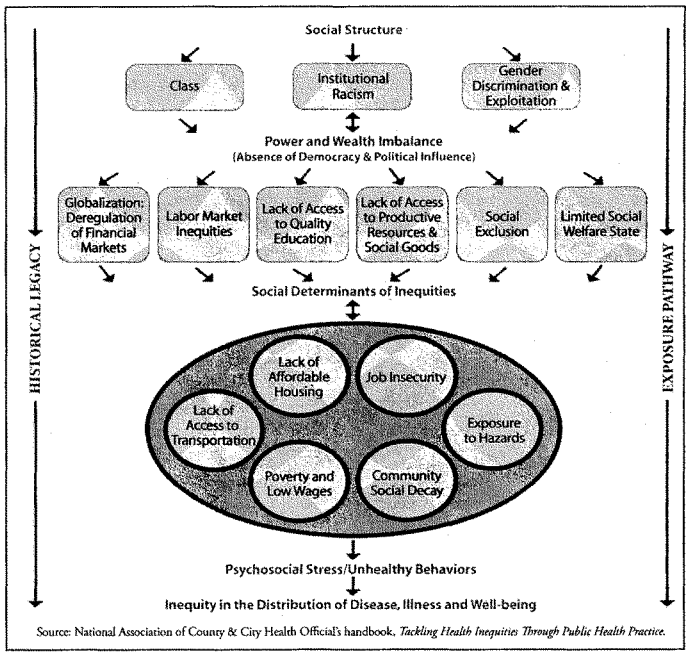
Historical policies and practices that separate communities on the basis of income and race have resulted in the poor and people of color becoming concentrated in racially segregated neighborhoods. While neighborhood poverty, housing and school segregation in King County do not reach the extreme levels experienced in many other U.S. metropolitan areas, the patterns in how they help create and sustain inequities are similar.

In addition to limiting socioeconomic opportunities, living in poor neighborhoods can have a direct negative impact on people's well-being. Poor neighborhoods are often close to freeways and other sources of environmental pollutants. Streets may be unsafe and housing run down. The unhealthy neighborhood environment can become the social context that promotes unhealthy behaviors ranging from crime to poor nutrition. Poor neighborhoods have a low property tax base and less political power to implement the upkeep or restoration of parks and other recreational areas. The graphic on the next page illustrates how social structures, power and income, and social determinants combine to affect the quality of people's lives.

Correcting a history of inequality

How can persistent inequities be overcome? Evidence is mounting that focusing on the determinants of health and well-being – such as affordable housing, access to transportation, safe environments, quality education, and living wage jobs – can improve the health and well-being of disadvantaged communities. Not surprisingly, these conditions are already present in thriving communities.

"Inequities," by its very definition, means that the benefits of progress are reaching some sectors of society, but not others. Hence, there are solutions that are working for some



Source: National Association of County & City Health Official's handbook, *Tackling Health Inequities Through Public Health Practice.*

populations, but not others. Addressing inequities must include expanding for all people what are known to be the contributors to well-being and a better quality of life that currently are only enjoyed by some.

Though it is true that less is known about how to foster these conditions in struggling neighborhoods and communities, every community has its strengths and assets, which need to be the foundation of improvements. There are examples, locally, nationally and internationally, where successes have been achieved, especially when comprehensive approaches are taken that combine policies with appropriate programs and services.

Over the past several decades, women across the globe have made extraordinary advances in achieving a more equitable standing in society and creating more fair systems. Globally not all societies have achieved the same level of progress, but in many societies women have made significant advances by gaining a voice, political representation, real economic power and more. In countries where women have achieved more equal standing, the consequences have been astounding, ranging from higher literacy rates to reduced infant mortality, reduced population growth and more rapid economic development.

Asthma and housing quality is one of the best studied examples of how physical and social characteristics of the built environment are associated with health status. Public health efforts locally and nationally have focused on improving indoor environmental quality and have grown into a broader effort to improve

the built environment to promote health. Growing evidence supports the effectiveness of a multi-level strategy. This strategy includes addressing exposure to indoor asthma triggers and the underlying structural conditions which increase trigger exposure. Partnerships with public housing agencies and community-based organizations can incorporate healthy homes guidelines and principles of healthy community design into the physical redevelopment of public housing. A final difference-maker are resident-led community building activities to promote social cohesion and interaction.

In King County, recent rates for childhood hospitalizations due to asthma have declined as local asthma control efforts, such as those described previously, have intensified. Along these lines, the Seattle-King County Healthy Homes study, which included low income children with poorly controlled asthma and targeted English, Spanish and Vietnamese speaking families, showed that a home visiting program was able to reduce asthma symptoms and produce improvements in the quality of life of the child's caregiver.

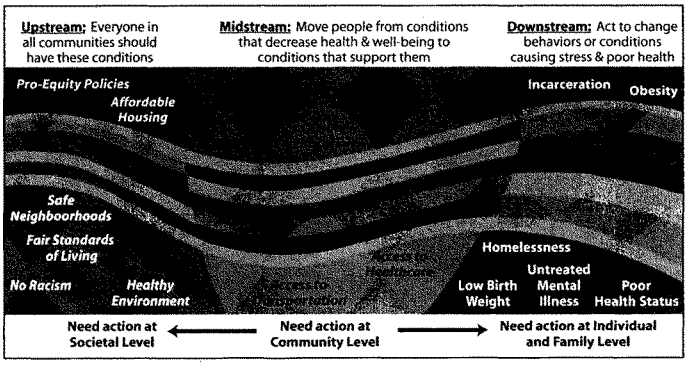
It is possible both to create new programs and to re-design existing programs to make a difference in addressing inequities. As part of King County's effort to correct a history of inequalities, the goal must be to expand the programs and activities that have achieved the desired effect, modify existing programs to incorporate pro-equity elements, and create new programs and policies that will explicitly address local inequities.

A "stream" as a metaphor for the conditions of the community

The metaphor of a stream provides several insights about the connection between the underlying conditions or social determinants in a community and the health and wellbeing of individuals and families. As shown in the diagram below, when the upstream conditions of a community – environmental, social, economic, and political – are neglected, the implications are a much greater set of downstream problems experienced by individuals and families and there are costs incurred by everyone.

Working upstream means finding solutions to problems before they develop, at a policy-level, and across sectors of society – communities, governments, and businesses. Within state and local governments, all agencies have a role in contributing to a healthy stream. Transportation, parks, education, health, justice, treatment, housing, and other service systems can break out of their traditional silos and work together to respond to the needs of communities.

In fact, the historical response by most



institutions has been to focus on the downstream crises of individuals and families. More prisons, social workers, homeless shelters, treatment beds, and emergency healthcare services are often the priority for funding. Yet, what is needed is a focus on all parts of the stream – upstream, midstream, and downstream. While it may take many years, upstream successes will result in a steady reduction in the demand for downstream crisis services and a commensurate increase in our ability to further support the conditions that promote thriving communities.

Community empowerment

Equity and social justice are fundamentally about communities having an equal voice in shaping their future. A new park will have a much greater benefit to the surrounding community if its residents help design it. An underserved community is much more likely to have the bus service it needs if its members can influence the service delivery.

Yet, the historical disadvantages some communities face can be substantial barriers to having this voice. If residents move frequently to find affordable housing, cannot take time off work, do not know whom to call or where to go to voice their concerns, or simply lack faith that they will be heard, they will continue to be left out. A key ingredient to promoting equity and social justice is to engage communities and support them in developing their voice and influencing their future.

Clear and constant focus

Information about the economy and the population's income, health or education is usually reported as an average for the country or a particular region, which disguises the severe poverty, crime, preventable illnesses, and homelessness that persists in some communities. As a result, the issue of disparities and their underlying inequities is out of focus, or even worse, out of mind for many institutions, businesses, and privileged communities.

A key ingredient of solutions is the need for intentional and systematic focus on inequities, including spending resources on measuring inequities. As noted earlier in this report, the facts alone are disturbing and compelling. However, to prevent equity and social justice from returning to the back burner when the next crisis erupts, these issues and trends should be tracked and reported regularly so that this region can assess its progress.

Making progress will require King County and other local organizations to become more intentional and systematic about examining equity when developing policies, making funding decisions, and delivering services. Whether it is a zoning policy, a park improvement project, or a drug treatment program, the persons or organizations making decisions should start by answering two questions: How does this policy, funding decision, or service affect underserved communities? How can it be used as an opportunity to work upstream and positively impact community conditions that support all communities?

National momentum

Both nationally and here in the Northwest, organizations are coming together to develop and share strategies for creating and promoting equity. The innovative strategies are important in order to maintain the focus on equity and to learn from each other.

At the national level, two initiatives, Place Matters and the Dellums Commission, are identifying root causes and proposing upstream approaches to creating and promoting equity. Both are initiatives of the Health Policy Institute of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, whose mission is to ignite a "Fair Health" movement that gives people of color the inalienable right to equal opportunity for healthy lives. (For more information, see www.jointcenter.org).

King County is one of over twenty counties participating in the national learning community called Place Matters. To address social conditions that lead to poor health, King County's Place Matters team is focusing its efforts on developing a tool for creating

more equitable policies and on holding community dialogues to address inequities.

Another county team recently examined the situation in this region for young men of color within the six domains in the national Dellums Commission Report (health, education, family support and child welfare, workforce and economic development, juvenile and criminal justice and media), and highlighted possible next steps. The work of both teams has contributed to shaping this Equity and Social Justice Initiative.

In addition to Place Matters and the Dellums Commission Report, many other efforts are emerging nationally. Five examples are noted below and are particularly relevant for King County since they are partners in this movement. More information on these efforts is provided in Appendix II.

- **Multnomah County (Oregon) Health Equity Initiative:** Addressing health inequities by directly engaging communities and building upon knowledge gained from successful initiatives and public dialogues launched by the Departments of Health, Community Justice and the Library.
- **Alameda County (California) Place Matters Initiative:** Promoting more equitable distribution of social goods by influencing policies in housing, education, economic development, incarceration, land use and transportation with a long-term view towards sustained effort over many years.
- **Louisville Metro, Kentucky Center for Health Equity**: Promoting policy change, evidence-based interventions and education, and building new coalitions that reshape the public health landscape to assist communities in addressing barriers to health equity.
- **Washington State, Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council on Health Disparities**: Creating an action plan and statewide policy to include health impact reviews that measure and address social determinants of health that lead to disparities as well as the contributing factors of health that can have broad impacts on improving status, health literacy, physical activity and nutrition.
- **City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative:** Seeking to reduce disproportionality in economic opportunity, education, civic engagement, health, and criminal justice, fostering more inclusive civic engagement, ensuring equity in business and personnel practices, and delivering services that are relevant to Seattle's diverse populations.

Examples across the country show paths to achieving equity through social justice by creating or refocusing policies and practices rooted in the social determinants. King County's thinking and efforts are guided by the work underway locally and nationally.

Undoing decades of misguided policies, overt neglect, and the unintended consequences of past policies will take many years of persistent and steady effort. However, as highlighted in this report, many key ingredients are known and when these ingredients are placed in the hands of communities, governments, and businesses focused on promoting equity it can result in powerful and positive changes.

"I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits." —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

3. Now Is the Time to Act

Dr. King's vision can be a guide for this county and its residents. The goal must be to transform the privileges that some enjoy into basic rights for everyone to share. Embracing the principles of equity and social justice can lead to a future where all residents of King County have real opportunities for quality education, livable wages, affordable housing, health care, and safe and vibrant neighborhoods. In this vision of the future, in stark contrast to the distressing indicators cited earlier, a much healthier and more prosperous picture of King County would emerge.

- If all King County residents had access to jobs paying a living wage, then 390,000 fewer individuals would be living in or near poverty and instead could better enjoy the high quality of life that this region has the potential to offer.
- If every school in King County were as excellent as the schools in the most privileged communities, then nearly 1,000 more youth of color would graduate from high school each year and would be prepared to take on the challenges of economic diversification and global change.
- If all people in King County lived in healthy environments, had the knowledge to make healthy lifestyle choices, and could access high quality and affordable health care, then preventable illnesses and chronic diseases would become rare occurrences in this region while long, healthier, and fuller lives would be the norm for all residents.

Promoting equity and social justice will benefit everybody. All residents of King County would benefit from a better-educated workforce, more businesses that provide livable wage jobs, safer communities, fewer residents without health insurance, and a shrinking demand for criminal justice and crisis services.

A rich tradition

King County and its partners are not starting from scratch, and there are many activities and initiatives locally from which to build upon and learn from. King County government has a history of leadership in addressing a number of areas of disparity. A few recent activities include:

- The Children's Health Initiative is an innovative approach to improve the health of low-income children. This initiative reaches out and enrolls children in insurance programs, uses multiple languages and trusted community messengers, and links families and children to regular medical and dental care.
- The Black on Black Crime Coalition, formed by King County Councilmember Larry Gossett, aims to address the rise in violent crime in the African-American community, by working across sectors, including cities, county, law enforcement, schools, faith-based communities and others.
- In criminal justice, the King County Work Training Program coordinates access to education, training and employment opportunities for persons involved in the criminal justice system. Education and employment are the keys to giving people the skills and competencies they need to be successful in careers that lead to self-sufficiency.
- HealthScape is King County's effort to promote public health and reduce carbon emissions by improving how communities are built to reduce dependency on cars and increase opportunities to be physically active. An equity lens has been used to prioritize projects. For example, the King County Department of Transportation is reconnecting a mixed-income community called Greenbridge in White Center with the central business district by providing a pedestrian pathway.

King County and its communities and partners

King County government is well positioned to be a catalyst for change in partnership with local communities and organizations. It has regional responsibilities for transportation, criminal justice, health, natural resources, parks, human services and other critical services. It also is a municipal provider of services to hundreds of thousands of residents in unincorporated areas.

Moving forward with an initiative focused on promoting equity and social justice will present many practical challenges and barriers. The set of principles listed below can help guide groups around these barriers.

- **Move "upstream" to address the root causes of inequities**. The presence of inequities is a signal of inadequate economic, environmental and other conditions that have existed for years. King County should use its collective expertise to identify these conditions and the opportunities to improve them.
- **Actively seek out and promote decisions and policies aimed at equity.** Many, if not most, decisions made in the public sector directly or indirectly impact conditions that influence the health and well-being of communities. While these decisions should not worsen the disparities in disadvantaged communities, the bar must be set higher. The decisions of King County government and its partners should promote equity through improving conditions that lead to a thriving community.
- **Empower communities.** The residents of the community are the best source of information on what is happening in their neighborhoods and what will or will not work. Their involvement combined with the expertise and technical know-how of King County and other institutional partners is a powerful model for positive and equitable change that will lead to more effective policies, decisions, and services.
- **Work across agencies and departments.** Too often, agencies work in "silos" when the best solution can come from an unexpected source and by working across disciplines. For example, a park can encourage physical activity for adults and provide after-school alternatives for youth. If agencies join together to creatively support the needs of a community, then they become co-producers of a community's health and well-being.
- **Recognize and honor cultural differences.** There is a need to understand, value and work with the diversity and differences that exist in the community. Tennis courts may be used constantly in one community and largely vacant in another community whose preferred activity is soccer. Home-based family services may be an effective program unless the social worker through a misunderstanding of cultural norms offends the clients and is unable to establish trust and confidence. If the programs and services are not designed and delivered in a culturally appropriate manner, they stand little chance of being effective.
- **Aim for long-term, permanent change.** While a new initiative can generate a burst of activity, real change will require long-term, sustainable strategies. Leveraging resources, regularly measuring progress, maintaining visibility, and embedding equity and social justice within an organizational culture are key components of a sustainable initiative. Policies and programs must be concrete and sustainable over time.

These directions represent a starting point for a way of thinking and doing that promotes fairness, equal opportunity, and community vitality for all residents of King County. It is a start on the long, but ultimately most rewarding, journey toward equity and social justice.

"All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence." —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

4. Next Steps and Actions

Starting this year, King County government will take initial yet concrete steps to build momentum toward Dr. King's vision. The work of the county is divided into three areas of action: policy development and decision-making; delivery of county services, and engagement in community partnerships.

These initial steps alone do not represent the full breadth of potential opportunities. They serve as catalysts for action and create the milieu for the kind of discussions and innovations that will lead to clear and ambitious pathways to equitable opportunities for all King County residents.

County policy development and decision-making

Policy, budgetary and program decisions by King County government and departments have a direct impact on the well-being of county residents. King County can affect the root causes of inequity by consciously evaluating new and current programs and policies and their impact on people of color and people in poverty. This process can assure that government policies do not create unequal negative impacts.

Furthermore, King County can give communities a voice in the process and thereby address the historical lack of access to institutional decision-making for communities experiencing the most significant inequities.

King County will ensure that promoting equity is intentionally considered in the development and implementation of key policies and programs and in making funding decisions.

Actions

- King County will develop and test an equity impact assessment and review tool and the associated process for incorporating the tool in decision-making.
- Create equity and social justice curriculum for managers, as well as a short curriculum for new employees.
- Create an internal mechanism for support and oversight to ensure that promoting equity is an integral part of doing business.
- Collect and publish measures to highlight inequities and to mark progress on correcting them.
- Ensure that county decision-making processes incorporate meaningful input from potentially impacted communities, particularly those facing the greatest inequities by improving internal capacity to work with communities.

Delivery of county services

King County government plays a direct or influential role in providing services, developing policies, setting priorities, and making funding decisions in many critical areas, including criminal justice, health, transportation and the environment. By working with partners and the community, King County departments have a key opportunity to identify and mitigate social inequities. As part of the King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative, all departments will begin new activities in 2008 to promote equity.

Adult and juvenile detention

The statistics on the overrepresentation of people of color in the criminal justice system in King County are startling. Young men of color are coming into contact with the justice system at alarming rates. Also called Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC), overrepresentation begins at arrest and worsens at subsequent stages of the justice system. Even beyond the justice system, former offenders may face collateral consequences related to housing, student loans, food stamps, employment, voting, Medicaid and other public benefits.

What contributes to racial disproportionality, according to the Dellums Commission and other national reports, is a "complex interaction" of socioeconomic disadvantages and the laws, policies and practices of governments and other institutions. This

complex interaction is perpetuated when communities – particularly, those most impacted by the criminal justice system – do not have opportunities to voice their concerns and be part of the solutions. The actions below focus on how the criminal justice and human service agencies can take steps to better understand and respond to DMC.

Experiences locally and nationally suggest the approach of examining key points in the justice system for their impact (if any) on racial disproportionality. The general fairness principle is that similarly situated persons, based on objective factors, should be treated the same. While most policies and practices will meet this test, it is possible that if left unexamined, unintended biases will continue without notice. Risk assessment tools and other practices may be available to support developing consistent, objective and reliable information for guiding decisions.

Actions

- As part of the current Adult Justice Operational Master Plan effort to improve and expand the use of community corrections programs, the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention will work with its criminal justice partners. It will examine whether overrepresented groups in secure detention are at least as likely to participate in alternative programs and to be as successful as other groups and, if indicated, it will develop appropriate recommendations.
- The Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention will also partner with other justice agencies to create an appropriate venue to oversee analyzing Disproportionate Minority Contact at other key stages in the process, developing recommendations (consistent with best or promising practices) and evaluating implemented measures.

Community and human services

Most services from the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) are contracted to agencies specializing in direct service delivery throughout King County. In its different program areas, the department is examining whether services are reaching different population groups in proportion to their need and whether these services are equally effective across population groups. For 2008, the department highlighted three areas.

Mental health and substance abuse: Beginning in 2008, King County will have an important new funding source for mental health and substance abuse that will help to address disproportionate minority contact. The Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Action Plan (MIDD), to be funded by a 0.1 percent sales tax beginning April 1, 2008, offers an extraordinary opportunity to bring new resources into both the mental health and chemical dependency systems. Addressing racial disproportionality was adopted by the Community Crisis Alternatives Workgroup, which drafted the mental illness action plan, as one of the guiding principles in determining service priorities.

Action

- The Department of Community and Human Services will increase its knowledge and understanding of disproportionate access to mental health and substance abuse services through better identification of affected populations, measurement of appropriate levels of service, and determination of whether outcomes are equally effective across population groups.

Prevention and early intervention: A variety of county programs and departments seek to identify emerging needs in infants, children and youth at the earliest possible point, with the goal of providing prevention and early intervention programs and services that might serve to reduce or prevent more serious illness or disability or justice system involvement down the road.

Action

- With its partners, the Department of Community and Human Services will review its services for inequities related to prevention and early intervention for the population birth through age three and, where they exist, craft and implement mitigation strategies.

Homelessness: Similar to nearly every social disparity nationwide, homelessness is disproportionately borne by persons of color. For instance, persons of color represent nearly two-thirds (61 percent) of shelter/transitional housing users nationwide yet comprise just 31 percent of the U.S. population. In line with the national trend, persons of color are heavily overrepresented among King County's shelter/transitional housing population. According to the 2007 One Night Count, persons of color made up 62 percent of this population although they represent less than a quarter (24.5 percent) of King County residents.

There are multiple factors contributing to this inequality. They include lack of income, lack of educational opportunities, housing and support services and lack of engagement in services due to the shortage of culturally competent programs – as well as the effects of criminal records and racial discrimination.

Action

- Under guidance of the DCHS, King County will use Safe Harbors data, program-generated data and the Committee to End Homelessness' Strategy Recommendations to link people of color, immigrants and refugees with homeless housing and services and understand barriers in accessing and succeeding in housing. DCHS will use the understanding gained through such investigations to identify strategies that can be implemented through its programs that will increase access to and success in housing for those populations. DCHS will seek to work with the Committee to End Homelessness on addressing the issues.

Development and environmental services

The Department of Development and Environmental Services aims to serve, educate and protect the community by administering King County's development and environmental regulations. This department is a national leader in promoting responsible and sustainable development to foster environmental quality, economic vitality and social benefit.

In recognition of the vital role of land use and built-environment policies and practices as a cause of inequity, the department will review and revise land use codes and policies and facilitate the creation of affordable housing in King County to create and promote equity and social justice.

Actions

- The Department of Development and Environmental Services will rewrite the zoning code to allow maximum development flexibility in exchange for the provision of public benefit, and it will review and revise comprehensive plan policies to encourage vibrant, mixed use neighborhoods that are diverse and integrated.
- The department will create an interagency team to coordinate the siting, funding, permitting, and development of infrastructure to partner and/or support and facilitate affordable housing projects in unincorporated King County and on King County surplus properties.

Executive office

The focus on equity and social justice will be a key element of the work programs of all Executive Office staff. In particular, the Executive Office will work with departments and the Budget Office to incorporate equity and social justice into King County operations and policy development. In addition, it will work with communities, stakeholders and media to educate the region on equity and social justice needs and to help develop and implement social justice and equity actions.

Two specific activities for the Executive Office in 2008 are to provide research and policy support for this initiative through its fellowship programs and to coordinate efforts to address the impact of climate change on vulnerable populations.

Research and policy support: The Executive Office recruits from two programs to assist with research and implementation of major policy initiatives. The King County Executive Fellowship Program (KCEFP) was created in the spring of 2003 to recruit recent public policy graduates from leading institutions.

The National Urban Fellowship (NUF) is a "leadership development organization founded to counter the under-representation of people of color and women in leadership positions." The Executive Office has participated in NUF to recruit multiethnic, multicultural mid-career women and men into fellowship positions.

In the past, Executive Fellows and National Urban Fellows in the Executive Office have worked on major initiatives such as reducing health care costs, establishment of the KingStat countywide performance management system, and the development of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. King County's work on promoting equity and social justice will be a focus area for the 2008 Executive Fellows and National Urban Fellows.

Action

- In the 2008 term of the King County Executive Fellowship and National Urban Fellowship, special emphasis will be dedicated to outreach, policy support and implementation activities articulated in this report.

King County's climate change actions, green jobs and vulnerable populations: There is consensus among the world's leading scientists that human emission of greenhouse gases is leading to global climate change, with dangerous effects on human settlements, health and livelihoods. Globally, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2007 report, "Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability," climate change will have disproportionate negative effects on the poor in developing nations and "even in prosperous societies." Because this concern extends to vulnerable populations in the Northwest, King County is seeking to identify and reduce the impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations.

To prevent catastrophic climate change for future generations, the countries of the world must slow, stop and reverse the growth of greenhouse gas emissions. Solutions already exist in the areas of land use, transportation, waste-to-energy technology and clean fuels. These solutions are driving the new green economy and are expected to create "green collar" jobs here in King County. These new jobs are an important economic opportunity for the region and, in particular, a pathway out of poverty for disadvantaged communities.

Under the direction of the Executive Office, King County's interdepartmental Climate Team was convened in January 2006 to review the county's plans, policies and investments on a regular basis in light of evolving climate change information, to develop strategies to reduce the county's contribution to climate change through greenhouse gas emissions, and to protect public health, property and natural resources from regional climate change impacts.

Action

- The King County Climate Team will support regional efforts to define "green collar" jobs and the creation of a green collar jobs initiative. This work includes identifying green collar jobs within King County government and business community and tailoring jobs initiatives and training programs in the short term to connect people facing the most significant barriers to these new jobs.
- The King County Climate Team will continue to research and seek to reduce the effects of climate change on vulnerable and economically disadvantaged populations in the region.

Executive services

The vision for King County is to be a high performance regional government known for fair and equitable treatment of all its employees and residents. County leadership and ultimately all county employees must be fully knowledgeable of the elements of equity and social justice in their work responsibilities and understand their accountability to uphold the county's values, standards and expectations. This can be accomplished through avenues such as management staff training and new employee orientation and through participation of all employees in

benefits such as the Health Reform Initiative, which offers both positive financial and health outcomes.

Action

• The Department of Executive Services will create an equity and social justice focus in the supervisory, manager and director training curricula. It will integrate the issues of social equity into the curricula and develop a specific class focused on social justice and public sector decision making. Segments of this curricula will be incorporated into the New Employee Orientation.

Data show that King County's Health Reform Initiative has a positive financial and health impact on those who participate. An analysis showed that there are higher levels of bronze (i.e., higher out-of-pocket medical expense) in workgroups that work independently and do not use computers to do their jobs – bus drivers and custodians are examples. Health Reform Initiative staff also found evidence of language barriers in some workgroups. The same cultural barriers to accessing health care that exist in the county population at large also are present in our workforce. King County can ensure all employees have access to the health and financial benefits of the program by addressing barriers to participation.

Action

• The Department of Executive Services will identify and address worksite barriers to participation in the Health Reform Initiative; the department will develop and implement an outreach plan for groups that have low participation rates.

Management and budget

Community Enhancement Initiative: Through the Community Enhancement Initiative, King County supports comprehensive community revitalization efforts to create livable and sustainable neighborhoods that are economically and culturally diverse. The initiative involves partnering with many stakeholders to clarify priorities and create healthier, livable communities. Drawing on their existing strengths and the support of public and private partnerships, these communities will be places that embrace equity of opportunity, tread lightly on the environment, and share in the health and prosperity of the region. As an example, the Skyway Community Enhancement Initiative is comprised of several early stage projects that intend to achieve broad community revitalization goals.

Action

• The Office of Management and Budget will facilitate a community planning process to create a vision for restoring park vitality based on meaningful community participation and leadership. The process intends to encourage community participation and engagement, strengthen collaborative relationships and build leadership capacity. This inclusive public process will help the community articulate shared goals, identify creative and constructive solutions, increase community ownership of an important neighborhood asset and achieve multiple successes beyond immediate park improvements.

King County Systems Integration Initiative: Traditionally, juvenile justice, child welfare, and other child serving systems have worked independently of each other to address the issue of racial disproportionality. For instance, the juvenile justice system has a special committee in place to examine, recommend and implement strategies to reduce racial disproportionality. In the child welfare system, the King County Coalition on Racial Disproportionality has completed an in-depth independent study of system practices and is supporting implementation of those practices that can reduce disproportionality.

While these efforts are important and should should continue, the experience of many practitioners in these systems is suggesting that the "siloed" approaches are not enough. Racial disproportionality continues at alarming rates in these systems. Research is also beginning to describe a pipeline between the child welfare, education, mental health and juvenile justice systems. Fortunately, over the past three years, partners from juvenile justice, child welfare, mental health, school and other systems have

come together to form the King County Systems Integration Initiative.

Action

- Under the guidance of the King County Systems Integration Initiative, the Office of Management and Budget will lead a study to understand how clients are involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, the impact of multi-system involvement on outcomes, and how these results compare across various demographic categories. Based on the results of this study, the community and system partners will develop and pursue cross-system strategies to reduce the disproportionate involvement in child-serving systems.

Budget development: As noted earlier in this report, King County is fashioning a tool to assist decision makers in understanding the equity implications of policy decisions. Another opportunity to consider equity in decision-making is the annual budget development process. In particular, the concentrated period of developing the Executive's proposed budget for King County is an important opportunity to incorporate elements of equity impact review tool in the decision-making process.

Action

- During the 2009 budget development process, the Office of Management and Budget will pilot, with selected agencies, revised budget forms and process that incorporate elements of the Equity Impact Review Tool. This trial will inform full implementation when developing the 2010 Executive proposed budget.

Natural resources and parks

The Department of Natural Resources and Parks has a broad service portfolio with hundreds of programs that provide both community and environmental services to residents and businesses throughout and beyond King County. These include siting and management of solid waste, wastewater and parks facilities, each of which has a significant potential to create, increase or decrease equity. The department will ensure a more equitable distribution of the key benefits and burdens associated with its service provision and facility locations.

Actions

- The Department of Natural Resources and Parks will complete a department-wide GIS-based Equity Assessment to identify potential areas of inequity in delivery of key services.
- This department will conduct a detailed Equity Impact Review of the Parks Capital Investment Program to inform changes that will ensure a pro-equity capital improvement program.
- It will also conduct a partial review (in select unincorporated and incorporated areas) of the equity impacts of the proposed updates to the Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan to help ensure a pro-equity posture in the final adopted plan and policies.

Public health

In recent years Public Health - Seattle & King County has worked to eliminate health inequities through community interventions and policy-focused programs aimed at prevention and creating healthy environments. The Infant Mortality Prevention Program, Steps to Health King County, the REACH diabetes coalition, the Healthy Eating Active Living Program and the Built Environment and Land Use Program are just a few examples of current programs and community coalitions focusing on inequities. Internally, the department's Diversity & Social Justice Group has conducted an inventory of programs that work to assess, reduce or eliminate health disparities and inequities in the county.

In 2008, the Equity and Social Justice Initiative plan for Public Health is framed by the Public Health Operational Master Plan. This framework sets forth guiding principles that are the foundation for future decisions regarding health. Specific to equity the Operational Master Plan states, "King County's Public Health strategies, policies and programs shall be driven by social justice."

Actions

- Apply the Equity Impact Assessment tool

and review process in decision-making within each public health function area: protection, promotion, provision and organizational attributes. Public Health will identify a menu of proposed actions and policy decisions and determine impacts on equity as well as mitigation options. Public Health will use this information to select the most promising strategies for further development in a business plan.

- Public Health will work with external partners to achieve equitable access to health care for uninsured and underinsured residents in King County. In the context of Public Health's provision assessment work plan, the department will apply methods of the Equity Impact Assessment tool and review process to measure equity impacts of alternative service delivery system options for the safety net population and incorporate relevant findings.
- In order to promote fair and equitable access to public health information produced for people with limited English proficiency, Public Health will create a system for translation services to make the process more efficient and produce translations that are of a consistent high quality. Additionally, Public Health will encourage other King County departments to replicate this translation system.

Transportation

The Department of Transportation is committed to helping people travel around the region by providing many forms of transportation and the necessary programs, services and facilities, and designing and maintaining roads and bridges.

The Department has led recent studies, HealthScape I & II, with results that demonstrate the health and economic benefits of transit oriented, pedestrian friendly, mixed use development. Using these research data, the department will develop and implement mechanisms for incorporation into its planning and delivery of its services to King County residents.

Actions

- The Transportation Department will develop a tool to prioritize potential non-motorized transportation improvements based on transportation, health, air quality and equity outcomes.
- It will implement the HealthScape principles based on sustainable changes to the built environment to achieve the goals of efficient transportation, improved air quality, healthier communities and reduced greenhouse emissions in a disadvantaged neighborhood.
- It will work to expand the supply of affordable housing within close proximity to transit, housing, recreation and employment centers through public/private partnerships for transit oriented development.

Community partnerships

Many key opportunities to promote equity and social justice go beyond the boundaries of any one program or community. Community engagement and education are an initial set of opportunities addressed in this report. Although in some of these areas King County government may have a limited role in setting policies or delivering services, it can be a catalyst for mobilizing and supporting effective partnerships and actions.

When disadvantaged communities have a strong voice in decisions that affect their well being, those decisions are more likely to be successful in promoting equity for them and for all residents. King County has an opportunity to address the historical lack of access to decision-making by involving community members in developing solutions to inequities. This will not only result in effective programs that improve the well-being of all King County residents, but it will also begin to level the field of opportunity for communities whose voices historically have been left out.

Starting in 2008, King County will carry out the activities in the areas of community dialogues and empowerment, as well as education.

Community engagement

King County has the opportunity to support capacity building of all communities

– especially those experiencing inequities – by raising awareness about the statistics on equity, asking community members for their input in identifying program priorities and regularly involving them in decision making.

A new four-hour PBS series, "Unnatural Causes," which focuses on socio-economic and racial disparities in health, will be used by the county and its partners to engage in dialogues with the community. Facilitators will be trained to lead discussions on the root cause of inequities. The series comes with accompanying materials, such as a Community Action Toolkit, webcasts and podcasts, discussion guides, lesson plans, fact sheets and other resources that will be used during the community dialogues.

Action

- King County will begin a community dialogue process to increase awareness among community members of equity and social determinants of health and to spur action, especially around policies.

Education

Over the past 20 years, numerous studies have shown a significant gap between white youth and youth of color on a range of educational outcomes such as drop-out rates, graduation rates, test scores, readiness-to-learn and post-secondary enrollment. Today, the statistics remain alarming. Moreover, the evidence continues to mount about the consequences of these gaps in education on communities of color, the economy and the prison system.

Experts cite a range of potential causes for the many gaps in educational outcomes. Children and families in stressed communities have less access to supports and services outside of school. Policies of zero tolerance can criminalize adolescent behavior and penalize minority students disproportionately. Minority families may feel disengaged and excluded from their schools. High-poverty, high-minority schools are less likely to be assigned experienced teachers and to have sufficient support for new teachers.

Furthermore, early childhood development needs to be stressed. Social disadvantage is damaging at any stage in life but is especially harmful when experienced early in life. It is important to improve community conditions for optimal early childhood development and to eliminate gaps in school readiness that affect learning and life long well-being.

Actions

- "From Neurons to King County Neighborhoods" was designed in partnership with early childhood development stakeholders to strengthen early childhood environments by changing policies based on science and community knowledge. As one of the partners in this multi-sector, multidisciplinary group of early childhood stakeholders, King County will support a range of activities, including: conducting universal home visits for parents with infants and "Best Beginnings" for first-time, young parents as part of the White Center Early Learning Initiative funded by Thrive by Five; and linking children of all ages to comprehensive, prevention-focused healthcare as part of the Children's Health Initiative.
- Closing the gaps in readiness-to-learn, early literacy skills, drop-out rates, graduation rates, and other educational outcomes is a challenge that goes beyond any individual organization. King County in partnership with the Puget Sound Educational School District will reach out to school districts and related organizations in 2008 to organize a regional forum to improve the understanding of the gaps in educational outcomes and its causes, to share promising local efforts, to highlight national best practices, and to develop an action plan. Potential topics include early childhood development, literacy, early-warning system, drop-out prevention and intervention, mentoring, access to community services, zero-tolerance policies, truancy, graduation rates and post-secondary vocational training, and educational outcomes.
- King County will also participate in two local efforts, coordinated by the Puget Sound Educational School District, which address the drop-out issue. First, Reinvesting in Youth (RIY) is a coalition of organizations

and governments seeking to reduce the drop-out rates of minority youth in King County and to increase enrollment in post secondary education or jobs that pay a living wage. RIY has produced an in-depth study that provides comprehensive recommendations for a drop-out strategy at state and local levels. Second, developed by the educational taskforce of the King County Systems Integration Initiative, PathNet will develop a coordinated countywide system to retrieve court-involved youth who are truant or out-of-school and guide them into a seamless pathway of education and career opportunities. Existing alternative education and vocational programs will be coordinated and linked via a regional network to serve the high number of court-involved youth who have disengaged or dropped out of school.

"The time is always right to do what is right." —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

APPENDIX I NATIONAL INEQUITIES

Despite broad economic and social gains in society and in this country in recent history, major differences exist and continue to persist for significant segments of our population, particularly communities of color and people who live in poverty, across the continuum of measures of health, well being and quality of life.

In 1998, the Council of Economic Advisors for the President's Initiative on Race detailed how, on average, whites are more likely than non whites to:

- Attend primary and secondary schools with smaller class sizes
- Have access to computer technology in schools and at home
- Attend and graduate from college
- Earn higher salaries
- Retain employment during a downturn in the economy
- Have health insurance and access to health care and survive certain life-threatening illnesses
- Have better housing, spend less of their income to obtain house, and have access to mortgage loans and own their own homes
- Own stocks, mutual funds or retirement accounts

Six years later, in 2004, United for a Fair Economy released a study that showed very stark statistics for African Americans relative to whites:

- The typical black family had 60 percent as much income as a white family in 1968 but only 58 percent in 2002
- One in nine blacks could not find a job. Black unemployment was more than twice the white rate, a wider gap than in 1972
- Black infants were almost two and a half times as likely as white infants to die before the age of one, a greater gap than in 1970
- White households had an average net worth of $468,200 in 2001, more than six times the $75,700 of black households

In late 2007, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, based on new data on real after-tax income from the Congressional Budget Office, found that uneven growth brought income inequality to its highest level since at least 1979, when they began gathering these data. Taken together with prior research, the new data indicate that income is now more concentrated at the top than at any time since 1929.

Over the 26-year period for which the new data are available, income gains among high-income households have dwarfed those of middle- and low-income households. The figures show:

- The average after-tax income of the top 1 percent of the population more than tripled, rising from $326,000 to over $1.07 million — for a total increase of $745,000, or 228 percent.
- By contrast, the average after-tax income of the middle fifth of the population rose a relatively modest 21 percent, or $8,700, reaching $50,200 in 2005.
- The average after-tax income of the poorest fifth of the population rose just 6 percent, or $900, over the past 26 years, reaching $15,300 in 2005. (Figures

were adjusted for inflation and are presented in 2005 dollars.)

In 1987, the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice released its groundbreaking study *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States*. The report was significant because it found race to be the most potent variable in predicting where commercial hazardous waste facilities were located in the U.S., more powerful than household income, the value of homes, and the estimated amount of hazardous waste generated by industry. The *Toxic Wastes and Race* study was revisited in 1994 using 1990 census data.

- Over nine million people are estimated to live in circular host neighborhoods within 3 kilometers of the nation's 413 commercial hazardous waste facilities. Over 5.1 million people of color live in neighborhoods with one or more commercial hazardous waste facilities. For 2000, neighborhoods within 3 kilometers of commercial hazardous waste facilities are 56 percent people of color whereas non-host areas are 30 percent people of color. Thus, percentages of people of color as a whole are 1.9 times greater in host neighborhoods than in non-host areas. Percentages of African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Asians/Pacific Islanders in host neighborhoods are 1.7, 2.3, and 1.8 times greater, respectively.
- Poverty rates in the host neighborhoods are 1.5 times greater than non-host areas (18 percent vs. 12 percent) and mean annual household incomes and mean owner-occupied housing values in host neighborhoods are 15 percent lower.

APPENDIX II NATIONAL EFFORTS

Multnomah County Health Equity Initiative

The Multnomah County initiative addresses health inequities by directly engaging communities, building upon knowledge gained from successful initiatives and public dialogues launched by the Departments of Health, Community Justice and the Library. The initiative has a multi year strategy that involves community engagement, assessment and policy development with three overarching goals:

- To create a common understanding among health professionals, civic leaders, and community members of the causes of and solutions to health inequities with a focus on justice and equity
- To raise the visibility of current disparities elimination efforts of community based organizations and county departments
- To explore and advance policy solutions to health inequities

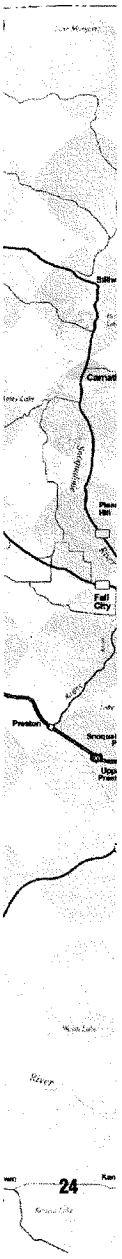
Multnomah's success will be evaluated over the short and long term in six areas:

- Civic engagement in dialogues about health inequities
- Increased visibility of current efforts to address inequities
- Inventory of efforts to address inequities in health and human services
- Policy and practice improvements
- Community-wide policy and practice changes that address root causes
- Documented improvements

Alameda County Place Matters Initiative

Alameda's initiative aims to promote more equitable distribution of social goods by influencing policies in housing, education, economic development, incarceration, land use and transportation with a long-term view towards sustained effort over many years. Alameda, is conducting in-depth assessments of the problems associated with each policy arena. The learning from these assessments will form the basis and guide roundtable discussions with community stakeholders. From these community dialogues, a solid local policy platform will be created and partnerships for advocacy and implemented leveraged. Alameda County's goals include:

- Affordable Housing: An adequate supply of housing is constructed and preserved in proportion to demand for that housing with regards to size and affordability, so that the cultural, racial, and class diversity of the community is maintained. All housing is safe, habitable, and supports good health. No household resides in overcrowded conditions, is homeless due to housing costs, or resorts to spending more than 30 percent of the income on housing costs.
- Education: All school-aged youth have access to a quality education that prepares them to be productive members of the community, provides a safe and stimulating learning environment, and prepares them to achieve their goals and dreams. Schools expect and ensure that all students graduate. Life-long learning opportunities are accessible to all residents.
- Economic Development: All residents have access to high quality, local employment opportunities that provide healthy, safe and meaningful work, so as to increase income and wealth equity.
- Incarceration: By interrupting the cycle of



recidivism and reducing the disproportionate minority contact with the justice system, men of color will no longer be incarcerated at disproportionate rates. An equitable judicial system will be achieved at each state of the process, including arrest, trial, sentencing, and reentry.

- Land Use: Communities are designed to promote and support safe walking and biking, and to provide access to quality affordable food, including fresh fruits and vegetables. All residents live in communities where the air, soil, and water are clean and provide the conditions for good health. All residents have access to living wage jobs and culturally appropriate health care services, including prevention, treatment, and emergency response, in their communities.

- Transportation: Citizens are easily able to go about their daily lives utilizing transportation systems that are accessible from their home and work and that are affordable. All public transit systems run on-time with well maintained vehicles and shelters.

Louisville Metro, Kentucky Center for Health Equity

The Louisville, Kentucky Center for Health Equity is a new and hopeful approach to the public's health. Seeking out root causes, the Center addresses glaring socio-economic and racial inequities in health. While drugs, diet, a healthy lifestyle and medical technologies are important, the Center's philosophy is that there is more to health than bad habits, health care or genes. Their premise is that the social conditions, into which people are born, live and work, profoundly affect well-being and longevity. The Center for Health Equity supports projects, policies and research indicating that health and longevity are correlated with socio-economic status. Further, they recognize research that supports the fact that people of color face an additional burden from racism and discrimination and propose that solutions lie in better social policies.

More information at: www.louisvilleky.gov/Health/equity/.

Washington State Interagency Coordinating Council on Health Disparities

In 2006, the Washington State Legislature created the Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council On Health Disparities which is charged with "creating an action plan and statewide policy to include health impact reviews that measure and address other social determinants of health that lead to disparities as well as the contributing factors of health that can have broad impacts on improving status, health literacy, physical activity and nutrition." Specifically, the Council exists to:

- Promote and facilitate communication, coordination and collaboration among relevant state agencies and communities of color and the private and public sector, to address health disparities

- Use a variety of assessment mechanisms to gather data and recommend initiatives for improving the availability of culturally appropriate health literature and interpretative services with public and private health related agencies

- Create an action plan by 2012 for eliminating disparities in Washington State. The plan will look at health disparities broadly and also must specifically address a number of diseases and conditions specified in the legislation.

- In collaboration with the State Board of Health, in the development of health impact reviews requested by the Governor or the Legislature

- Through public hearings, inquiries, studies and other information gathering efforts, work to understand how the actions of State government ameliorate or contribute to health disparities

- Use advisory committees to address specific issues

- Provide regular updates of its progress to the Legislature starting in 2008

More information at: www.governor.wa.gov/boards/profiles/250.asp.

City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative

The City of Seattle is becoming increasingly diverse. A primary challenge of this diversity is the ongoing struggle to create a community where all people are valued, regardless of their background. Mayor Nickels' Race and Social Justice Initiative seeks to reduce disproportionality in economic opportunity, education, civic engagement, health, and criminal justice; to foster more inclusive civic engagement; to ensure equity in City business and personnel practices; and to deliver City services that are relevant to Seattle's diverse populations.

Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative, coordinated by Seattle Office of Civil Rights, is a citywide effort to:

- Create a community where residents and employees experience our cultural and ethnic diversity as an asset

- Eliminate institutional attitudes, practices, and policies that result in racial disproportionality

- Understand the challenges that cultural pluralism places on democracy and transform our civic and citizen engagement processes to address those challenges

More information at: www.seattle.gov/mayor/issues/rsji.

Web Resources

King County Resources

King County AIMS High: Annual indicators and measures
www.metrokc.gov/aimshigh/equity.asp

Health disparities resources
www.metrokc.gov/health/library/topics/H.htm

Health of King County report
www.metrokc.gov/health/hokc

King County Communities Count report
www.communitiescount.org/

National and International Resources

California Newsreel's *Unnatural Causes* video series and resource for discussion on social determinants of health
www.unnaturalcauses.org

Dellums Commission Report
www.jointcenter.org/publications1/publication-PDFs/Dellums%20PDFs/FinalReport.pdf

Urban Institute and racial disparities
www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411563_racial_disparities.pdf

World Health Organization's Commission on Social Determinants of Health
www.who.int/social_determinants/en/

World Health Organization's Health Impact Assessment
www.who.int/topics/health_impact_assessment/en/

This report was developed by King County and its many employees who passionately serve and work with residents every day.

www.kingcounty.gov/equity • 206-296-4600

Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas
April 9, 2008

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Good morning Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee. My name is Mike Wiley and I am the general manager / CEO for Sacramento Regional Transit District. I'm honored to be here and appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today about the Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas.

First, let me thank the committee, especially Congresswoman Matsui, for your on-going support of transit in Sacramento. The Sacramento region has a history of supporting transit. For the past three days, a group of nearly 400 delegates from the Sacramento region comprised of elected officials, business, labor and government leaders met with federal elected and government officials to make the case for federal funding and policy activity on many important issues that affect the six county region's economy, prosperity, businesses and families. One of our major priorities includes advocating for balanced transportation solutions that improve mobility for all of the region's residents.

A major challenge facing our metropolitan area is that as a region, we must develop ways to define growth, instead of being defined by it. Fortunately, our leaders and communities are committed to smart growth and transit. In the past four years alone, the state of California and the Sacramento region have approved separate transit-supportive funding measures. During this same time, the Sacramento region's MPO, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), has developed an innovative plan that crafts an alternative vision that integrates transit with smart growth concepts such as higher-density, mixed-use developments and reinvestment in existing developed areas. Meanwhile, the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) continues to exceed ridership expectations in its 418 square-mile service area. In order to maintain this type of success, the relationships between RT, its MPO and the state DOT must continue to grow.

Over the past decade, California has been one of the fastest growing states in the Nation. The Sacramento region's growth has exceeded both the state and national averages and is expected to add one million new residents by 2020. In an attempt to keep up with this growth, there had been a continued practice of building large-lot, low-density housing. If allowed to continue undeterred, this type of development will ultimately consume another 660 square miles of undeveloped land. Residents would face longer commutes, more vehicle trips, dirtier air and a growing disconnect between where they live and where they work.

To many people, this growth pattern was not acceptable if the region was going to reverse the trends of growing traffic congestion and worsening air quality. In 2004, Sacramento's MPO, the Sacramento Area Council of Government (SACOG) took the first big step in changing the region's land-use patterns.

In 2002, SACOG's Board of Directors initiated the Blueprint project. The motivation for the project was to determine if there were alternatives to current transportation investment priorities and land use patterns that would make improvements to the region's travel patterns and air quality, while being consistent with local attitudes and values. At the foundation of the Blueprint is a plan for managing the inevitable growth in the Sacramento region.

Through a series of Blueprint workshops at the neighborhood, city, county and regional level, more than 5,000 residents, elected officials, business leaders and environmental interests helped craft an alternative vision that integrates smart growth concepts such as higher-density, mixed-use developments and reinvestment in existing developed areas. The analysis shows that following smart growth principles will shorten future commute times, reduce traffic congestion, lessen dependence on automobiles and provide for housing choices that more closely align with the needs of an aging population.

In the end, elected leaders and communities approved a plan that will shape the region's future by promoting more efficient and sustainable development and more transit choices as an alternative to sprawl. The vision, known as the Sacramento Region Blueprint, is intended to guide land-use and transportation choices over the next 50 years as the region's population grows from its current population of 2 million to include more than 3.8 million people.

The Blueprint helps put the Sacramento region squarely on a path toward a more livable and sustainable future by embracing the concepts of more walkable, transit-oriented communities that better integrate jobs and housing. By defining smart growth for the region, the plan provides the opportunity to meet the transportation and planning challenges that lie ahead.

Following the approval of the Blueprint, SACOG updated the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). This plan not only guides development consistent with the plan, but also looks at funding areas such as transit, which is vital to the plan's success. As a non-attainment region, SACOG is required to update its (MTP) every four years.

In March 2008, SACOG's Board of Directors adopted the MTP 2035. With the Blueprint as a backdrop, the plan provides a 21% increase in transit funding over the previous MTP. Also, programs and planning, which support transportation investments, such as rideshare matching and Spare the Air campaigns, increased by 35%. This is the first big step in following the growth plans consistent with the Blueprint.

Each of the region's cities (and their residents) played a significant role in establishing the growth plan and so are currently updating their general plans to reflect the land-use and growth patterns established in the preferred Blueprint scenario.

One of the most important aspects of the preferred Blueprint scenario is the reliance on transit to help satisfy the goals of the plan. SACOG's MTP 2035 recognizes this fact and includes a provision for additional transit operating funds (the equivalent of a ¼-cent sales tax) by 2012.

The development of the preferred Blueprint scenario and the MTP 2035 has highlighted the challenges facing the Sacramento region over the next 25+ years. Challenges include significant increases in population, employment and new households; an aging population with particular needs; and continuing reliance on the car with continuing issues relating to congestion and air quality as a result. Improving air quality is a particularly important issue for the region. As a non-attainment region, not addressing air quality containment threatens public-private sector investment through a cessation of building permit issuances.

The "smart growth" principles underpinning the Blueprint are central to how many of these issues will be addressed. One of the key principles, "Providing a variety of transportation choices", highlights the key role that a modern, high quality, affordable and attractive transit network will have in delivering a sustainable future for the Sacramento region. This principle will have a direct impact on the requirement for RT's services.

The Blueprint plan estimates the following:

- Region-wide transit trips will grow from 93,000/day to 629,000/day by 2050.
- Region-wide trips into the Sacramento downtown will rise by approximately 40%.
- Region-wide transit mode share (i.e. the percent of all trips taken by transit) will triple, with a 400% increase in Sacramento County.

These huge increases will impact the costs of running the Regional Transit network. Many of the growth assumptions that have been made are based on an expected expansion of the transit network. A number of factors will contribute to the predicted growth in transit patronage over this period, including:

- Increased housing densities (following 'smart growth principles') making transit provisions more efficient and cost-effective.
- Changing behavior resulting in people 'choosing' to live closer to transit and closer to their places of employment, shopping, education and recreation.
- Regional demographic changes with the number of seniors more than doubling over this period.
- Growing concerns over climate change and energy security resulting in increased social pressure for transit investment.

In response to these growing transit needs, RT is undertaking a comprehensive update of its Transit Master Plan (TMP), Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) and ADA/Paratransit Plan. The previous Regional Transit Master Plan was adopted in 1993. While that document has been useful, it is outdated. The master plan must be updated to help guide RT for the next 10, 20 and 30 years and to make sure it is consistent with the Blueprint and MTP 2035 plans. This process includes an extensive public and stakeholder engagement program and will be completed in the spring of 2009.

In order to continue to grow the transit system to support the Blueprint, the region will continue to look for ways to fund the capital projects that are crucial for the smart-growth path that has been established. It is vital that local transit agencies receive federal funds to provide more frequent and reliable services.
RT, SACOG and the state's DOT (Caltrans) work closely to utilize flexible federal funds by allowing local decision-making to apply the funds to the most urgent needs. Also, New Starts funds have been invaluable for recent light rail extensions in Sacramento.

From the state and local side, the Sacramento region and the State of California have stepped up to provide support with local match funding. The support is strong enough that in some cases, such as RT's $260 million Amtrak / Folsom light rail extension, local, state and federal flex funds provided 100% project funding. In 2009, RT will also begin work on a 1-mile light rail extension that will be the first phase of an eventual federally funded light rail project that will bring service to the Sacramento International Airport. The $37 million project will be funded entirely by local and state dollars.

In 2006, California's Governor and Legislature initiated the first phase of a comprehensive Strategic Growth Plan to address California's critical infrastructure needs over the next 20 years. Voters approved five separate propositions in 2006, which included over $20 billion in general obligation bonds to fund state and local transportation improvement projects. Some of this money will be spent on capital improvements, which shows a commitment by California's citizens to improve transportation throughout the state.

Prior to the passage of the state bonds, Sacramento County voters overwhelmingly supported renewal of Measure A, a 30-year ½-cent countywide increment to the retail sales tax to fund local transportation and air quality improvements. As part of the renewal, local funding for transit increased 8% over current funding levels. Measure A provided much needed local funding to support existing transit operations and will help build the 4.3-mile South Line II light rail project scheduled to begin construction in 2009.

At the federal level, it is crucial that Congress identify a funding source that is sustainable and growing to meet the nation's infrastructure needs. The current rate of 18.4 cents per gallon cannot sustain the existing Federal program beyond

2009 as wells as allow for growth in the Federal investment. These funds could come from many sources, such as gasoline tax increases, a carbon tax, a cap and trade program for greenhouse gas emissions, or private sector funding. Federal legislators should seek more flexibility between highways and transit, and a criteria that focuses on and rewards a reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and GHG emissions when deciding on capital expansion projects.

Prioritization of funding should be given to those urban locations that are considered non-attainment areas for air quality issues. Also, those regions that provide local funding and commit to the type of land use plans that create more compact, transit-supportive neighborhoods, should be given financial incentives to continue this practice. Adoption of smart growth principles is a key step in cleaning our air and reducing our dependency on foreign oil.

The next authorization should begin to connect land-use patterns with sustainable living and increased transit. As most people know, public transportation already plays a strong and beneficial role in the climate change solution; however increased growth in public transportation use, while good for the climate at large, also results in additional operating costs and per capita reduction in carbon output. We must address the need for additional allocations to address the impact on operating costs.

Further, when public transportation service is linked to greater intensity of development adjacent to transit stations, we see shorter passenger trips, which doesn't require the use of carbon-based fuels. These benefits offer the opportunity to provide carbon offsets for other sectors of the economy.

Workforce development is another key issue facing transit agencies throughout the nation. The Transportation industry is the 17th highest economic driver of the U.S. economy, per the U.S. Department of Labor. The transit industry, currently and over the next 5 years plus, is experiencing a 30-50% turnover of staffing, largely due to baby boomer retirements. With significantly less Generation X and Y workers entering the workforce, and other industrial sectors constricting and downsizing, the transit vacancy rates create viable employment options for displaced and new workers.

As Congress and Administration begin the process of reauthorizing highway and transit legislation, we must emphasize the continuing significance of the federal role in transportation. Transit provides mobility to millions of Americans, spurs economic development on a large scale, reduces energy consumption, and creates jobs across America.

The relationships between the transit agency, MPO and DOT in some parts of the country may not be as important as they are in Sacramento. In Sacramento, the stakes are enormous and the partnerships are critical. Today, SACOG, Caltrans and RT are working together, which results in better outcomes

measured by funding allocations and project selection. This positive relationship greatly assists us in our technical and policy decision-making, leading to improved transportation and land use plans. By working together on models, we can produce credible forecasts that garner support from other stakeholders. The relationship also opens up lines of communication between all three organizations, which are crucial for effective planning for the region.

People in large metropolitan areas, such as Sacramento, are facing a difficult choice: continued auto subsidy and dependency, more sprawl, decaying city centers, and more pavement; or market-based pricing reforms for economic efficiency, green belt protection, urban revitalization and transit.

California and the Sacramento region are taking the necessary steps to be leaders in Smart Growth efforts, which we hope will make a significant impact nationally.

Although we have seen success in finding dollars for transit, we still face the challenge of securing a reliable stream of state transit funding. As budgets get strained, transit funds tend to be one of the easier targets for state legislators to draw from. For FY 2007, RT lost approximately $14 million in transit-dedicated funds that were used to balance the state's budget. This type of action makes the job of operating a transit agency difficult. An inability to rely on certain funding levels creates an inability to develop a long-range plan and a budget that's associated with it. In order to grow the transit system to reach the region's future needs, we are working to implement a stable and reliable local funding source by 2012.

Transit has an important role to play in addressing the challenges of a growing region, but to do so requires reinforcing the achievement attained by the transit industry. Transit must continue to play an important role in transportation planning, as well as land-use policy. SAFETEA-LU provides a national transportation policy that provides safe, secure and reliable mobility options as an integrated part of a balanced transportation system.

We must recognize that public transportation provides all Americans, from all walks of life, access to social and economic opportunity to enrich their lives and their communities. We must invest in the development of the transportation system capacity needed to enable economic growth and reduce traffic congestion. By recognizing the central role of public transportation in achieving other critical national policy goals, including national security, cleaner air, conserving our energy resources and reducing our dependency on foreign oil, we create a cleaner environment and enhance the community we live in. A strong partnership between transit, the MPO and the DOT will ensure that these goals are reached in a much timelier manner, and such partnerships need to be encouraged and rewarded by National policy.

Testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

"Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas"

Robert D. Yaro, President, Regional Plan Association

April 9, 2008

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit.

My name is Robert Yaro. I am president of Regional Plan Association (RPA), a private, independent planning organization for the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Region. For more than 80 years, RPA has been shaping transportation systems, protecting open spaces, and promoting better community design for the region's continued growth. RPA works in collaboration with the public, private, and civic sectors to advance long term plans for the region that support economic prosperity, a healthy environment, and quality of life.

While RPA's primary focus is on the NY-NJ-CT region, when necessary and appropriate RPA addresses national trends and policies. In the 1960s, for example, RPA led a national public education effort in support of creating the federal Urban Mass Transit Administration and its federal funding for transit systems across the country.

RPA is once again engaged in a national research and advocacy effort, this time focused on developing a strategy for the nation's future growth. America 2050 is a national initiative based at RPA to develop an infrastructure investment plan for the United States that responds to the challenges of rapid population growth, climate change, and global economic competition. It is advised by a National Committee for America 2050 of civic and business leaders, regional planners, and public officials in the nation's largest regions across the country.

Since 2005, RPA has been working with its America 2050 partners to develop proposals for national transportation policy, with a focus on the unique needs of America's metropolitan regions and megaregions. These places account for the bulk of America's economic activity and will accommodate a majority of America's population and

economic growth in the coming half century. It is essential that our national policy formulate specific strategies that support the growth and efficiency of America's densest and most congested places and give them the tools to compete effectively in the global economy. My testimony focuses specifically on how the unique needs of metropolitan regions and megaregions may be addressed in America's transportation policy.

Addressing the Transportation Needs of Metropolitan Areas

As you know, America's population passed the 300 million mark in late 2006 and continues to grow. According to the U.S. Census, our nation is expected to grow about 40 percent by mid-century, adding at least 120 million people by the year 2050.

RPA's analysis of land use trends indicates that most of the growth in this country will take place in metropolitan areas, and specifically, in ten or more "megaregions" -- large networks of urbanized areas like the Northeast Megaregion, which stretches from Boston to Washington, D.C. We consider these megaregions, places like Southern California, the Texas Triangle and the Arizona Sun Corridor, the new competitive units in the global economy. They are competing with the similarly-sized "global integration zones" of Europe and Southeast Asia, where tens of billions of dollars in investments have been made in high-speed rail and goods movement systems to support the highly-mobile workforce of the global economy.

Emerging Megaregions of the United States

If America is to compete internationally, accommodate rapid population growth, and preserve the quality of life and environment in its metropolitan regions, it must make dramatic investments in its metropolitan infrastructure systems. Much in the manner of

the Interstate Highway Act of the last century, our surface transportation policy must provide a bold framework for another half century of growth and development in America. In doing so it will need to accommodate population growth, move goods, and transition to alternative energy sources and transportation modes that can be supported by increased density.

Our national transportation policy is not currently "doing the job" of providing adequate financial resources, decision-making authority, flexibility, tools, and support systems to metropolitan regions to deal with the challenges of growing demand on their deteriorating roads and transit infrastructure. The growth in people, jobs, and wealth that is predicted in the coming century leaves these very large regions unable to provide for themselves within the current structure.

At the same time, the federal government is not asking enough in terms of accountability to objectives and performance standards for the roughly $50 billion dollars it appropriates every year in the surface transportation program. Instead of giving states a "blank check" to build bridges to nowhere and highways that enable sprawled development, federal funding should come with clear expectations that it will be used to meet the national purpose of the transportation program. Given the urgency of global climate change and the share of emissions generated by the transportation sector (at least 30 percent), one of the goals of the nation's transportation program should be to reduce carbon emissions by reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

It may appear that the two objectives I've described – (1) creating capacity for population and economic growth and (2) reducing carbon emissions by reducing VMT – are in conflict. But I do not believe that they are. America can accommodate a significant share of its growth by coordinating land use and transportation decisions in metropolitan regions to provide greater transportation choices, more vibrant communities, less time spent sitting in traffic, and a healthier environment. But to do so, the formulas and structure of the transportation program that favor road building over transit and require metropolitan regions of millions of people to go begging to their state capitols for adequate funding, must change. In short, we need radical reform that attaches expectations to federal funding and more tools, resources, and authority to metropolitan regions.

Challenges in Metropolitan and Megaregions

Nationally, metropolitan areas and megaregions must contend with the greater movement of goods and people within and among their regions. The key to accommodating this rising mobility is to provide greater choice and modal options for each trip. At the megaregion scale, in the Northeast for example, this means investing in Amtrak's Northeast Corridor to improve the efficiency, frequency and reliability of intercity rail service.

Improvements in intercity rail can help offset regional air travel, which is growing at the rate of 7 percent a year, and clogs airport runways because of the short, frequent and

small nature of these flights. Rail trips are more energy efficient than air travel, emit fewer carbon dioxide emissions, and connect directly to public transportation networks in the heart of central cities.

Nationally, we should be investing in and developing intercity rail corridors of up to 500 miles in length to promote attractive alternatives to air and road travel. Funding for intercity rail should not go through a separate authorization and appropriations process, but should be integrated in the surface transportation bill to facilitate greater coordination among modes and more options for intercity travel. While we support the creation of new, high-speed rail corridors on separate rights-of-way, it is important to note that simply providing frequent, reliable, "higher" speed service of 110 mph in dense corridors would result in major increases in ridership.

Within metropolitan regions, we must continue to invest in our public transportation systems as economic development tools. Our metropolitan regions can accommodate the projected increases in population in this country if we focus density near transit to support healthy lifestyles and a healthy environment. There are 900 transit stations in the New York region; all should and could be focal points for development and smart growth.

The New York region boasts the highest use of public transit anywhere in the country (68% of the region uses public transit compared to 9% in the rest of the country). And yet our systems are struggling because of a history of taking on debt to cover operating costs and a lack of funding for capital improvements to expand capacity in the region. The New York region's ability to grow and prosper is dependent on completing capacity-expanding projects such as the Second Avenue Subway, East Side Access and Access to the Region's Core. The construction of Moynihan Station and the overhaul of the existing Penn Station will also encourage increased ridership by re-creating a glorious public space and vastly improved facilities for regional commuters and riders along Amtrak's vital Northeast Corridor.

History has shown that as public authorities have invested in the safety, efficiency and operation of their systems, the public has responded by riding transit more often. In New York City, this includes making streets safer for pedestrians and bicycles, providing more bicycle lanes, pricing automobile use in the central business district and using that funding to help support investments in the public transportation system. Bicycling and walking are zero emission modes of transportation and shifting trips to them will help reduce global warming emissions. While not every trip in a metropolitan area can be easily taken on foot or bicycle, these non-motorized modes can link up with transit to provide convenient transportation alternatives to private motor vehicle trips.

We also must continue to maintain our nation's highways and manage them better by adopting intelligent transportation and pricing systems to manage congestion and traffic incidents. The highways of tomorrow should be high-tech – offering options and different pricing to the users based on traffic flow, incidents, and time of day. Highways should be

connected to networks of commuter rail connected to airports, so that each route provides redundancy and modal choice, and so that fare and toll payments are seamless.

Finally, we must prepare and contend with the major impact of goods movement on our nation's highways. This is a competitiveness issue. In the last 75 years, foreign trade increased from an 11 percent to 27 percent share of our gross domestic product – putting a greater burden on our airports, seaports, and the highways that carry the majority of our goods. This is combined with the trend toward "just in time" delivery, in which retail businesses have consolidated and shifted large parts of their inventory to the trucks traveling on our nation's highways.

To meet these challenges I propose three major initiatives that could begin to shape the next transportation bill to meet the growing needs of our nation's economic regions.

1. **Asset Protection and Performance Initiative:** We need to maintain and upgrade what we built over the last sixty years. Examples of infrastructure failure like the Minneapolis bridge collapse and the more recent bridge failure in Pennsylvania are dangerous and unacceptable. The federal government should raise the minimum standards of maintenance on existing highway and public transportation assets and provide the funding to meet those standards. This should be prioritized above funding projects that build new capacity. In addition to promoting state of good repair nationwide, we should provide new tools, resources and training to states, regional entities and local governments to experiment with programs that enhance system performance, such as congestion pricing, greater use of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and innovations that increase ridership, safety, and public information on transit systems.

2. **A National Infrastructure Investment Plan:** In addition to its commitment to maintaining the existing system, the federal government should develop a *national infrastructure investment plan* that will help define and possibly narrow the federal role in transportation. As it applies to transportation, the national infrastructure investment plan should include added capacity in seaports, airports, rail (both passenger and freight), and highway freight corridors that require multi-state, megaregional, or international coordination. This national investment plan should be developed by a bipartisan Commission with members appointed by Congress and the next President and should be driven by a 9-month research and public outreach effort to determine national needs and strategic priorities. Draft legislation for a U.S. Commission on National Infrastructure Investment has been drafted by Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and we are working with him to build support for this proposal. The Commission's work would result in a map of national investments and principles that would define the core of the federal transportation program. Federal block grants and/or financing packages to build the components of the system would be administered to suitable alliances of state transportation departments, high-speed rail authorities, metropolitan transit agencies, and public- private partnerships.

3. **Metropolitan Mobility Starts:** A new federal program should be established that focuses on providing additional resources, tools, flexibility and capacity building in

the nation's metropolitan planning organizations and transportation agencies. This initiative would target new capacity needs in metropolitan regions, tying federal funding more directly to meeting national objectives, such as VMT reduction, but with greater flexibility about how those objectives are met to encourage innovation and modal choice. Rather than make funding tied to specific modes, the federal government could provide incentives to meet goals such as: coordinating transportation investments with regional land use plans, reducing VMT, improving safety, accessibility, and improving air quality.

Conclusion

There is no more suitable role for the federal government than to chart the direction of the nation's future growth with long-term investments in infrastructure that will promote economic prosperity, a healthy environment and the freedom of movement across the nation's rich landscape. Given the constraints we face with respect to global climate change and our dependence on foreign oil, the federal government should strongly support the transition of the transportation system to less combustive technologies and more energy efficient and human-powered transportation choices. These choices are most possible in the nation's metropolitan areas where economic activity and people are concentrated and where more tools, resources, and policies are needed to direct investments to these areas.

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