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Surface Transportation Policy Project's Electronic Update

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Hill Update

Urban County Leader Seeks Investment in Metropolitan Congestion

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held its third TEA-21 oversight hearing March 19, 2002. At the hearing, King County Executive Ron Sims



told the Committee that the greater Seattle/King County area and others areas others struggling with urban congestion problems need new funding commitments in next year's reauthorization legislation.

Sims, a leader among the nation's county officials, said that "the key is to have a metropolitan system in place that everyone has agreed to fund." He added that "the Federal government can stimulate this (system development) and then provide the funds."

Sims also advised the Committee about his efforts to organize a "metro caucus" to focus on developing specific recommendations for the upcoming TEA-21 renewal legislation. None of the other transportation experts taking part in the hearing were able to address the nexus between economic growth and congestion, other than suggesting that congestion was largely preordained, with one of the witnesses suggesting that the public will "just have to live with it."

The Senate panel will continue its hearings in April with a session focusing on 'Operations and Security in Metropolitan Areas.' The House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit held a March 20 hearing with key federal officials to examine the financial health of the Highway Trust Fund. The House Committee has yet to release its full schedule of hearing topics for 2002.

In Brief...

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is pleased to announce the launch of their new Web site designed for trail users, builders, advocates and enthusiasts of all ages. Visit the new site at <http://www.railtrails.org>.

Calendar

[Transportation and University Communities Conference](#)
— June 15-18, 2002- Amherst, MA

[House Transportation Committee Schedule](#)
— April: 11: Subcommittee hearing on passenger rail

[Senate EPW Hearing](#)
Date TBA: Operations and Security in Metropolitan Areas

[Transportation and University Communities Conference](#)
— June 15-18, 2002- Amherst, MA

Quote of the Week

"Walking 30 minutes a day will dramatically improve your life. Playing a game with your children in your backyard will help. Walking in a park can make a difference to your health. [...] The doc and I are going to encourage all our country to either run or walk or swim or bicycle for the good of their families, for the good of their own health, and for the good of the health of the nation."

- President Bush, in a March 26 news conference announcing his nomination of Richard Carmona for Surgeon General

To view the Senate Committee hearing transcript, [click here](#).

New Appointment

Emil Frankel, a former board member of STPP and the former Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Transportation, has been officially appointed to his new position as Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Transportation Policy. The appointment was made on Friday, March 29 as a recess appointment by President Bush.

Clean Air Standards Upheld

A three-judge panel of the United States Federal Court of Appeals ruled for the second time on March 26, 2002 on critical new health-based clean air standards, firmly rejecting industry's renewed challenges to overturn the standards. On May 14, 1999, the same panel of judges ruled 2-1 that the standards were unconstitutional, only to be reversed in a unanimous decision by the United States Supreme Court on February 27, 2001. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established the clean air standards at issue in 1997 to protect public health by limiting nationwide pollution levels of smog (ground-level ozone) and fine, sooty particles.



When EPA issued the standards in 1997, it estimated that when implemented the standards would protect 125 million Americans from adverse health effects of air pollution. Since then, a body of scientific research has only strengthened the medical basis for the standards. On March 6, 2002, the Journal of the American Medical Association published a study of 500,000 people across the country finding that prolonged exposure to air contaminated with fine particles significantly raises the risk of dying of lung cancer or other heart and lung diseases. Other recent studies have linked the pollutants at issue with increased risk of asthma in children (The Lancet, 2002; JAMA, 2001); acute stroke mortality (Environmental Health Perspectives, 2002); and birth defects (American Journal of Epidemiology, 2002). A study of the 90 largest U.S. cities found strong evidence linking daily increases in particulate pollution at contemporary levels to increases in daily death rates, and in hospital admissions of the elderly (Health Effects Institute, 2000). Another study has indicated that chronic exposure to particulate pollution may shorten lives by one to three years (Environmental Health Perspectives, 2000).

-from environmentaldefense.org

Bike Advocates Mourn the Death Of Susie Stephens



Hundreds of bicycle advocates from Washington State to Washington DC held simultaneous wakes the evening of Monday, April 1st to honor the memory of Susie Stephens, a national leader in bicycle advocacy who was killed March 21st. Stephens was struck by a tour bus while walking across a street in downtown St. Louis, where she was working on a conference for the National Center for Bicycling and Walking.

Stephens, 36, helped create the Thunderhead Alliance, representing bicycle advocacy groups across the country, and organized annual Thunderhead retreats to train and inspire the groups' Executive Directors. She served as Managing Director of the Thunderhead Alliance and had served as Executive Director of the Bicycle Alliance of Washington. She lived in Winthrop, Washington. Barbara McCann, Director of Campaign Support for STPP, said, "Susie multiplied the effectiveness of the transportation reform movement by helping create and support a national network of effective bicycle advocacy groups. Perhaps most importantly, she taught many of us how to have fun while working for change."

The police in St. Louis are investigating the crash and have not yet decided whether to charge the driver. In lieu of flowers, Stephen's family suggests that donations be made in her name to one of the following organizations: [Bicycle Alliance of Washington](#), the [Methow Conservancy](#), or the [Thunderhead Alliance](#). Please contact any of these organizations for more information.

California Bill to "Fund the ADA"

A new bill introduced in the California legislature (AB2369) would provide state funds to improve access for persons with disabilities. The Transportation Accessibility Bond Act is a bond measure (dollar amount yet to be determined) to help local governments and public transit agencies meet the federal requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The transportation costs of complying with ADA are high yet vital for allowing access to jobs, services and recreation for all Californians. Introduced by Rep. Salinas in February, the bill has attracted enthusiastic support from the disabled rights advocacy community, who are working in coalition with the California office of the Surface Transportation Policy Project to pass it.

To download the bill (in .pdf format), [click here](#).

New Report on Transit Investment

A new national report by the Michigan Land Use Institute and United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan, "New Economic Engine," points to a state's investment in transit as key to the its economic health and ability to leverage public



dollars. The report examines how transit is funded in twelve states from federal, state, and local sources. It attributes high transit ridership and high levels of federal support to diverse and reliable sources of state and local funding. In a ranking of total funding per capita, the five cities spending the most per resident on transit in 1999-2000 were New York, Dallas, Pittsburgh, Houston and Atlanta. The report points to dedicated sources of state and local funding as the reason these regions have received large federal matching grants for expanding transit services. "First rate transit," the report states, "can provide the cost savings and transportation options needed to enhance quality of life and put cities on course to better compete nationally and globally for public and private investment."

For more information, [click here](#).

Transfer is written and edited by John Goldener of the Surface Transportation Policy Project, with contributions by Barbara McCann, Andrea Broaddus and Kevin McCarty. Readers are invited to reprint newsletter items; proper citation is appreciated. If you are not currently subscribed, please send us a note via e-mail to: transfer@transact.org. Be sure to include your full mailing address and name of your organization, phone and fax numbers. For comments and suggestions about Transfer's content, contact John Goldener at jgoldener@transact.org.

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