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Surface Transportation Policy Project's Electronic Update

IN THIS ISSUE

- [Mean Streets Report Details](#)
- ▶ [Progress, Shortcomings on Pedestrian Safety in U.S. Metropolitan Areas](#)
- ▶ [109th Congress to Tackle Renewal of TEA-21](#)
- ▶ [President Signs New FY'05 Funding Bill](#)
- ▶ [FHWA to Revise FY'05 Apportionments, Set Rescissions of Prior Year Funds](#)
- ▶ [Key Senate Committee Adds Panel Members](#)
- ▶ [Espinosa to Lead STPP Board](#)
- ▶ [Canby Prods "Road Gang" to Embrace Bigger Tent for Better Results](#)

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[Transfer Archives](#)

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Mean Streets Report Details Progress, Shortcomings on Pedestrian Safety in U.S. Metropolitan Areas



STPP President Canby at National Press Club release.

In releasing [Mean Streets 2004](#), STPP leaders recently joined with a broad array of partner organizations to call attention to the many challenges before the nation in making walking safer in local areas throughout the U.S.

"The Mean Streets 2004 report provides a useful yardstick for elected officials and transportation leaders to measure progress, or lack thereof, in making pedestrians and their communities safer," said STPP President Anne Canby in remarks during the release of the report. "Nearly 52,000 pedestrian deaths over the last ten years demands that we do much more to make walking a safer travel option."

The STPP study was released December 2 at the National Press Club and in other locations throughout the nation, in conjunction with AARP, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, American Planning Association, American Public Health Association (APHA), American Society of Landscape Architects, prominent local and state leaders and numerous state and local transportation reform advocates.

"America's mean streets are even meaner to our youngest and oldest citizens, as well as African-American and Latino pedestrians," said Judith E. Espinosa, Chair of the STPP's Board of Directors. "We need to find out why this is happening and take the necessary steps to correct it," she said.

The Orlando metropolitan area led the largest metropolitan areas with the meanest streets and also topped all these areas in growing more dangerous for pedestrians, according to the study's pedestrian danger index (PDI).

Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson who took part in the national release described the actions taken in his city and region to make pedestrians and their safety a higher priority, with the report finding that the Salt Lake region led all others in making its pedestrians safer. "Four years ago, the Mean Streets report was indeed a catalyst for change in our community," said Mayor Anderson in commenting on the report and its value to local leaders throughout the country.



Press briefed on report at Press Club.

The American Heart Association was among the many organizations supporting the release of the report at events in Washington, DC and in many local areas. "The Mean Streets 2004 report clearly shows that federal, state and local governments can do more to ensure pedestrians and cyclists a safer experience. By encouraging physical activity in the community, we are addressing a major risk factor for the nation's leading killers – heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases," said Barry Franklin, Ph.D., FAHA, on behalf of the American Heart Association.

To view the full report as well as details on Salt Lake City's pedestrian safety efforts, please go to – www.transact.org.

109th Congress to Tackle Renewal of TEA-21

Despite many fits and starts, the 108th Congress didn't complete work on legislation renewing the nation's surface transportation law, known as "TEA-21", voting to extend the law five times during the two-year term of the 108th Congress.

The many issues involved in renewing the massive funding bill for highways, bridges, transit, safety and other transportation investments will be revisited in the 109th Congress, which begins its work immediately after the New Year's Day with a series of organizing sessions.

While there will be some changes in the leadership and membership of the authorizing committees responsible for TEA-21 renewal legislation, the key leaders remain and are already committing to early action on multi-year bill.

The 109th Congress must start the process anew, beginning with the introduction of leadership proposals, which will likely be followed by committee action in February. Committee leaders want to move TEA-21 legislation to the full House and Senate in March to allow for conference negotiations in April. Once conferees reach an agreement, it must be approved again by the House and Senate before it goes to the President for his signature or veto. This schedule is driven by the May 31, 2005 deadline set forth in the last extension law.

The 108th Congress did help the renewal process when it enacted tax changes pertaining to the treatment of ethanol, ensuring additional revenues to the highway trust fund. The Administration is now estimating the revenues effects of these tax changes as it prepares a revised version of its "SAFETEA" renewal plan, which is expected to go up to Congress immediately after the President's State of the Union Message.

While decisions on how the bills will proceed in the next Congress have not been finalized, there is an expectation that the House and Senate leaders want to follow the renewal bills (S. 1072, H.R. 3550) adopted in the 108th Congress as they draft

proposals to bring to their respective panels as early as February.

President Signs New FY'05 Funding Bill

Earlier this month, President Bush signed into law an omnibus funding bill (H.R. 4818), providing \$388 billion in federal funding for domestic programs, including new funding for transportation programs during fiscal year 2005 (FY'05).

Importantly, while this legislation provides a full year of appropriations for various transportation programs, about eight months of the money will actually be available since the spending authorizations are in effect only through May 31, 2005.

Under H.R. 4818, Congress increased overall funding for public transit, providing total funding of about \$7.65 billion, up \$380 million over the FY'04 level. This was the first real increase in transit funding since FY'03. While the Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and Rail Modernization programs were essentially held to current spending levels, additional funding was directed to the New Starts, Formula Grants and Bus Discretionary programs.

For highways, the obligation limitation will be \$34.42 billion, up \$780 over current funding, including funds for more than 800 highway project earmarks. However, the new funding bill also makes adjustments in the authorized highway program levels (i.e. apportionments to states) to provide the necessary spending authority for the numerous projects in the bill. It does this by reducing the FY'05 apportionments to the states by about five percent and by requiring states to rescind \$1.26 billion in "unobligated program balances" from prior years (see related story).

Finally, the legislation provides \$1.207 billion for Amtrak, down only slightly from current funding, but more than what the House approved and what the President requested. However, the new law does direct Amtrak to reach an immediate agreement with U.S. DOT on repayment terms for a previous \$100 million loan, reducing available funds for this fiscal year.

FHWA to Revise FY'05 Apportionments, Set Rescissions of Prior Year Funds

Before New Year's Day, the Federal Highway Administration will issue a notice describing how provisions of the omnibus funding law affect current (FY'05) and prior (FY'04 and before) highway program funds to the states. Specifically, FHWA will revise FY'05 highway program apportionments provided under the eight-month extension law and it will also instruct states on their share of the \$1.26 billion in funds to be rescinded from highway program funding balances. Each state will have 30 days to

surrender their share of the \$1.26 billion rescission amount.

While the omnibus law protected program balances in the Safety and Urban/Local Area set-asides under the Surface Transportation Program (STP), all other core program accounts, including the Bridge, Transportation Enhancements and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) programs, will be in the mix as states draw down unobligated balances to meet their share of the rescission. Under the omnibus law, states can decide how the rescission amounts will be allocated among the various program accounts. Consider the FY'04 rescission of \$250 million; about 20 percent (i.e. 1 out of every 5 dollars) of the rescinded funds came from the CMAQ program, a rate that is nearly four times greater than how CMAQ funds are apportioned to the states in the first instance (i.e. about 1 out of every 20 dollars).

Key Senate Committee Adds Panel Members

Likely appointments to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, which has lead responsibility for the highway and research titles of TEA-21 renewal, are already known. The key panel will add four new members from the majority – Sens. John Thune (SD), Jim DeMint (SC), Johnny Isakson (GA) and David Vitter (LA) – and two new members representing the minority – Sens. Frank Lautenberg (NJ) and Barak Obama (IL). The four new Republican Senators replace four who will be leaving the panel, with the Democrats adding two new members for three who will be departing.

Among other changes on the panel is the departure of Senator Harry Reid (D-NV), who played a pivotal role in shaping the legislation in committee and guiding the bill through the Senate floor. As the new Senate Minority Leader, Reid relinquished his position as the ranking minority member of the panel's transportation subcommittee. Montana Senator Max Baucus is expected to replace Reid.

These and other committee membership changes to the key Senate and House transportation panels will be decided and announced officially when Congress next month.

Espinosa to Lead STPP Board

Judith M. Espinosa, who is the Director of the University of New Mexico's Alliance for Transportation Research Institute (ATRI), was recently elected Chair of STPP's Board of Directors.

Espinosa is a former Secretary of New Mexico's Transportation and Environment Departments and is currently a member of the STPP Board. She replaces outgoing Chair Sarah Campbell, who has had a long and distinguished career in leading STPP, as its first Executive Director and later as a member of the STPP Board.

"I am honored to serve as Chair of the Surface Transportation Policy Project, an organization with a strong focus on providing environmentally sustainable transportation choices for Americans." said Espinosa. "For fifteen years, STPP membership has spearheaded progressive policies to achieve balanced transportation choices which have given their communities better mobility and changed the way transportation serves our citizenry. I am eager to collaborate with our national partners to accelerate and replicate the successful transportation policies and services they have implemented within their regional and local areas."

To read more, go to – <http://www.transact.org/release.asp>

Canby Prods "Road Gang" to Embrace Bigger Tent for Better Results

In recent remarks to a bimonthly luncheon gathering of Washington, DC-based transportation leaders, known as the "Road Gang", STPP President Anne Canby urged the participants to embrace a "big tent for better results", offering her assessment of the challenges in securing greater public support for transportation investment.

"From my experience, we tend to look at transportation investments from the perspective of how to get a project built, rather than how an investment will affect our communities and the people who live in them, or the manufacturers and logistics managers trying to ship goods around the world. Taking a broader view can build support for the challenges the transportation sector faces," she said.

Canby used the occasion to emphasize the importance of embracing the public and recognizing their desire for more balanced transportation investment. "The public is watching, they are paying closer attention, and, quite frankly, they want a different product line than what we have been producing ... so we can get better results from their tax dollars," she said. For her full remarks, go [here](#).



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