



Transfer

Surface Transportation Policy Project's Electronic Update

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Announcements



"Traffic Congestion: Issues and Options," a two-day policy conference in Washington, DC will address the causes and consequences of traffic congestion; examine policy, technical, and institutional strategies for mitigating congestion from a wide range of perspectives; and contribute to informed decision-making in the upcoming reauthorization of the federal TEA-21 transportation legislation.

[Click here](#) for more information

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July Shaping Up As Busy Month For TEA-21 Renewal

House and Senate Committee leaders are eyeing July as their target month for key actions on TEA-21 renewal, even though as of yet few agreements have been reached among leaders now drafting the various pieces of the legislation.



As a prelude to the busy July ahead, the first official Congressional action on TEA-21 may come during the week of June 23rd in the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, which plans to act upon selected safety and other issues under its jurisdiction. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee that oversees key highway programs is now working under a self-imposed deadline to produce a draft renewal plan for action after the Independence Day recess, targeting final Senate action before the end of July. The Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee is expected to take action in July as well, assuming the full Senate takes up the legislation prior to the August recess. The final installment in the TEA-21 package - added revenues to underwrite the expected six-year \$310+ billion spending plan - will be taken up by the Senate Finance Committee, whose leaders have already ignited substantial controversy over a proposed plan to dismantle existing revenue commitments to public transportation.

In the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, where the leadership remains focused on building support for user fee increases as part of a \$375 billion renewal package, efforts are expected to accelerate in July, with a goal of unveiling a renewal plan before the August recess. The House Science Committee has jurisdiction over certain research issues, while the House Ways and Means Committee must find the additional revenues that will be needed to support the spending levels. House Republican leaders have yet to reach any agreement with Transportation Chairman Don Young (R-AK) on the funding levels for the six-year bill.

Article Documents Senate Majority Efforts to Roll Back Environmental Protections



A June 20 article in the *Washington Post* reported that the majority staff of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is embracing renewal proposals that would effectively roll back key transportation reforms that were made in ISTEA and affirmed in TEA-21, including policies set forth under the Clean Air Act, Section 4(f) (federal protections for natural and historic places), and even the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The content of the proposals has alarmed many STPP partners and others, given the direction key panel leaders are heading on TEA-21 renewal.



This article indicated that the Senate majority is considering very substantial changes to current environmental protections, well beyond what had been expected or what the Committee's hearing record would indicate are necessary. Several proposals attack standards and protections under Section

4(f) or NEPA that have been in place for more than three decades.

It is also the first public report on where the EPW panel is headed on environmental issues, appearing to contradict earlier public pronouncements that the Committee leaders are working collaboratively and in a bipartisan manner on their TEA-21 renewal plan.

For a copy of the Washington Post article, [click here](#).

Oberstar Introduces Safe Routes To School Bill

Congressman James L. Oberstar (D-MN), the ranking minority member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, introduced a groundbreaking Safe Routes to School bill in the House on June 18. In a press briefing, Oberstar lauded the bill, saying it "encourages children and adults to reacquaint themselves with the joys of human-powered transportation."



The Pedestrian and Cyclist Equity Act of 2003 (PACE) would create a national Safe Routes to School program, providing states with a total of \$250 million a year to fix unsafe conditions on roads near schools and encourage children to walk and bike to school. Congressman Oberstar was joined by co-sponsors Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA), and Rep. Nick Lampson (D-TX). Fourteen members have co-signed so far, including Republican David Hobson of Ohio.

"The accident rate for pedestrians and bicyclists is disproportionately high, and we need to address this by investing in safe, convenient facilities for biking and walking," said Anne Canby, president of the Surface Transportation Policy Project. "To the lawmakers who are contemplating how to spend upwards of \$300 billion in federal transportation funds over the next six years, we say: Put the users back in the equation and give our citizens the choices they want."

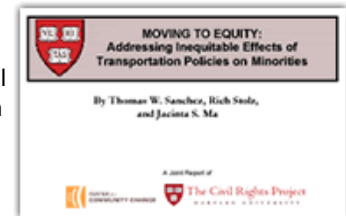
A key reason for the introduction of the bill is the rapid increase of childhood obesity and inactivity-related diseases. "We want to get kids back into the habit of bicycling and walking for fun and transportation," said Oberstar. "With this bill we can change the lifestyle habits of an entire generation." More than 70% of today's parents bicycled and walked to school, while only 18% of their children do today, according to a recent survey conducted by Belden, Russonello and Stewart.

The estimated annual cost of physical inactivity and obesity in the United States is approximately \$117 billion.

For more information, visit www.americabikes.org

Report: Reauthorization Bill Could Have Negative Impact on Minorities

A new report from The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University and the Center for Community Change chronicles how the federal government spends between 30 and 40 billion dollars on surface transportation each year and the impact it can have on minorities and their communities. The report, "Moving to Equity: Addressing Inequitable Effects of Transportation Policies on Minorities," makes several policy



recommendations, and informs policy makers of how their implementation would help address racial injustices created by transportation policies and advance the constitutional goal of equality.

The report outlines the demographic realities of transportation planning, the inequitable costs of transportation policies that encourage travel by car and highway development, and the barriers inherent in the current transportation planning process. According to the report, these transportation policies and approaches have created an enormous burden on minority and low-income individuals, with those in the lowest fifth of income earners spending 36% of their take home pay on transportation, while those in the highest fifth spend only 14%.

STPP President Anne Canby issued a press statement on the report noting that, "as working families struggle to make ends meet, Congress is unfortunately considering measures that would decrease funding for mass transit and intercity rail. Instead, Congress should continue to help communities offer transportation choices and build on the success of the current federal transportation spending bill that guarantees funding for transit, clean air and local control over transportation spending and decision-making."

Recommendations made in the report include:

- Increase funding for enforcement of civil rights and environmental laws and regulations, such as Title VI and NEPA.
- Improve data collection that can be used to evaluate the impacts of transportation projects and plans on minority and low-income communities.
- Recognize the interaction between transportation, land use, and social equity, and support programs that understand and address this interaction.

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



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