



# Transfer

Surface Transportation Policy Project's Electronic Update

## IN THIS ISSUE

- ◉ [House Hearings on SAFETEA](#)
- ◉ [Officials Discuss TEA-21](#)
- ◉ [New Freight Mobility Caucus](#)
- ◉ [Human Service Transportation](#)
- ◉ [Highway Funding Hearing](#)
- ◉ [New Ped/Bike Surveys](#)
- ◉ [GAO Report on Air Quality](#)

## Announcements



2003 Call for Entries: National Award for Smart Growth Achievement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is now accepting applications for the 2003 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement. This competition is open to local or state governments and other public sector entities that have successfully created smart growth.

[Click here](#) for more information.

## [Transfer Archives](#)

May 12, 2003; Volume IX, Issue 10

### House Panel Plans Hearings on Administration's SAFETEA Bill

Anticipating submittal of the Administration's proposal for TEA-21 reauthorization this week, the House Highways, Transit and Pipelines Subcommittee has scheduled a hearing for Thursday, May 15 to review the long-awaited bill. Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta will testify. The subcommittee will also hold hearings next week to receive additional comment on the legislation. The Administration's bill, the Safe and Flexible Transportation Efficiency Act of 2003 (SAFETEA), is expected to offer a modest increase in funding, consolidate some programs, emphasize highway safety, and propose changes affecting clean air attainment procedures and project delivery.



Meanwhile, the full House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's leadership continues to focus their efforts on finding ways to increase federal highway spending to provide the funds for their TEA-21 renewal vision.

For more information, visit [TEA3.org](http://TEA3.org)

### Elected Officials Discuss TEA-21, More Money and Authority Top List

On 5/7, the House Highways, Transit and Pipelines Subcommittee held a hearing to explore what Governors, Mayors, and other local elected officials want in TEA-21 reauthorization. In particular, lawmakers asked Governors and local elected officials to speak to the ambitious \$375 billion funding target identified by Committee's leadership. Most witnesses testified in support of a six-year bill and increased spending with several specifying the need for visible results and more resources at the local level.



### **House Leadership Priorities for Reauthorization**

In opening statements, Chairman Tom Petri (R-WI) and Ranking Member Bill Lipinski (D-IL) identified needs to maintain and improve the nation's infrastructure and economic stimulus as the underlying reasons to increase federal transportation spending substantially above TEA-21 levels. Other lawmakers also outlined system preservation, greater funding at the metropolitan level, and land use planning as priorities for reauthorization, while engaging in customary debates over donor-donee status. Several Members also described the importance of investing in freight mobility, intelligent transportation systems, security, and traditional and new transit markets.

### **Governors Split on Donor-Donee, United on Maintaining ISTEA, TEA-21 Framework**

Although Governors were divided over a controversial proposal by the State Highway Alliance for Real Equity (SHARE), which seeks to guarantee all

states a minimum 95% rate of return, they were united in support of the ISTEA-TEA-21 framework. According to Kentucky Governor Paul Patton and Chairman of the National Governors Association, "The Governors also concur that the current program structure, which features state and local planning and decision-making, flexibility, guaranteed funding levels for highways and transit, and an intermodal approach is working well and should be retained."

Newly-elected Governor Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania suggested the creation of a Federal Capital Budget to invest in transportation at the same level as other G-7 nations. Elected on a smart growth platform, Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm identified the state's Preserve First initiative, which seeks to bring 90% of roads into good or fair condition, as a performance-based approach to transportation that is fiscally responsible.

### ***Local Officials Build Case for Greater Share of Transportation Resources***

A second panel of local officials, including Mayors Victor Ashe of Knoxville, Greg Nickles of Seattle, Elizabeth Flores of Laredo, and William Brooks of Belle Isle, FL, testified in support of suballocation, or a greater share of funding and authority at the metropolitan level, on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, and the National Association of County Officials. In particular, Mayor Ashe described suballocation as an answer to state bureaucracies slowing down project delivery, noting that even after environmental and public review, states can take twice as much time to complete a project compared to local governments.

Mayor Flores also noted that Metropolitan Planning Organizations in non-attainment areas should directly receive CMAQ funding since state transportation agencies have under spent a total of \$2 billion in air quality funds over the past 10 years. In Texas, only 72% of CMAQ funds were obligated, despite demand for air quality improvements in places like Laredo which handles 40 percent of all overland trade between the United States and Mexico.

To read the testimony, see [www.house.gov/transportation](http://www.house.gov/transportation).

For more information on the case for suballocation, [click here](#).

---

### ***New Goods Movement Caucus Seeks to Advance Freight Mobility in TEA-3***

In an event related to the 5/7 hearing, Congresswoman Millender-McDonald (D-CA) and Congressman Diaz-Balart (R-FL) launched the "Goods Movement Caucus" to begin crafting a freight agenda for TEA-21 reauthorization. Mayor Beverly O' Neill of Long Beach, CA identified the need to invest in "critical chokepoints" near major international trade centers such as the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, which receives 42% of all U.S. inbound containers. The Ports handles goods for every region in the country, including \$2.2 billion in the Northwest, \$8.6 billion in the Great Plains, \$25 billion in the Great Lakes states, \$34.3 billion in the Northeast, \$10 billion in the Southeast states, and \$98 billion in the Southwest states. The 16-member caucus is gathering input from local elected officials, transportation agencies, and stakeholder groups to develop policy initiatives that support projects of national economic significance in TEA-21 reauthorization.

For more information on the Goods Movement Caucus, contact John Young in Congresswoman Millender-McDonald's office at 202.225.7924.

---

### **Joint House Hearing Focuses on Human Service Transportation Coordination**

On May 1, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the House Education and Workforce Committee held a joint hearing on coordinating human service transportation. At issue are the 62 federal programs that provide a critical lifeline for the transportation disadvantaged and the thirty-year effort to make federal, state, and local agencies integrate an estimated \$4-7 billion worth of human service transit.



According to Congressman Petri (R-WI), who is the second highest-ranking Republican member of both committees, "Coordinating these transportation services would encourage efficiency and reduce costs through the shared use of personnel, equipment and facilities, thereby improving the level of service for current clients and making an expansion of services possible. However, coordination can't be done alone. A single Department trying to coordinate alone is like playing a game of catch with yourself."

Funded by eight federal agencies through 25 separate pieces of legislation, these transportation programs are typically managed by state and local human service agencies that provide transit for a specific destination such as employment, job training, HeadStart or health care. According to testimony by Kate Siggerud, Acting Director of Physical Infrastructure Issues, U.S. General Accounting Office, although half of all states are believed to have a coordination initiative underway, the lack of funding for the DOT/HHS Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility and limited guidance at the federal level hampers transportation, social services, health and mental health, and area agencies on aging from providing coordinated transit service.

Recommendations by witnesses include financial incentives or requirements to encourage coordination similar to the DOT's Job Access and Reverse Commute program which requires participation by human service agencies; harmonized criteria for program eligibility, reporting, and funding cycles; and technical assistance to help federal, state, and local providers develop better service and cost sharing arrangements. In addition, David Wenzel, President of the National Council on Disability, recommended Congress set-aside 5 percent of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for making sidewalks accessible to people with disabilities. Although this use is currently eligible for CMAQ and STP, witnesses noted that few states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations have spent funds accordingly.

For more information, visit [the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's website](#).

---

### **Joint Congressional Committee Holds Hearing on Reauthorization Funding**

Congress' Joint Economic Committee held a hearing on May 6 to review potential new sources of highway funding for a TEA-21 renewal bill. Two new sources of revenue



were suggested: an increase in the federal gas tax and "congestion pricing," a system whereby fees are levied on users of high-demand roadways, particularly during peak travel hours. Tolls are not currently allowed on interstate highways.



Congestion pricing was broadly supported among the witnesses as a means for maximizing the efficiency of the highway system by simultaneously raising new revenues and helping to relieve congestion. Most witnesses envisioned that congestion pricing would begin on existing HOV lanes and that transit vehicles would be exempt from fees. Rep. Mark Kennedy (R-MN) called for construction of a new national system of "fast lanes" financed by tolls. These lanes would become general traffic lanes after the projects are paid off. Michael Replogle of Environmental Defense questioned roadway expansion as a long-term solution to highway congestion, pointing out that what is known as "induced traffic" quickly fills up new lane capacity.

---

#### **Polls: Americans Favor Increased Investment in Pedestrian, Bicycle Facilities**

Two separate surveys released this week demonstrate strong support for improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The first poll, conducted by the Gallup



Organization for the National Highway Safety Administration and the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, found that 73% of respondents believed that communities should provide bicycle-specific facilities such as trails, paths and traffic signals, and that 75% believed that changes were necessary to improve and expand pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks, signals, and crosswalks. The survey, which emphasized the need for improvements in community planning to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians, was released just days before Congress is expected to receive the Department of Transportation's final proposal for the reauthorization of TEA-21.

The second survey, conducted by Beldon Russonello and Stewart for America Bikes, found that a majority of Americans want to bicycle more and are willing to invest tax dollars in creating better places to bike. According to the poll, 53% of those surveyed supported increased federal spending on bicycle facilities, even if it means less gas taxes go to construction of new roads. Additionally, 50% supported requiring roads to include bicycle lanes or paths, even if it means less space for cars and trucks.



Both surveys follow a recent STPP poll that found that the American public wants to walk more places more often, and is willing to invest in making it possible. That survey, also conducted by Beldon Russonello and Stewart, found that a majority (68%) favor putting more federal dollars toward improving walkability, even within a constrained budget.

For more information on the America Bikes poll, visit [http://americabikes.org/resources\\_media\\_pollrelease.asp](http://americabikes.org/resources_media_pollrelease.asp)

For more information on STPP's pedestrian poll, [click here](#).

---

#### **GAO Report Supports Changing Air Quality Analysis Process**

On May 9th, the General Accounting Office (GAO) released their report on the air quality planning requirements under



transportation law, also known as transportation conformity. The report shows that the primary problem faced by metropolitan planning organizations, which are tasked with doing air quality analysis, is a shortage of qualified staff and funding for this complex and important task. To address these issues, the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations is asking for an increase in the federal funds set aside for metropolitan planning in the reauthorization of TEA-21.



The GAO report has come under strong critique from environmental organizations. Michael Replogle of Environmental Defense found that the report gives little consideration to the environmental and public health purpose of this law. One of the core recommendations of the report is to extend the conformity planning cycle to five years from the current three-year cycle. "This would be like balancing your checkbook once every five years. Conformity analysis may not be fun, but it protects public health," said Replogle.

The report notes that the current conformity process timeline provides "an incentive to work cooperatively with other agencies.... Furthermore, frequent updates can help focus public attention on transportation planning."

For the full report, [click here](#) (.pdf format).

For the Environmental Defense critique of the report, [click here](#).

surface transportation  
policy project

---

Transfer is written and edited by John Goldener of the Surface Transportation Policy Project, with contributions by Ryan Greene-Roesel, Jeremy Gunderson, and Nancy Jakowitsch. 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](mailto: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](mailto:jgoldener@transact.org).

---

We rely on donations to provide Transfer and other services. Please consider making a donation to STPP via the secure "Support STPP" link on our homepage. For more information about STPP visit our web site at <http://www.transact.org> or call 202.466.2636.