



# Transfer

Surface Transportation Policy Project's Electronic Update

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## Announcements



Easter Seals Project ACTION, an organization dedicated to identifying and promoting innovations in public and private transportation for people with disabilities and their families, is looking for statements of need from individuals, families and organizations throughout the disability and transit communities. For more information, [click here](#).

## [Transfer Archives](#)

## May 2, 2003; Volume IX, Issue 9

### Amtrak Releases 5-Year Strategic Plan

On April 25, Amtrak President and CEO David Gunn released a new five-year strategic plan designed to restore the rail carrier's physical plant and train equipment to a state of good repair and to improve the railroad's operational reliability.



The plan focuses on improving reliability and cost-efficiency through investments in existing infrastructure and equipment, and proposes no new significant passenger services. "While there has been much discussion of 'reforming' Amtrak in recent years, no matter what reforms policymakers may want, you have first got to get costs and reliability under control," said Gunn. "This strategic plan focuses on running a fiscally tight business and bringing the railroad to a state of good repair so that it costs less to operate and costs less for the taxpayer to support it."

"This plan is comprehensive and thorough. Every dollar is strictly accounted for, and anyone reviewing the plan can understand where and why the money is being invested," said Gunn. "The dividend of such investment would be a railroad in good operating condition, with overhauled, safe, reliable, and well-maintained equipment. For the tracks we own, it will mean a state of good repair, far fewer speed restrictions that degrade capacity, riding comfort and schedule reliability."

For more information on Amtrak's strategic plan, [click here](#).

### Amtrak CEO David Gunn Takes Plan to Capitol Hill

On April 28, Gunn testified before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Railroads in a hearing to examine Amtrak's current financial and operational situation and prospects. Mr. Gunn's testimony focused on recent and planned improvements to the rail system, and addressed some of the specific criticisms leveled against the organization. "Repairing and improving this railroad is the Board's and my immediate goal and is in everyone's interest," said Gunn in his testimony. "We have a five-year plan that will accomplish this, and I am asking for your support and leadership as we move forward. I would urge you to consider this plan in the broader context of Amtrak's reauthorization where it really should be done and end this stutter-step practice of reforming Amtrak through the annual appropriations process."



Additionally, Mr. Gunn participated in a hearing on April 29 before the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee's Subcommittee on Surface Transportation on Amtrak's five-year plan and the future of intercity rail passenger service. The hearing also featured testimony from DOT Inspector General Ken Mead, DOT Deputy Secretary Michael Jackson, and

Reconnecting America Co-Director and STPP Board Member Hank Dittmar.

To read David Gunn's testimony in the House, [click here](#).

To read David Gunn's testimony in the Senate, [click here](#).

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#### **Dittmar Outlines 'Reconnecting America' Vision at Senate Panel**

Testifying April 29 before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, Reconnecting America Co-Director Hank Dittmar shared his initiative's vision for the future of passenger rail and Amtrak. "We believe that passenger rail can play a significant part in our nation's transportation system, if we redefine the role that intercity rail plays in that network, and if we provide stable levels of capital funding, create incentives for connecting our separate air, rail and bus networks together, and remove regulatory barriers that prohibit coordinated planning and integrated approaches to delivering intercity transportation services – both passenger and freight," he told the panel.



In discussing Amtrak, he noted that the nation's intercity passenger rail corporation "was saddled with an impossible set of conditions." Dittmar also addressed "the failure of United States transportation policy and practice to approach transportation service delivery in a networked manner. Each mode – air, rail, bus, and automobile – is presumed to operate independently, and to compete with one another for customers and scarce resources. The failure to network the transportation system, with both public and private components, is increasingly leading to system and market failures within each industry, and these failures are increasingly threatening continued improvements in our Nation's economic productivity."

In his oral remarks and written statement, Dittmar, who is also a STPP Board Member, also outlined several specific recommendations on actions to help overcome these challenges.

To view the testimony, [click here](#).

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#### **2002 Traffic Deaths at Highest Level in 13 Years**

Fatalities from traffic accidents in the US went up 1.7 percent in 2002, to the highest number of deaths since 1990, according to an analysis based on preliminary estimates of traffic deaths released last week by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The report attributed the increase chiefly to fatalities among travelers in SUVs, light trucks and vans, which grew by 4.2 percent. The increase in rollover fatalities in SUVs and pickup trucks accounted for half of the 1.7 percent increase in traffic fatalities.



While the estimated fatality rate relative to vehicle miles traveled remained constant in 2002, the fatality rate per 100,000 persons rose by 0.7 percent for the year. Pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities remain over-represented in the total, with 13 percent of the estimated 42,850 persons killed in 2002.

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

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#### **President's TEA-21 Reauthorization Plan Coming Soon**

The Bush Administration's TEA-21



reauthorization plan is expected to propose \$14 billion on a new transportation safety initiative, referred to as the "centerpiece" of its proposal. The proposal, called "The Safe and Flexible Transportation Efficiency Act of 2003," or SAFETEA, is in the final stages of review by the Office of Management and Budget and is expected to be released sometime next week.



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Transfer is written and edited by John Goldener of the Surface Transportation Policy Project, with contributions by Linda Bailey 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](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).

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