



Transfer

Surface Transportation Policy Project's Electronic Update

May 29, 2002 - Volume 8, Issue 10

Hill News

Highway Congestion Relief Reviewed by House Panel

The House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit continued its review of TEA-21 renewal with a May 21 hearing on ways to relieve highway congestion through capacity enhancements and increased efficiency. FHWA Administrator Mary Peters provided perspectives on the nation's traffic congestion problems, providing testimony that dealt with capacity enhancements, improved efficiency, system preservation and asset management. While noticing that passenger travel "is expected to grow more slowly," she indicated, as many others have recently, that truck travel "is expected to grow by more than 3 percent annually, "nearly doubling between 1998 and 2020."



Joining witnesses on the largely industry-oriented panel, Environmental Defense's Michael Replogle told panel members, "Throwing more money into road-building and streamlining project reviews to curtail consideration of environmental factors won't solve congestion. But better accountability, planning, consideration of alternatives, and support for new smart incentive strategies can help local and state agencies, businesses, and citizens cut their way through the traffic mess and boost transportation equity."

Industry witnesses continued to press for additional resources and environmental streamlining as their priorities for TEA-21 renewal legislation. Peters' testimony gave credence to industry claims about the lack of investment in capacity enhancement, stating that "highway mileage increased only 2 percent during the period 1980-2000." For

Quote of the Week

"I think it goes without saying that the transportation system should not kill or maim children. We don't count them. If we don't count them, they don't count ... None of the local planning processes that I know of do any kind of accurate update about how children move through the transportation system."

Tom Downs, head of the National Center for Smart Growth Education and Research at the University of Maryland, in response to a question about Safe Routes to School legislation during testimony before the May 15, 2002 Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing.

Calendar

House T&I Committee Schedule

June 6
Subcommittee on Railroads
Hearing on Recent Derailments And Railroad Safety
 10:00 a.m.
 2167 Rayburn House Office Building

June 18
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
Hearing on Intermodalism: Moving America's People and Goods
 10:00 a.m.
 2167 Rayburn House Office Building

the full story about highway capacity, see STPP's [Decoding Transportation Policy & Practice](#) on the subject.

Testimony from the hearing can be found at [TEA3.org](#)

STPP Leaders Testify Before Senate Panel On Transportation & Smart Growth



On May 15, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing on "Transportation Planning and Smart Growth" at which STPP Board Members Judith Espinosa

and Thomas M. Downs shared their perspectives.

Espinosa, who leads the University of New Mexico's Alliance for Transportation Research Institute, appeared on behalf of STPP, telling the panel members that "despite progress under ISTEA and TEA-21, we haven't fully capitalized on these laws." She noted the alliance that has formed to promote the [New Transportation Charter](#) and emphasized "the public has a strong appetite for improvements," wanting more choice and balance in their transportation systems. Espinosa talked about the need for good data and research to support better planning and smart growth efforts and called for more transparency in funding decisions by the states.

In concluding her oral remarks, Espinosa indicated that it was likely that "in 2003, legislation on air, rail, highway, and transit will be considered," urging action on an integrated approach to deal with transportation challenges.

Downs, who spoke as Director of the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth, Research, Education, and Training, provided perspectives on the state of knowledge on the connections between transportation and land use patterns.

"Smart growth is about growth," Downs told the Senate panel, "the question is how we choose to cope with it." He added that systems "must be accountable for how we absorb that growth." Downs noted how little research has been conducted on the impact of transportation investments on density, land uses, and other factors.

"While we as a nation have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on developing better pothole material, better cement, and better bridge steel, we have spent almost nothing on the most important aspect of transportation – how it has changed the way we live and work."

Others testifying on smart growth and transportation included anti-transit consultant Wendell Cox and Joy Wilson, president of the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association.

For more information on the Senate hearing, [click here](#).

Decoding Transportation Policy & Practice: Transit Growing Faster Than Driving

The American love affair with the car seems to be slowing down, as transit ridership outpaced the growth in driving for the sixth year in a row. This new addition to the "Decoding Transportation Policy & Practice" series explores the upward trend in transit use first reported by STPP last month.



This analysis of information from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) shows that automobile use has leveled off, while transit trip-making reached its highest level in 40 years.

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

Decennial Census Information Released



Over the past few weeks the Census Bureau has been releasing some of the new travel statistics from the decennial Census. The information is partial and has been released on a state-by-state basis, and national figures are not yet available. Many regions are showing increased commute times over 1990. STPP will be posting a summary of the transportation information by state once all the information has been released. Watch for the statistics at www.transact.org late next week, or email Senior Analyst Michelle Ernst at mernst@transact.org.

A sampling of articles on the new statistics:

[An Albuquerque Alibi Weekly guest editorial by STPP's New Mexico Director](#)

[The Charlotte Observer](#)

[The Seattle Times](#)

[Connecticut Post Editorial](#)

In Brief

Susie Stephens' Killer Charged With Misdemeanor

The driver of the tour bus that killed bicycle advocate Susie Stephens in St. Louis in March has been issued a summons for failure to yield to a pedestrian, a misdemeanor. He faces a \$500 fine or 90 days in jail, and is still driving for Vandalia Bus Lines. For more information, see the [St. Louis Riverfront Times](#), or this [private website](#) with more information on the case.



California Bill Would Relax Standards, Encourage Smart Growth

An STPP-sponsored bill in California designed to relax state-mandated traffic "Level of Service" (LOS) standards around

transit stations and along bus rapid transit corridors throughout the state has been making its way through the state legislature. LOS standards require that housing or mass transit projects with any discernable traffic impacts fund and prepare "deficiency plans" that usually include expensive intersection enhancements and road widening measures. The unintended consequence of the policy is to force development projects into areas where there will be no major traffic impacts -- typically greenfield sites far away from existing city and town centers. This bill, SB1636, is expected to appear before for a vote on the floor of the State Senate the week of May 27th and, if approved, will be taken up in the State Assembly in early June.

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

"Understanding Senior Transportation" Report Released



A new survey by AARP finds that older Americans take significantly fewer trips as they age, and identifies the problems older Americans have with everything from driving to ride sharing to public transportation and walking. The report includes specific recommendations for improving transportation for seniors. It was presented at the first national Aging and Mobility conference in Phoenix Arizona March 25-28.

The paper, "Understanding Senior Transportation: Report and Analysis of a Survey of Consumers Age 50+" is available [here](#), or you can request a free paper copy by calling Vanessa Woodard at AARP, 202-434-3860.

Call for TE Project Nominations

The National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse (NTEC) is writing a new publication showcasing Transportation Enhancements projects that have served as a catalyst for further development and investment in a community, city, or region.

The ideal project will have documented economic and community benefits as well as a clear relationship to surface



transportation. Community benefits may include social, health, and transportation benefits. Project nominations need to be received by Friday, June 28, 2002. For more information, [click here](#).

California Firemen/Paramedics to Use Bikes

In an effort to provide more mobile support to rescue crews, the local fire and police forces in Capitola, California are joining together to provide bicycle-based firefighter/paramedics in order to better reach people who need medical assistance during the summer festival season. For more information, [click here](#).

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

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.

