

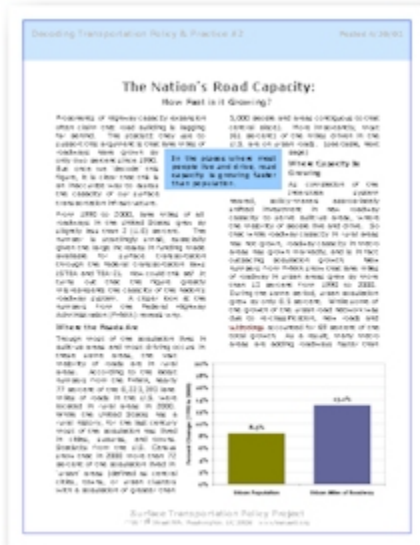


Transfer

Surface Transportation Policy Project's Electronic Update

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The Nation's Road Capacity: How Fast is it Growing?



Highway interests often back up their calls for more road-building by citing the statistic that roadway capacity in the U.S. has grown by just 2 percent in the last ten years. A new edition of STPP's "Decoding Transportation Policy & Practice" explains why that figure greatly misrepresents the capacity of our nation's surface transportation infrastructure.

STPP's analysis of data from the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Census shows that while overall road capacity has grown only slightly, in built-up areas -- where the vast majority of people live and drive -- capacity has increased by more than 13 percent. This growth reflects a shift in investment priorities coinciding with the completion of the Interstate system and is outpacing population growth.

To view the decoder, [click here](#) (.pdf format).

Hill News

Transit Successes Touted Before House Panel

TEA-21's guaranteed funding levels



Quote of the Week

"Show us someone who'd argue that Manhattan needs more car traffic, and we'll show you a parking-garage owner."

– *Newsday*, on the decision to lift the carpool rules on the Queensboro Bridge, the Queens Midtown Tunnel and the Lincoln Tunnel that were put in place following the events of September 11. For more information, [click here](#)

Calendar

National Walk to Lunch Day
May 1, 2002

House T&I Schedule
May 1, 2002: Highways and Transit: Hearing on Major Project Management

Senate EPW Hearings
Date TBA: Operations and Security in Metropolitan Areas

Date TBA: Rescheduled hearing, full committee business meeting

Transportation and University Communities Conference
June 15-18, 2002: Amherst, MA

BikeFest 2002
August 2-4, 2002; Amherst, MA

Pro Bike / Pro Walk 2002
September 3-6, 2002; St. Paul, MN

In Brief

for public transit investments have provided a significant increase in economic and social benefits, according to transit leaders who testified before the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit subcommittee today.



FTA Administrator Jenna Dorn at the April 17th hearing told the panel members, “public transportation benefits people who choose to ride it, and benefits those who have no choice; even people who choose not to ride public transportation benefit from the more vibrant, healthy community that it fosters.”

In his testimony, American Public Transportation Association President William Millar stated, “We appreciated what the legislation and its reliable and predictable annual funding has meant for our industry and the millions of Americans who rely on our services. Whether it’s expanded personal mobility choices or a myriad economic and commercial returns or cleaner air, all Americans receive the benefits of public transportation investment.”

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

Welfare Reauthorization Gains Speed in House Ways and Means Committee

In other Hill news, the full House Ways and Means Committee, which has principal jurisdiction over federal welfare legislation, is expected to mark up the subcommittee bill to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program as early as this week. Similar to the Administration's proposal, the Personal Responsibility, Work and Family Promotion Act of 2002 (HR 4090) would require a doubling of participants in work activities despite an absence of new funding beyond the annual \$16.5 billion in block grants for cash assistance and work supports provided in the 1996 welfare reform law.

MBTA Announces Switch to Cleaner Diesel

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) has announced a \$3 million plan to convert 980 diesel buses to cleaner burning low-sulphur diesel fuel. For a Boston Globe article on the switch, [click here](#). For MBTA's press release, [click here](#).

Amtrak Names New Head

Amtrak announced last week that David L. Gunn, who once headed the transit systems in New York City and Washington, will replace outgoing president George Warrington on May 15. To read more, [click here](#).

Internship Opportunity at STPP

This position will conduct strategic research and grassroots organizing to support the organization of the Alliance for a New Transportation Charter. Activities will generally consist of gathering information to support STPP's model campaigns, assisting with outreach to add members to the Alliance and support for our grassroots network in conducting activities such as candidate education. See a complete job description at www.transact.org.

Although states spent more than \$532 million on transportation services for welfare recipients and low income workers (from TANF and other federal and state funds in FY2000), so far the pending House bills do not directly address transportation needs. In response to greater unemployment, some states have begun shifting TANF funds, which have often been used to match FTA Job Access and Reverse Commute grants, from work supports to cash assistance payments. According to Hill insiders, legislation to be introduced in the Senate next month may seek to secure work participation credits or new funding for transportation, childcare, education and other work supports.

For a *New York Times* article on state views on TANF reauthorization, [click here](#).

Committee Favorably Reports National Defense Interstate Rail Act



The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation voted 20-3 in favor of the National Defense Interstate Rail Act (S. 1991) on April 18, 2002. The bill, authored by the Committee Chair Fritz Hollings (SC) and other Senate leaders, calls for a broader federal

commitment to developing interstate rail infrastructure, focusing on high-speed rail corridors, increased funding and fiscal accountability for Amtrak, and new security requirements for rail lines and stations. To read more about this bill, [click here](#).

House Committee Continues Streamlining Efforts

The House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure approved an airport 'streamlining' bill, HR 4481, last week that would



threatens the environmental review process for airport siting and infrastructure projects. The aviation streamlining bill is viewed as part of a concerted progression of attacks on existing federal environmental statutes. Proponents of aviation and other environmental streamlining efforts argue that existing environmental review and regulations are hindering transportation and other improvement projects. Environmental and other groups opposed the pending aviation bill, which was somewhat modified in the full committee, expressing concerns that the issues surrounding large, complicated and controversial projects are not simply explained by attacks on the underlying federal environmental statutes. In addition, streamlining efforts in aviation and in other areas are expected to undermine state and local efforts to participate in projects that directly affect them and that some proposed "reforms" could have disastrous environmental repercussions. For more information, [click here](#).



New NHTSA Highway Statistics Released

Newly released statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show a slight decline in the number of traffic fatalities and injuries from 2000 to 2001. Injuries from crashes fell 5 percent from 3.2 million in 2000 to 3.0 million in 2001. A total of 41,730 people were killed in crashes last year, a drop of two-tenths of one percent from the 41,821 persons killed in 2000. "Losing nearly 42,000 of our friends, neighbors and family members to highway crashes is unacceptable," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y.



Mineta in response to the new statistics. Since 1990, more than 450,000 Americans have died in crashes.

Pedestrian fatalities declined slightly from 2000 to 2001. 4,698 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes in 2001, a drop of 0.9 percent from 2000. Cyclist deaths grew to more than 700 in 2001, an increase of 1.6 percent over the number of cyclists killed in crashes with vehicles in 2000.

For more information, visit the [NHTSA website](#).

New VMT Figures Released



Figures from FHWA and the American Public Transit Association released April 17, 2002 show that for the first time ever, the growth in transit ridership has exceeded the growth in driving for five years in a row. From 2000 to 2001, transit ridership increased by 2 percent, with driving

growing by only 1 percent during the same period.

The growing popularity of public transit captured headlines in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and Denver, where the greatest increases in ridership were recorded. A St. Paul story lamented the decline of ridership in that city as transit funding gets cut in the state budget. Several papers editorialized on the merits of investing in transit, including the Washington Post, the State in Columbia, South Carolina, the Roanoke Times in Roanoke, Virginia, and the Tucson Citizen in Arizona.

“We’ve been watching these numbers for several years and now we can say that the growing popularity of transit is a trend, not an anomaly,” said David Burwell, President of the Surface Transportation Policy Project. “Americans want choice and freedom, and in places where transit service is improving, they are often choosing the bus or the train over their own car.”

To read STPP’s press release on the new figures, [click here](#).

The full report of 2001 national and local ridership statistics can be found on [APTA's website](#). The latest statistics on driving can be found at the [FHWA's website](#).

California Community Design Incentives Victory

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments in California has approved a \$500 million program to financially reward local governments for smart growth, more compact development, transit-oriented development, and walkable and livable communities. The move was a major victory for STPP California, which had worked hard to generate support for the measure by the six-county Metropolitan Planning Organization. The program is based on a similar program run by the San Francisco Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission. The total dedicated to this program is \$600 million; \$500 million regional funds off the top plus a \$100 million match by locals. Also, off the top are Bike/Ped projects at \$300 million of regional funds, and \$280 of local funds to match regional projects. As part of the program, a pledge was made by the board that half of the revenues generated by the next sales tax will go towards transit.



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