



Transfer

Surface Transportation Policy Project's Electronic Update

IN THIS ISSUE

- ▶ [Canby Testifies on BRT](#)
- ▶ [Current Transportation Bills](#)
- ▶ [TEA-21 Renewal, Amtrak](#)
- ▶ [Multimodal Investment](#)
- ▶ [GAO Report](#)
- ▶ [AAA Drops AHUA](#)
- ▶ [Joyce Foundation Report](#)
- ▶ [CNU Conference](#)

Announcements



The planners and sponsors of the ninth annual Rail~Volution conference (September 11-14) are pleased to be able to offer a limited number of scholarships to citizen activists and advocates working on transit and related land use issues. The application deadline for scholarships is July 11.

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

[Transfer Archives](#)

July 1, 2003; Volume IX, Issue 15

STPP President Canby Testifies on BRT & Enhanced Bus Services

In testimony before the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, STPP President Anne Canby urged lawmakers to preserve the basic program structure for federal transit programs in considering measures to promote the development of bus rapid transit, or BRT, and enhanced bus services.



Specifically, Canby urged the Senate panel, which is responsible for the transit provisions of TEA-21, to continue the bus discretionary program "but adapt it to allow multi-year grant commitments for more limited BRT projects that fall outside of the new starts program and allow these commitments for enhanced bus project that meet certain criteria."

Canby also urged the Committee to maintain the current law commitment of 80/20 matching ratio for all transit projects, including new starts.

Congressional Committees Move on Several Transportation Bills

While renewal of the TEA-21 law dominates much of the Congressional debate, House and Senate Committees are now turning their attention to other transportation priorities such as the Amtrak reauthorization and legislation to promote investment in high-speed rail development.



Last week, lawmakers on the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee approved legislation authorizing funding of up to \$2 billion annually for the nation's passenger rail corporation, Amtrak. Adopting the bill, H.R. 2572, on a voice vote, Committee members praised the bipartisan agreement aimed at funding the first three years of a five-year capital plan being championed by Amtrak President David Gunn. Committee Chairman Don Young (R-AK) said, "It is my hope that the funding authorized in this bill will allow a last-chance window of opportunity for an Amtrak turnaround."

Immediately following its June 25th action on the Amtrak bill, the T&I Committee approved the "Railroad Infrastructure Development and Expansion Act for the 21st Century" (RIDE 21) providing financial support, including tax-credit bonds and tax-exempt financing, to states for investments in high speed passenger rail services and assistance to freight rail providers for certain capital improvements. "This legislation represents an historic commitment from this Congress to improve and expand our nation's rail infrastructure and develop a viable high-speed rail system," said Chairman Young in a release on the legislation, H.R. 2571, which was also approved on a voice vote.

For information on the Committee's action on Amtrak renewal (H.R. 2572) and RIDE 21 (H.R. 2571), visit <http://www.house.gov/transportation/>

Senate Panel Takes Action on TEA-21 Renewal, Rolls In Support for Amtrak

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee June 26 approved legislation, "The Surface Transportation Safety Reauthorization Act of 2003", that addresses TEA-21 safety issues under the jurisdiction of the panel. During action on the bill, the panel members accepted an amendment sought by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX) that provides for a six-year reauthorization for Amtrak. The bill authorizes \$2 billion annually for six years. The Committee bill also creates a non-profit corporation to issue bonds to develop high-speed rail.



For a description of the Committee action, visit <http://commerce.senate.gov/newsroom/printable.cfm?id=205587>

House Democrats Introduce Multimodal Investment Legislation

On June 26th, Congressman Jerry Costello (D-IL), Ranking Member of the Water Resources Subcommittee, introduced a \$50 billion economic recovery package promising to create millions of jobs through multimodal infrastructure investments and related infrastructure. Cosponsored by Congressman Oberstar, Ranking Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and Committee Member Lincoln Davis (D-TN), the initiative would prioritize funding for ready-to-go projects that can award bids within 90 days of enactment.



H.R. 2615, the "Rebuild America Act of 2003," would provide \$50 billion in infrastructure investment, including \$5 billion for highways, \$3 billion for transit, \$14 billion for high speed rail, \$7.5 billion for passenger and freight rail, and \$2.5 billion for port security. The package would cost the Treasury \$34 billion over ten years, coming from \$4.5 billion from changes in the tax code and \$29.5 billion from the general fund. An additional \$10 billion in surpluses from the highway, aviation, and water resource trust funds would finance a portion of the package.

"If we can pass this bill and get it signed into law by the end of July, we can put people to work by Thanksgiving," said Cong. Oberstar (D-MN) in introducing the transportation and economic stimulus package last week.

For more information on the bill, including a state-by-state analysis, visit http://www.house.gov/transportation_democrats/#RebuildAmerica.

GAO Finds Failure to Consider Impacts & Involve Stakeholders Early Are Primary Cause of Environmental Review Delay

Last week the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) released yet another report on the causes of environmental review delay. The report titled, "Stakeholders' Views on Time to Conduct Environmental Reviews of Highway Projects," was requested by House T&I Committee Chairman Young



(R-AK). It was based on "structured interviews" with 29 different interest groups including state DOTs, natural resource agencies, environmental organizations (including some STPP coalition partners), AASHTO, ARTBA, and the American Highway Users Alliance. Respondents, categorized as either environmental stakeholders or transportation stakeholders, were asked to identify the primary causes of environmental review delay. While the GAO report is by no means comprehensive -- considering only delays caused by major environmental reviews, which the report notes are required on only 3 percent of all federally sponsored projects -- some of the results were compelling. Interestingly, the environmental stakeholders identified state DOT's failure to consider environmental impacts early, and involve other affected parties early in the process, as the primary reasons for environmental review delay.

To read the whole report, please visit <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d03534.pdf>

AAA Drops Membership in American Highway Users Alliance

The national American Automobile Association (AAA) has announced that they have dropped their patron membership in the American Highway Users Alliance (AHUA). AAA's membership allowed AHUA, an organization financed largely by road construction, oil, and automobile manufacturing interests, to claim to speak for AAA's 45 million members while lobbying Congress.



Last year, AAA's patron membership allowed AHUA to tell Congress that "the 45 million members of the American Highway Users Alliance urge you to strongly oppose adoption of the Kerry-Hollings Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) language in the Energy Policy Act." A few weeks later, the Senate rejected the proposed fuel economy improvements designed to improve environmental protection and national security.

Although the national organization has dropped their membership, fourteen regional AAA clubs are still members of the highway lobby.

For more information, visit <http://www.newdream.org/sbs/aaa.html>.

Report: Midwest Falls Short on Congestion, Freight, & Air Pollution

A new study by the Joyce Foundation finds that the Midwest is falling behind in addressing traffic congestion, air pollution, and other critical transportation problems.

The study examines Midwest spending on transit, rail projects, road repair and other improvements since the 1991 passage of ISTEA, the federal transportation bill, which is currently up for reauthorization in Congress. The study reports that over \$42 billion in federal transportation dollars went to the seven-state region, funding major projects in Chicago, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, and other Midwest cities to improve bus service, create bike paths and repair roads. But the region has lagged behind in vital areas, such as increasing transit ridership and improving air quality. Meanwhile, traffic congestion costs the Midwest more than \$10 billion annually; freight-rail tie-ups in Chicago (the world's third-largest intermodal port) slow down shipments nationally; and promising light-rail and



high-speed rail projects remain stalled for lack of funds.

For more information, visit <http://www.joycefoundation.org>

Bay Area's Smart Growth Vision Recognized at 11th Annual Congress for the New Urbanism

The Congress for the New Urbanism recognized several of its 2003 Charter Award recipients at the 11th Annual Congress in Washington, DC last week. Among the 15 award winners was the San Francisco Bay Area's Smart Growth Strategy/Regional Livability Footprint Project, a twenty-year visioning project for the nine-county region. The project was crafted with extensive public participation and GIS planning tools. Advocates are now working with regional agencies to implement the smart growth preferred alternative, which would allow over half of all new housing units and jobs to be located near bus and rail service, compared to just 25 percent of housing and 35 percent of jobs today. This alternative would also allow more households to live within a 30-minute commute to work and would consume 82 percent less undeveloped land.



For information about the Smart Growth Strategy/Regional Livability Footprint Project, visit <http://www.abag.ca.gov/planning/smartgrowth/>.

Another award winner was the City of Milwaukee for its freeway teardown. Former Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, who championed the project or what is called the Park East Development Project, was named CNU's CEO, a position he will assume at the end of the year. He replaces Shelly Poticha who now serves as CNU's Executive Director.

For a listing of the award winners, [click here](#).



Transfer is written and edited by John Goldener of the Surface Transportation Policy Project, with contributions by Michelle Ernst, Nancy Jakowitsch, 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. 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.