



principles to lead with ...

2008–2009

The Transportation Transformation Group

Principles for a New National Surface Transportation System

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It's About Time

Transportation is failing and demands to be transformed. Population, income and economic activity have risen, increasing the demand for transportation, but infrastructure has not kept pace. The result is time wasted on clogged and deteriorated roads, pollution of our air and eroding economic opportunities.



Transportation funding is inadequate to the job. Transportation policy is ineffective at meeting the needs of our citizens. Inflation has dramatically decreased the purchasing power of the federal motor fuels tax, and revenues are wasted by inflexible and unfocused funding categories. Next year the Highway Trust Fund is projected to go bankrupt.

We desire fundamental reform. We seek to move beyond the primary focuses of past debates—federal motor fuel tax increases and the fight among donor-donee states. The reforms needed transcend those issues.

America needs a long-term, goal-based vision for the future of transportation that transforms the current way of meeting America's needs. The following principles should guide all policy changes enacted.



Principles

It's Time for a Change

WE SUPPORT a transformation of American transportation policy in 2009, not just a reauthorization of current policies.

WE SUPPORT a national transportation plan that sets and reaches goals, not simply mandates that processes be followed.

WE SUPPORT a transportation system that enhances quality of life and maintains global competitiveness by reducing congestion and increasing mobility.

WE SUPPORT redefining the roles of Federal, State and local governments and the private sector in the delivery of transportation solutions.

WE SUPPORT transportation policies that provide maximum flexibility in transportation finance, procurement and operation of existing and new facilities.

WE SUPPORT transportation policies that allow states to develop and implement seamless multimodal solutions that best achieve transportation goals.

WE SUPPORT the continuation of the existing federal motor fuel tax, provided significant program reforms and innovative financing methods are made fully available to states.





It's Time to Plan for the Future

WE SUPPORT a transformation of American transportation policy in 2009, not just a reauthorization of current policies.

Congress must establish a long-range vision of surface transportation that considers all modes for moving people and goods, as well as the providers and customers of the system.



Federal activities should focus on maintaining and building transportation facilities with a clear national interest, including the Interstate System, major arterials, major international trade routes and cross-border systems.



It's Your Time

WE SUPPORT a national transportation plan that sets and reaches goals, not simply mandates that processes be followed.

Congress should define a national strategy and provide the policy framework that empowers states to set goals, make decisions, and deliver projects that implement the national strategy.

Congress should enact legislation that is consumer-focused and recognizes that Americans expect congestion relief, cleaner air, improved economic opportunity, well maintained roads, and increased safety.

Policies should be enacted to significantly improve project delivery times.

Transportation systems should be evaluated based on improvements in performance standards and predictable travel times.

Processes mandated by law should be streamlined and harmonized to enable the delivery of new transportation systems, not arrest their development.





It's Time for New Choices

WE SUPPORT a transportation system that enhances quality of life and maintains global competitiveness by reducing congestion and increasing mobility.

If we do nothing, the congestion crisis will hinder productivity, economic opportunity and our ability to remain globally competitive. Our overall quality of life is dependent on improving the efficiency of our transportation system.



The Federal government should encourage and provide incentives for implementation of any and all tools to meet transportation goals including congestion pricing, high occupancy toll lanes, tolling options, truck only lanes, vehicle miles traveled pricing, construction of new capacity facilities and utilization of all types of public private partnership arrangements.

The future transportation system should aggressively advance the adoption of new intelligent transportation system technologies, while maintaining flexibility to adapt to emerging technologies. Technologies should have an open architecture, be interoperable and respond to customer needs.

It's Time to Work Together

WE SUPPORT redefining the roles of Federal, State and local governments and the private sector in the delivery of transportation solutions.

Federal, state and local governments and the private sector must all have flexibility to apply innovative techniques in planning, funding, financing, development, delivery, operations, management, preservation, oversight, and accountability.



The Federal government should primarily be responsible for establishing the vision for the nation's transportation system with an emphasis on transportation facilities with national and international significance for movement of people and freight. The Federal Government should encourage innovation in finance procurement and project delivery in meeting the country's transportation needs, including utilization of a variety of finance options, technologies and participation with the private sector.

States should be responsible for implementing the national vision and to deliver projects that advance state and national goals. States should have maximum flexibility to achieve goals with a limited oversight role from the Federal government. States are accountable for designing the business strategies to implement the national vision, which means making decisions on projects of statewide significance, directing statewide project planning and overseeing project procurement.

Local and regional leaders, including metropolitan planning organizations, should be responsible for resolving transportation problems that are local and regional in nature. They should have maximum flexibility to make local and regional decisions.

The private sector's primary responsibility is to partner with states and local governments wherever practical at every stage in the finance, operation, design, maintenance and construction of highways.





It's Time for Flexibility

WE SUPPORT transportation policies that provide maximum flexibility in transportation finance, procurement and operation of existing and new facilities.

States and regions should be encouraged (also through incentives) to invite private-sector innovation and financial resources to participate in project design, operation, delivery and financing options.

States should not be penalized for utilizing innovative solutions.

Technical interoperability across modes should be updated as technology and capabilities advance.

Federal funding categories should be consolidated and focused on meeting broad national goals. Federal program categories should be reduced to not more than 4-5 broad categories with significant national purposes.

Discretionary programs should be dissolved, and not more than the current 2.5% of the total authorization should be devoted to federal administration and research.





It's Time to Focus on Solutions

WE SUPPORT transportation policies that allow states to develop and implement seamless multimodal solutions that best achieve transportation goals.

The federal government should identify ways to maximize freight and passenger connectivity and develop incentives for doing so.

States and local governments should be given flexibility to move financial resources among modes of transportation that best accomplish transportation goals.



It's Time to Shift Gears

WE SUPPORT the continuation of the existing federal motor fuel tax, provided significant program reforms and innovative financing methods are made fully available to states.

The current method of financing the Federal program primarily through federal motor fuel taxes is not sustainable and will not address current and future transportation needs. The federal government should explore alternative federal financing methods.

Prior to considering any increase in Federal motor fuel taxes, the Federal government should encourage and enable States to employ business strategies and innovative finance techniques that help meet transportation goals. These may include tolling, congestion pricing, HOT lanes, vehicle miles traveled pricing and the full range of other public private partnership mechanisms to bring additional resources to solving transportation issues.

We support shifting the focus away from states' individual returns on the federal program in exchange for achieving the broader goals of significant program reform and full availability of alternative financing methods.

In order to focus on reform and innovation, states need assurance that they will have financial stability under any significantly reformed new program. Assuming that federal motor fuel taxes continue to exist at current levels, we support ensuring that each State receives no less than the percentage of its core highway funding received in FY 09, as compared to the total core highway funding distributed to all states in any given year of a future authorization.





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