

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
STATE HIGHWAY AND  
TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS  
**AASHTO**  
THE VOICE OF TRANSPORTATION

## TRANSPORTATION—Are We There Yet?

Metropolitan Mobility and  
Congestion Reduction—2009

transportation

# mobility



# Metropolitan Mobility and Congestion Reduction

## Importance of Metropolitan Areas

Since the 1950's, the number of people living in metropolitan areas in this country has nearly tripled growing from 85 million to 225 million. Over the next 50 years, another 125 million will be added, with population approaching nearly 350 million. Keeping pace with the transportation needs of this growing population and their expanding economies has become an overwhelming challenge. The result is increased hours on the road, and decreased time with our families.

Metropolitan congestion is bad and getting worse as demand has outdistanced capacity. The federal government has a stake in helping metropolitan regions solve the congestion problems that plague them. Improvements are needed in highway system performance and capacity; transit and, in many areas, expansion of intercity passenger rail service. Congestion relief and system reliability should be a major focus of authorization.

No single approach will solve the problem. But there are three principle strategies: add more capacity, operate the system more efficiently, and encourage travel and land use patterns that use the system in better ways.

AASHTO's policy recommendations support all three.

## Expand Capacity by Increasing Investment in Metropolitan Mobility

**HIGHWAYS.** To focus resources on the mobility of metropolitan areas, AASHTO proposes a new, outcome-focused *Transportation System Improvement and Congestion Reduction Program*, with an objective of selecting projects which, when completed, could measurably improve system performance and reduce congestion. This would replace the current *Surface Transportation Program*, but retain its current flexibility.

Funding for metropolitan areas and congestion relief projects should be expanded by increasing the overall highway program to \$75 billion by 2015. These dollars should be systematically programmed by states and metropolitan planning organizations to meet community needs.

**TRANSIT.** Transit demand is steadily increasing and current systems are hard-pressed to keep pace. Transit ridership should double over the next twenty years. To begin to add the capacity needed to bring this about, AASHTO recommends that federal transit assistance increase by 80 percent by 2015 to \$18.5 billion per year.

**INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL.** The time has come for the United States to provide an intercity passenger rail network that provides competitive, reliable, and frequent passenger service, comparable to world-class systems in other countries. Current service should be brought up to a good state of repair. Ultimately service should expand to include high speed rail corridors, regional corridors, and long-distance service. Federal funding of \$35 billion over six years is needed to begin the capital investment required.

## Operate the System More Efficiently

To provide low-cost, quick-turnaround relief for congestion, AASHTO recommends that Congress establish a new core Operations and Management Program funded at \$3 billion per year. The program would fund investments to enhance travel reliability, reduce delay and improve overall system performance. Eligible activities would include incident management; emergency response; signal synchronization; intersection and street improvements; lane markings, and traveler information systems. States should be encouraged to program Operations and Management funds for low-cost, rapid deployment projects designed to reduce delay and improve reliability.

## Encourage Travel and Land Use Patterns that Use the System in Better Ways

AASHTO supports policies and investments which encourage more trips to be taken by transit, by bike, or on foot, rather than by car. AASHTO also wants to see better coordination of transportation and land use policies between state DOTs and local governments. To do so AASHTO supports transforming the current *Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program* (TCSP) into a *Transportation and Land Use Program*, and funding it at \$100 million per year to provide land use technical assistance to counties and cities.

