

Blue Ribbon Panel

Significant Systematic Changes to Transportation Infrastructure Capacity

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General Thoughts

Assumptions

- Focus is 50 years in the future.
- "Changes" needs to mean "increase".
- Increase can be accomplished by construction and by changes in policy.
- Focus should be on the role of transportation in enhancing economic development; transportation can be used to manage and guide development.
- Other goals should include fuel efficiency, minimizing adverse environmental impacts, redundancy to enhance security, customer convenience.

Primary focus of capacity expansion, where and when possible, should be on using pricing to influence customer demand and to support "best" choices by customers. The view must be regional and funding must be provided based on regional plans rather than state or city-specific plans.

- In dense areas, federal policy (backed by funding support) should support increased bus and rail transit coverage (including geographic and time of day), lower transit fares, interconnectedness of transit systems (in terms of schedules, stations, information, and payment mechanisms), and redundancy of systems to enhance security.
- Federal policy should also encourage the use of time-of-day pricing to discourage auto trips in the peak period, to encourage carpooling and support HOV lanes and HOT lanes. Further, federal policy should require bottlenecks to be addressed.
- Cordon pricing in the major cities should be encouraged as an additional aspect of time-of-day pricing and funds should be used to improve transit.
- Interconnected information systems should be required in order to receive future federal funding support. These systems should focus on both multi-mode trip planning as well as transit and vehicular information throughout the system regarding incidents and alternative route options.
- Efforts to develop 5.9GHz system for both safety as well as interoperable toll collection should be pursued and a national toll payment system developed. The focus of this effort should look towards a replacement of the gas tax with a road user fee and both policy and toll payment systems

should include both road and transit systems. (e.g., road use fee is higher where a transit alternative exists).

- In some cases, particularly in more densely developed areas, real-time information systems can serve to increase capacity, by informing and diverting motorists before they reach accidents, construction, etc. If there is one “big new thing”, it’s the role that information will play in the transportation system of the future, vis-à-vis the role it plays today.

In some instances, new capacity is warranted.

- Federal interregional focus should be on rail system improvements. High speed, reliable rail with frequent service should be the major inter-city service option between cities that are under x hundred miles apart, to supplement or, in some cases, replace air travel. Passenger rail should be separate from rail freight.
- Federal policy should encourage large city “satellite cities”. Development of these satellites would encourage more wide-spread economic growth, make jobs and economic development available to more areas, would reduce congestion and auto trips to the city center, help avoid “sprawl” and improve the environment. They would be connected to the large city via high speed rail.

Public and private investment dividing lines will be blurred.

- Private investment in new or existing roadways is appropriate provided that the public interest is maintained. In areas of the world where public/private agreements have existed for many years, agreements have included revenue sharing with the public entity, as well as requirements for the private entity to build a parallel, non-tolled road.
- Conversely, there may be areas of goods movement that have traditionally been privately funded where public investment is appropriate to guide economic growth and/or minimize adverse impacts (e.g., truck-only roads/lanes or aspects of the rail freight system).