



The Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin is a statewide nonprofit organization that advocates building and maintaining an efficient, reliable and interconnected transportation system that addresses our state's needs for safe mobility and economic growth.

## May 2010

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## Making the Case for Essential Transportation Capacity

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) released ***Transportation Reboot: Unlocking Gridlock***, to identify the most urgently needed capacity expansion projects. Future reports in the series will address connecting rural and urban America and the nation's freight capacity needs.

"Our report shows that we are experiencing system overload," said AASHTO Executive Director John Horsley. "While congestion levels declined with the recession, congestion is now returning, costing millions in lost time and productivity. Capacity increases are needed in transit, rail, and particularly highways."

Key findings excerpted from the report include:

**Population increases are putting strains on existing transportation networks, and are increasing the need for new capacity.**

- Since 1956 when the Interstate Highway Act was enacted, the U.S. population has grown by 140 million. Unlike countries in Europe and Asia whose populations are expected to decline, the U.S. is growing.
- In 10 years the U.S. population will grow by 27 million people, more than the number of people who currently live in Texas.

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**Significant investment is needed to keep America moving.**

- Travel on the U.S. highway system has increased five-fold over the past 60 years from 600 billion miles driven to almost three trillion in 2009.
- Annual travel is expected to climb to nearly 4.5 trillion miles by 2050, even with aggressive strategies to cut the rate of growth to only one percent per year.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation's 2008 Conditions and Performance report, released in early 2010, projects an annual highway investment need of about \$175 billion. Of that amount, \$85 billion is needed for system rehabilitation, \$71 billion is needed for system expansion and \$18 billion is needed for system enhancements such as safety improvements.

**The Interstate Highway System is the backbone of the nation's transportation network and must continue to play a strategic role.**

- Between 1980 and 2006, traffic on the Interstate System increased by 150 percent, while Interstate capacity increased by only 15 percent.
- Because capacity has not kept pace with travel demand over the past four decades, the amount of traffic experiencing congested conditions at peak hours in the nation's most urban areas on the Interstate System doubled from 32 percent to over 67 percent.

**Meeting metropolitan mobility needs will require a balanced approach that preserves what has been built to date, improves system performance, and adds substantial capacity in highways, transit, freight rail, and intercity passenger rail.**

- Highways play a dominant role in providing mobility for the American public, carrying 95

percent of passenger trips and 93 percent of freight by value. Expanding highway capacity is not the only thing that will be required to meet future mobility needs, but it will be a principal part of what is needed.

- To reduce current congestion and meet future needs, the AASHTO 2007 Future Options for Interstate Highways study found that the equivalent of 30,000 additional lane-miles should be added to the existing 85,000 lane-miles of urban Interstate. Additionally, another 40,000 lane-miles need to be added to the existing urban segments of the National Highway System.
- AASHTO has also called for doubling transit ridership by 2030, and increasing federal transit assistance by 89 percent. AASHTO has also called for investing \$50 billion in high speed and intercity passenger rail during the next six years.
- Massive investments in transit capacity and a quadrupling of transit ridership cannot substitute for additional increases in Interstate highway capacity needed to accommodate longer-distance passenger and freight movements and the through-trips that continue to grow.

The report outlines a four-prong approach to improving the nation's transportation system:

1. Preserve and modernize the system,
2. Improve system performance,
3. Shift trips to other options, such as intercity passenger rail, transit, bicycles or walking; and shift freight from trucks to rail and
4. Add the highway capacity needed to sustain America's future.

Visit [http://expandingcapacity.transportation.org/unlocking\\_gridlock/gridlock.html](http://expandingcapacity.transportation.org/unlocking_gridlock/gridlock.html) to view the entire report.

## Senate Climate Change Legislation Postponed

The announcement of Senate climate change legislation six months in the making was postponed when one of the legislators backed out. Senator Lindsey Graham, R-South Carolina, pulled his support for the climate and energy legislation unless Majority Leader Reid, D-Nevada, would pledge that the bill would be taken up before any legislation on immigration reform. Graham doesn't want to see valuable Senate floor time used to debate immigration reform as he thinks it is unlikely to pass in the current session.

Graham had been working with Senator John Kerry, D-Massachusetts, and Senator Joe Lieberman, I-Connecticut, on legislation which was submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in late April. The agency will take six to eight weeks to examine the bill and perform an analysis.

The three senators have not disclosed what their bill would include regarding greenhouse-gas emissions from the transportation sector, except to rule out a gas tax increase. Kerry has described a possible charge for oil companies to buy pollution allowances similar to other sectors covered by the legislation. Kerry has also said a portion of the revenue would be deposited in the Highway Trust Fund, but no percentage or dollar amount was given.

Previously, 26 organizations had sent a letter to Kerry, Graham and Lieberman stating that any proceeds from a carbon tax on gasoline should go toward transportation.

## USDOT Examines Greenhouse Gases

According to a report released by the U.S. Department of Transportation, a number of strategies can be used to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions from the transportation sector. While the report makes no specific recommendations, the report analyzes of a full range of strategies including:

- Using low-carbon fuels,
- Increasing vehicle fuel economy,
- Improving system efficiencies and
- Reducing vehicle miles traveled.

The report attributes 29 percent of all U.S. greenhouse gases to the transportation sector. The remaining 71 percent is due to electricity generation, which is used in industrial and commercial applications as well as in residential settings. Within the transportation sector, 59 percent of greenhouse emissions come from cars and light-duty trucks, 19 percent from freight trucks and 12 percent from aircraft.

Visits [http://ntl.bts.gov/lib/32000/32700/32779/ DOT\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Report\\_-\\_April\\_2010\\_-\\_Volume\\_1\\_and\\_2.pdf](http://ntl.bts.gov/lib/32000/32700/32779/ DOT_Climate_Change_Report_-_April_2010_-_Volume_1_and_2.pdf) to view the 605-page report, ***Transportation's Role in Reducing U.S. Greenhouse-Gas Emissions***.

## AASHTO Calls for Balanced “Livability”

The Obama administration has indicated that “livability” will be among the top priorities when it comes to transportation funding. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) would like the administration to define livability to include a full range of transportation options – including improvements to roadways, transit, walking and biking.

“Even before livability became a buzzword, many of us in the transportation field were working hard at improving the quality of life through smart transportation choices and investments,” said John Horsley, executive director of AASHTO. “The next authorization bill must take into account the important role played by road-related investments in enhancing communities and improving the convenience of travel and access to services for all citizens.”

AASHTO released a new report, *The Road to Livability: How State Departments of Transportation Are Using Road Investments to Improve Community Livability*. The report states that: “While State DOTs support what can be done through transit, walking and biking to enhance ‘livability,’ what has been missing from the national dialogue is what can be accomplished through road-related improvements.” The report documents a number of ways state DOTs are working to enhance local communities.

Congress will have to determine the meaning of livability during the debate over the next multi-year transportation authorization. AASHTO makes the following recommendation: “A public policy that addresses true livability must include not only urban but rural communities, not only the environment but also the economy, not only transit riders and bicyclists, but soccer moms and family vacationers at the Grand Canyon.”

Visit <http://downloads.transportation.org/LR-1.pdf> to view the entire report.

### U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Sustainable Communities Guide

The USDOT has issued a reference guide that identifies resources for promoting livable and sustainable communities. The guide was released in conjunction with U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The document, ***Leveraging the Partnership: DOT, HUD, and EPA Programs for Sustainable Communities***, summarizes the various federal programs available.

Visit [http://fta.dot.gov/documents/Sustainable\\_Communities\\_Programs\\_4-26-10.pdf](http://fta.dot.gov/documents/Sustainable_Communities_Programs_4-26-10.pdf) to view the guide.

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## President Signs Another Aviation Extension

President Obama signed another short-term extension of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) authorization, extending FAA operations and programs through July 3. The bill, H.R. 5147, allows the FAA to continue to collect fuel and ticket taxes to fund the Airport and Airway Trust Fund and to make expenditures from the fund.

This is the 13th extension since the FAA authorization expired on September 30, 2007.

The House and Senate have each passed new authorization bills and are now working to reconcile the differences.

## Commission to Address the Deficit

In February, President Obama signed an executive order establishing the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. The commission's objective is to put forward proposals to balance the budget excluding interest payments on the debt by 2015 and to meaningfully improve the nation's long-term fiscal outlook.

To report out a recommendation, the commission will need 14 out of 18 votes, ensuring that any report will have bipartisan support. President Obama has asked for the commission's recommendation by December 1, 2010.

The commission will be led by former Clinton White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles and former Republican Senate Whip Alan Simpson. Other members include:

Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT)

Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA 31)

Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI 4)

Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK)

Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND)

David Cote, Chairman and CEO, Honeywell International

Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID)

Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL)

Ann Fudge, Former CEO, Young & Rubicam Brands

Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH)

Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX 5)

Alice Rivlin, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institute and former Director, Office of Management & Budget

Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI 1)

Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL 9)

Rep. John Spratt (D-SC 5)

Andrew Stern, President, Service Employees International Union

The commission faces a monumental task. Under Obama's proposed 2011 budget, the deficit is projected to reach \$1.5 trillion or 10.3 percent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). While the Congressional Budget Office projects that the deficit will decline for a period of time, lowering to 4 percent of GDP by 2014, the deficit is expected to resume rising again after that time. Typically, economists consider deficits in excess of 3 percent of GDP unsustainable.

Many people doubt the group will be able to come up with a plan that can garner the necessary 14 of 18 votes as any realistic plan will have to include a combination of spending cuts, including tackling entitlement spending, and tax increases.

Transportation advocates worry that the commission will recommend using increased gas taxes to reduce the deficit. This road has been taken several times in the history of the gas tax and would limit the ability to raise money to fund the next surface transportation authorization.

**TDA Welcomes  
a New Member**

**Madison Area Bus Advocates**

## Transportation in the News

Wisconsin: Rural Safety – Wisconsin has installed a first-of-its-kind traffic sign at one of northern Wisconsin's most deadly intersection. The intersection of Highway 53 and 77 in Minong is one of the most deadly in the state with 21 right angle T-bone crashes over the last 10 years. A significant percentage – 40 percent – have resulted in either death or incapacitating injury.

The sign looks like the divided highway symbol with a “do not cross” symbol that flashes if a car is imminent. First there is a yellow symbol to let the driver know that a car is approaching the intersection. This changes to the red “do not cross” symbol when the car reaches a critical point.

Engineers and psychologists at the University of Minnesota developed the Rural Intersection Collision Avoidance System as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation plan to reduce rural car accidents.

Georgia – The Georgia legislature has passed legislation allowing a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax to fund transportation improvements (TSPLOST). The bill would divide Georgia into 12 regions and ask voters in each region whether to hike the sales tax 1 cent to pay for roads, bridges and rail projects in that part of the state. The vote would take place in 2012, providing adequate time for planning and project selection.

The bill is based on Governor Perdue's original bill, and the governor's office has been very involved in its passage. Perdue is expected to sign the legislation by June 8.

Illinois – Illinois recently launched a \$12.8 billion, 6-year transportation construction plan. The program will construct or resurface thousands of miles of roads, replace hundreds of bridges and create thousands of jobs.

This will be the largest road and bridge

improvement effort Illinois has ever seen said Governor Pat Quinn. “I have made it my priority to invest in our state's infrastructure, which will spark economic growth in local communities across the state by putting more people to work while improving public safety,” he said. “We look forward to the most robust construction season in the state's history and the benefits it will bring to Illinois.”

More than \$5 billion of construction work will be under contract in the current construction season, compared to \$3 billion from last year.

Federal grants are expected to cover \$7.3 billion of the plan's cost, while the state contributes \$4.9 billion and local governments \$600 million.

Quinn also urges Washington to move forward with a robust federal transportation bill.

Kansas – Kansas transportation advocates are pushing a new \$8.2 billion, 10-year transportation plan. The proposal calls for a .3-cent sales tax increase and an increase in registration fees - \$20 for cars and \$100 for big trucks. The plan would replace the transportation program that expired last year, leaving the state without money for big-ticket highway projects. Despite support for highways, good transportation infrastructure and the corresponding economic development, many legislators are hesitant to consider a plan that raises taxes and fees at this time with the economy only showing small signs of recovery.

Wyoming – Wyoming faces a \$135 million annual transportation funding gap. According to the state's long range transportation plan prepared as part of the Wyoming Connects planning initiative, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation expects to have available \$294 million per year to spend on major maintenance and reconstruction. However, to maintain the current quality of Wyoming's highways, the state will need to spend \$429 million annually.

## Wisconsin Transit Week

Wisconsin Transit Week is May 17-23, 2010!

TDA sponsors Wisconsin Transit Week to publicize the benefits of transit throughout the state. It's a great time for you to promote your community's transit system – and help TDA spread the word that transit is vital to the economy, the environment and the quality of life all Wisconsinites enjoy.

Visit the TDA website, [www.tdawisconsin.org](http://www.tdawisconsin.org), for more information.



The graphic features a white bus with a blue stripe and a digital display that reads "TRANSIT: IT WORKS!". To the right of the bus, the text reads "Transit: It Works!" in a large, bold, black serif font, followed by "Wisconsin Transit Week" and "May 17-23, 2010" in a smaller, black sans-serif font. Below the text is a photograph of three people: an elderly woman with glasses and a white jacket, a young woman with long dark hair in a light blue shirt, and a man in a light blue shirt and tie. In the bottom left corner, the TDA logo is displayed, consisting of the letters "TDA" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font with a white outline, and the full name "Transportation Development Association" in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font below it.

### Save on AAA Membership, Auto & Home Insurance

Visit the AAA website for a listing of membership benefits. You'll also be eligible for high-quality auto and home insurance coverage through AAA at a discounted TDA group rate too. Keep in mind, even if you already have AAA membership or insurance through AAA, you can save even more under this group plan. Enrollment is convenient through a statewide network of AAA offices.

Go to [www.aaa.com](http://www.aaa.com) or call 1-800-236-1300 to find an office near you.

To receive your AAA discount provide your AAA group number TRN003.

Join today and take advantage of the great benefits and savings.



## Association Notes

### Register Today for the TDA Drive-in

Wisconsin's next governor and legislature will face a seemingly impossible task – to balance a state budget that is over \$2 billion in the hole, while remaining true to campaign promises not to increase taxes of any kind.



They will face a similar conundrum with the transportation budget. Five years after Wisconsin repealed gas tax indexing, no votes have been taken to adjust the gasoline tax to maintain its purchasing power; we are still in the early stages of funding the replacement of the fifty-year-old interstate system in southeast Wisconsin; transit systems are languishing under a strained property tax and potholes adorn more local roads. Most significantly, the public does not believe that increasing user fees will help solve any of this as transportation funds have been diverted in the past to help fill the general fund deficit, and many think it is likely to happen again.

As disheartening as all of this can seem, there are efforts occurring across the state to reverse these trends and place Wisconsin on a better path. The 2010 TDA Drive-in will provide detailed information about Wisconsin's fiscal and budgetary situation and will highlight three promising movements that are underway in Wisconsin: the I-39/90 Coalition, the Wisconsin Way and a push for an advisory referendum on the November ballot regarding a constitutional amendment to protect the transportation fund.

The problems facing Wisconsin are significant, but groups across Wisconsin are working to fix them. Come to the 2010 TDA Drive-in and learn

what is being done and what you can do to get Wisconsin moving in the right direction again.

Registrations are due by May 20th.

Visit the TDA website, [www.tdawisconsin.org](http://www.tdawisconsin.org), for event information and a registration form.

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### Calendar of Events

TDA Drive-in – May 26th at the Madison Club. Visit the TDA website, [www.tdawisconsin.org](http://www.tdawisconsin.org), for event information and a registration form.

Wisconsin Transit Week – May 17th-23rd.

2010 Mid-Continent Transportation Research Forum hosted by the Wisconsin Transportation Center – August 19th-20th in Madison, Wisconsin. Visit <http://epdweb.engr.wisc.edu/Courses/Course.lasso?myCourseChoice=L268> for more information and to register.

*If you know of an upcoming event that would be of interest to TDA members, please forward information to the TDA office, [general@tdawisconsin.org](mailto:general@tdawisconsin.org).*

### Save these Dates

- TDA Golf Outing – August 12th
- TDA Annual Meeting – October 19th
- 2011 TDA Fly-in – March 30th-31st

*Visit the events page on the TDA website, [www.tdawisconsin.org](http://www.tdawisconsin.org), for event details and any future changes in the schedule.*