

# KEY FACTS ABOUT AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND FEDERAL FUNDING

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The nation's roads and highways are the backbone of the U.S. transportation system, allowing Americans to travel approximately 3 trillion miles annually. But conditions on the system are deteriorating, as the need for transportation improvements far outpaces the amount of funding available. As the nation looks to rebound from the current economic downturn, making needed improvements to roads, bridges and public transit could provide a significant boost to the economy by creating jobs and stimulating long-term economic growth as a result of enhanced mobility and access.

SAFETEA-LU (the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users), the current long-range federal surface transportation program, was originally set to expire on September 30, 2009. Following a series of short term continuing resolutions, the current program now expires September 30, 2011. The level of funding and the provisions of a future federal surface transportation program will have a significant impact on future highway and bridge conditions and safety as well as the level of transit service, which, in turn, will affect the state's ability to improve its residents' quality of life and enhance economic development opportunities.

## *Federal Funding for Our Nation's Surface Transportation System Generates Jobs; Making Needed Highway Improvements Assures Economic Recovery and Growth*

- Our nation's highways, transit systems, railroads, airports, ports and inland waterways drive our economy, enabling industry to achieve the growth and productivity that have made America strong and prosperous.
- A Federal Highway Administration study concludes that for each \$1 billion of federal spending on highway construction nationwide nearly 28,000 jobs are generated annually, including approximately 9,500 in the construction sector, approximately 4,300 jobs in industries supporting the construction sector, and approximately 14,000 other jobs induced in non-construction related sectors of the economy.
- The Federal Highway Administration estimates that each dollar spent on road, highway and bridge improvements results in an average benefit of \$5.20 in the form of reduced vehicle maintenance costs, reduced delays, reduced fuel consumption, improved safety, reduced road and bridge maintenance costs and reduced emissions as a result of improved traffic flow.

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### ***Current Road and Bridge Conditions, Travel Trends and Traffic Congestion***

- Thirty-two percent of America's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition. Driving on roads in need of repair costs U.S. motorists \$67 billion a year in extra vehicle repairs and operating costs – \$324 per motorist.
- Twenty-four percent of America's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.
- Forty-four percent of America's major urban highways are congested. Traffic congestion costs American motorists \$78.2 billion a year in wasted time and fuel costs. Americans spend 4.2 billion hours a year stuck in traffic.
- Vehicle travel on America's highways increased by 39 percent from 1990 to 2009, while new road mileage increased by only four percent. The nation's population grew by 23 percent from 1990 to 2009.
- Americans rely almost exclusively on motor vehicles for mobility. Travel in private vehicles accounts for 88 percent of all person miles of travel. Air travel accounts for eight percent of all person miles of travel, while transit (including buses and trains) accounts for one percent.

### ***Roadway Improvements Can Save Lives and Reduce Traffic Crashes***

- Roadway conditions are a significant factor in approximately one-third of traffic fatalities. There were 33,808 traffic fatalities in 2009 in the U.S. A total of 198,546 people died on U.S. highways from 2005 through 2009.
- The national traffic fatality rate is 1.14 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel.
- Motor vehicle crashes cost the U.S. \$230 billion per year, \$819 for each resident, in medical costs, lost productivity, travel delays workplace costs, insurance costs and legal costs.
- Where appropriate, highway improvements such as removing or shielding obstacles, adding or improving medians, widening lanes and shoulders, upgrading roads from two lanes to four lanes, and improving road markings and traffic signals can reduce traffic fatalities and accidents and improve traffic flow to help relieve congestion.
- According to a study conducted by the Federal Highway Administration, \$100 million spent on highway safety improvements will save 145 lives over a 10-year period.

*Data from the U.S Census, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Texas Transportation Institute was compiled and analyzed by TRIP, a nonprofit transportation research group based in Washington, D.C. Information is the latest available.*

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