

Administrator Speeches 2006

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<u>12/19/2006</u>	Remarks on the St. Charles Streetcars - New Orleans, LA (As Prepared for Delivery by Secretary Mary Peters)		
<u>12/13/2006</u>	Remarks on Transit Safety & Security Round Table, Newark, NJ		
<u>12/5/2006</u>	National Conference of State Legislators, San Antonio, TX (As prepared for delivery by Secretary Mary Peters)		
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"Good to Go" Transit Option for Older Americans"

09-26-06

Remarks: James Simpson, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

New York, New York

Acknowledgments and Introduction

Thank you Lee Sander, The Rudin Center, AARP, and the New York City Transportation Council for sponsoring this event today, which will begin an ongoing dialogue about transportation for older adults.

I am proud to be here on behalf of President George W. Bush and Acting Secretary of Transportation Maria Cino-- as mobility for older Adults is central to the President's Executive Order on coordinating and enhancing human services transportation.

Transit impact on me personally...

- Congestion initiative and its impact on public transportation.

Many Americans are unable to get to work, run errands, access medical care, or participate in community activities simply because they do not have reliable transportation. Some can't afford their own cars because of income.

Others may not be able to operate a vehicle because of medical conditions, disabilities, or other limitations. Individuals who are transportation dependent live in all parts of the country—including here in New York City.

For just a minute—I want to outline a few statistics:

As my colleague at AARP just mentioned, the number of older Americans will double to 70 million by the year 2030 and seniors will comprise 20 percent of the total U.S. population.

In a study conducted by the Harris Poll and the National Organizations on Disability, over 54 million people, almost 20 percent of the population, reported having a disability.

And...the number of people with lower incomes continues to be a challenge.

There are as many stories behind these statistics as there are individuals. Joe, who relies on dialysis, needs reliable transportation to and from a

medical facility to receive it—otherwise, his health deteriorates and his medical costs will skyrocket.

Ethel, who is 88 years young who had to give up her car- relies on alternative transportation to get to the doctor, the grocery store, to volunteer in the community, and to attend art classes.

Each day, in all of our communities, men and women find it difficult to participate in community life simply because they lack a ride.

“Human service transportation” means meeting the basic, day-to-day mobility needs of people who are transportation dependent, especially older Americans, as well as individuals with low-incomes and people with disabilities.

The “family” of human service transportation services supported by Federal programs includes much more than dedicated buses or vans. It also includes programs that reimburse consumers for taxi or bus tokens—reimburses consumers for gas and vehicle operating costs—and supports volunteer driver programs.

There are many reasons to be concerned about human service transportation today. Lack of transportation affects an individual’s independence and opportunity.

But human service transportation is not just about improving individual lives. It is about improving all facets of our economy, culture, and society that rely on transportation systems to work effectively at the community level.

When transportation does not work, other things—our healthcare system, our economy, and our civic culture--cannot work at their best, either.

Reliable transportation is a prerequisite for a healthy economy and often the first step toward independence and opportunity for older adults, as well as people with lower incomes and people with disabilities.

Fortunately, Americans have recognized that transportation is important for healthy communities and personal independence. In 1964, Congress created a Federal program to help support public transportation.

Today, through the Department of Transportation’s Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs, the Federal government provides approximately \$7 billion annually to develop new transit systems and improve, maintain, and, in the case of small urbanized and rural areas, operate existing systems.

FTA oversees thousands of grants to hundreds of State and local transit providers who are responsible for managing their transit systems and infrastructure projects.

Overall, the annual Federal investment in public transportation represents only about 17 percent of all such investments; the remainder comes from State and local government contributions, dedicated State and local tax revenues, and fare box and other revenue generated by local transit systems.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law by President George H. W. Bush in July of 1990, recognized the rights of people with disabilities to the same public transportation service that is available to other Americans. Today, over 90 percent of America's public transit buses are accessible, and every new bus or transit system must be accessible.

In spite of the significant investment in public transportation services, we still have serious gaps. Transportation to the grocery store, a city council meeting, or the doctor's office may simply not be available, affordable, or accessible. These gaps in service, even here in New York City are particularly burdensome for individuals who are transportation-disadvantaged, especially older adults.

Over the years, in response to these challenges, Federal, State and local governments created specialized programs to meet particular transportation needs.

At the Federal level alone, there are at least 63 separate programs, administered by eight Federal departments, and even more agencies, that provide special transportation services to older adults and others dependent on these services.

Most of these are human service programs that fund limited transportation services to provide eligible participants with access to particular services, such as health care, senior centers, or rehabilitation programs.

Let me give you just one example of how this plays out at the community level:

In one neighborhood, there are three different vans each supported by separate funding streams: Medicaid, Area Agency on Aging, and the Public Transportation system. Each van is only carrying 1-2 passengers, and picking up neighbors going to the same part of town.

All while -people living in other neighborhoods can't get service. Policy makers and tax payers ask-why one van couldn't meet the combined needs of these neighbors.

It is no secret that the emergence of so many separate transportation options—that are tied to specific programs, or available only to specific population subgroups-- has created a complex, often duplicative, web of transportation services in our communities.

Each program is likely to have different eligibility rules, different destinations, its own reservation system and rules, and unique travel

routes. Merely figuring out what services are available to a particular destination can be an enormous challenge for consumers.

In 2004, President Bush signed an Executive Order that has provided impetus to expand participation from 11 Federal departments. Through United We Ride, the Federal Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility is working at many levels---through policy, through programs, and through technical assistance.

The Council is working on solutions and strategies for coordinating human service transportation across Federal, State, and local programs. In a study conducted by the Transportation Research Board -it was estimated that just by improving the coordination of human service transportation programs and resources; we would generate a combined savings of more than \$700 million dollars per year.

The Council's goal is to help communities simplify access so that anyone—especially older adults---can call ONE NUMBER, regardless of where they are going, who is providing the service, and who is paying for the service.

The Council recognizes that there is much that can be done at the Federal level to clear the way and enhance coordination.

As Chair of the Executive Council, I am pleased to tell you that we are in the process of finalizing joint policy statements that clarifies two points: First, that all of our grantees across federal programs can and should plan services together to serve the total needs of the community, not just the narrow needs of their own programs.

In fact, SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act-A Legacy for Users) is one of the first pieces of legislation that requires this level of planning coordination for FTA programs.

Second, members of the Council want to make it clear that vehicles supported through one federal program can be used to serve consumers of other Federal programs.

The Council is also working on the principles of “how” to share costs -- and strategies that will work across various federal programs.

The Council looked at these coordination challenges through research, analysis, expert panels, focus groups, and listening sessions—and has concluded that there are five key areas that are critical for building coordinated human service transportation for older adults and others:

- There must be leadership at every level of implementation. Without sustained leadership, nothing is accomplished.

- Partnerships are essential. There must be networks and solid partnerships that include all of the stakeholders interested in this issue.
- Partners need to plan and work together to identify needs, barriers, resources, and solutions for building coordinated transportation systems.
- Communities should offer a “family of transportation services” that provides choices for older adults and others that meets ALL (not just some) of their mobility needs.
- And finally, Communities need to take advantage of the new technology solutions available for coordinating reservations, scheduling, dispatching, reporting, and billing.

The Executive Order is grounded in an understanding that real progress will only happen through hard work, collaboration, and consensus-building at the State and local level as well.

I know that this is not easy work, but believe it is well worth our time and our energy!! I know that this will require us to think differently and creatively about how we deliver transportation services.

But--only if we start today, will we have the chance to build transportation systems and services that work for all of our citizens. It's time to roll up our sleeves and work together- so that older adults here in New York and across the country can fully participate in our communities for many years. Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to this process.

Remarks at APTA Conference - San Jose, CA

10-09-06

Remarks: James Simpson, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

Thank you, Howard [Silver], for that kind introduction. I am pleased to be here with all of you... the leaders of the public transportation industry. I would like to thank APTA, and our local hosts Mayor Gonzales and VTA General Manager Michael Burns. It is also an honor for me to be sharing the stage with Congressman Honda... who serves on the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee.

I am proud to be here on behalf of President George W. Bush and U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Mary Peters.

It is fitting that we are in the hometown of former Transportation Secretary, Norman Mineta, a legendary public transportation leader and advocate.

Many of my personal experiences have had a profound effect on me as an advocate for public transportation. I grew up in New York City, a transit-rich environment... the richest, in fact. I've experienced firsthand how public transit shapes Americans' lives. I have seen how public transit empowers people who are just getting a foothold in the economy.

Growing up, I viewed affordable public transit as a necessity and as a vehicle that created a sense of freedom. Public transit opened a world of social and cultural diversity. It made summers possible at Coney Island, winters in Central Park... and exposed me to Times Square, the Museum of Natural History, Yankee Stadium, the World's Fair, Chinatown and Little Italy.

As a teenager, I rode public transit from home in Staten Island... to school in Brooklyn... and to work in Manhattan after school... via six buses, one ferry, and a subway - each day. All of these influences, fostered by public transportation, shaped my life and account for much of the reason I stand at this podium today.

And that's why I feel so passionately about transit ... the people it serves and the people that it should be serving ... people who count on it to take them to work and school, or who discover new possibilities in life, at the end of a subway or bus line.

I am grateful to President Bush for giving me the opportunity to lead FTA at a time when transit ridership is growing and the \$53 billion in

SAFETEA-LU programs and resources that the President signed into law are reaching transit customers.

As the Nation's chief transit spokesperson, I am excited about bringing the positive perspective of my own transit experiences to decisions affecting our industry.

I believe my experience as a business owner adds value to the FTA. Every public and private organization needs a bottom line. For transit, the bottom line is to keep the ridership momentum growing, providing a continually safer, more efficient, user friendly, reliable, and cost-effective operating system.

Like a private business, we seek more customers... In other words, (a bigger market share). To succeed in this goal, we need to make sure that our transit systems are managed like successful for profit companies with sound business practices.

Public transit must deliver the most value for every dollar, we must cut inefficiency wherever possible! And, embrace technology to improve performance!! Public transit needs effective leadership at all levels; that constantly strives to increase productivity throughout the organization.

I bring to the Administrator's position experience both as a public servant and an entrepreneur. Achieving our transit goals depends on the optimum use of both of those skills. I am committed to what I call... "entrepreneurial government" at FTA... creating a hybrid organization... drawing on the best practices of both the public and private sectors.

Entrepreneurial government means putting the customer at the top of the hierarchy; and turning the organization upside-down.

At the top you have the American people; the transit rider; (our customer), and the automobile user or non-transit user - (our potential customer).

Next in the hierarchy; are all of our elected officials who represent the needs and interests of our customers. (The American People)

They are followed by the transit authorities, suppliers to the industry; and, at the bottom is the FTA... We at the FTA... should be the foundation supporting everyone above.

Our mantra in the transit industry... at every organization, from operating authority to supplier, should be as follows: You have one of two jobs in public transit. Either you serve the riding public directly (like a bus driver who is on the front line) ... or you serve someone who serves the riding public directly. That "philosophy of service" ... is the holy grail of successful service providers... public or private.

Transit agencies around the world that behave entrepreneurially are best able to thrive. Robert Cervero, a professor at UC Berkeley, has written in his book... The Transit Metropolis, that the strongest transit regions in the world have one thing in common... Adaptability; what he defines as a “calculated process of making change by investing, reinvesting, organizing, reorganizing, inventing, and reinventing...

Adaptability is about self-survival in a world of limited resources, tightly stretched budgets, and ever changing cultural norms, lifestyle technologies and personal values.” This is true for private firms and public agencies.

Change and adaptation are essential to an organization’s vitality and development.

In today’s fast-paced global marketplace, there is certainly no patience for business as usual. You have to think of business; NOT as usual. Transit agencies that adapt to changing times and create harmony between their transit service and the urban landscape will thrive decades into the future.

We all know this intuitively. Rural areas, low density areas and urban centers all need public transportation...

But our transit services must be tailored to the area they serve... commuter rail may be the best option in one setting, passenger vans in another. The result is a product mix that delivers bus, light rail, vans, HOV/HOT lanes, paratransit... in short, a balanced portfolio of transit choices for our customers.

Reliable and accessible transportation is a prerequisite for a healthy economy and it also means meeting the basic, day-to-day mobility needs of everyone... including... older Americans... individuals with low-incomes and people with disabilities. It is often the first step toward independence and opportunity.

Entrepreneurial government also means being accountable. That accountability must apply to decisions made at every level of the transit industry.

At FTA, I am calling on senior management to be stewards of change, to look at the big picture, and to be proactive. A large part of transit management today is seeing old problems in new ways, and asking different questions...

- Can we develop new public-private partnerships?
- Can we coordinate our resources, as we are doing with United We Ride, to get more passengers on board?
- Can we deliver the same high-quality New Starts projects in a faster, more efficient way?

I take very seriously President Bush's directive that we strive for government that is "citizen-centered, results oriented and market-based."

The transit industry is also accountable to the bottom line... growing ridership while delivering the most cost effective and user-friendly transit systems possible.

Another part of accountability is recognizing success; in our case, increasing the number of riders... while ensuring we pay careful attention to our cost structure; while enhancing the safety and security of our customers and employees.

Today, at a panel session, FTA will announce a new Transit Ridership Awards Program, recognizing initiatives by our grantees that have resulted in ridership growth of 5 percent or more in a year.

We're looking to reward innovations that boost ridership in five areas: 1. fare structure, 2. marketing, 3. partnerships, 4. service coverage, and 5. operations. Transit Ridership Awards support accountability.

Battling Gridlock.../congestion relief initiative

As many of you know, USDOT has made congestion relief the top priority. And with good reason.

Frequently, our transportation infrastructure is not meeting the needs of commuters, travelers, and businesses. The tab for congestion in wasted fuel and squandered time amounts to an estimated \$200 billion a year. The Bush Administration and the Department of Transportation refuse to accept congestion as a fact of life.

As a former business owner in the motor carrier industry, I experienced first-hand the economic and social costs associated with insufficient public transportation and traffic congestion. At my Staten Island, New York, facility... a mere 15 miles from mid-town Manhattan... my vehicles and employees wasted over 4 hours a day traveling from their depot to their job site during the morning and evening rush on Interstate 278, a trip that is normally only a half hour each way off-peak. (50 percent workday travel time)

An expanded public transit system can help mitigate highway congestion, lower travel time and increase productivity and profitability for our nation's businesses and individuals alike.

Untangling the knot of congestion will not be easy. But we need to be innovative as we solve tomorrow's transportation challenges.

The USDOT Congestion Relief initiative attacks congestion from all angles. Our metropolitan plan, for example, focuses on policies with a proven track record of reducing urban congestion. Cities that join us in

"urban partnership" agreements will try variable pricing plans for highway use. They might create peak travel-time tolls, toll lanes, or additional HOV lanes.

Interest in variable pricing is growing dramatically. If London and Stockholm experiences are any indication, then variable pricing plans will create many new transit customers. When London introduced its variable pricing strategy, traffic congestion decreased and bus ridership increased 30 percent.

We need to begin thinking now... about how congestion mitigation strategies will impact public transportation... as well as about how public transportation can mitigate congestion.

Hudson County.../ Transit-Oriented Development

I believe transit is the circulatory system of our nation's economy. Well-designed transit is a catalyst for economic development. According to our research, every \$10 million invested in transit capital projects yields an estimated \$30 million in business sales.

For example, I recently built a facility adjacent to the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line in Jersey City. Two decades ago, the Jersey City waterfront was a wasteland of abandoned rail yards and decaying brownstones. But with a transportation system that includes the new light rail system and ... bus... commuter rail... ferry service... and the PATH train...

Jersey City now has more office space than Denver, Cleveland or Kansas City, and young families have made the move from the suburbs back to the city.

Success like this must be measured. Historically, transit planners and developers have struggled to document the benefits of transit to local economies and society. We can easily document the costs of transit... However, knowing the cost of everything and nothing else, gives us the value of nothing.

As many of you know, SAFETEA-LU added "economic development" as one of the project criteria for New Starts. We know that transit is integral to economic growth, and now the challenge for FTA is to concisely assess those benefits. Right now, we are working to find the best approach, and we hope to publish New Starts and Small Starts rulemaking for comment in early 2007.

Our work to add the economic criteria to New Starts evaluation is a tangible recognition of how important transit oriented development is to FTA.

What counts gets counted. I believe... if you're not measuring, you're not managing.

That's why we need to dedicate ourselves to building transit systems that will stand the test of time... transit systems that are built to last and provide notable, substantial benefits to the communities they serve for decades to come.

New Starts sponsors sometimes struggle to design projects that meet our criteria while also realizing important community objectives.

I like to keep things simple and use analogies whenever possible as... it "saves original thought."

For instance, I've asked FTA staff to make sure that our New Starts program delivers what is supposed to... wise major capital investments to improve mobility, help reduce congestion, improve air quality in the areas they serve and foster development of viable, safe, and livable communities.

A simple analogy to me is that developing a New Starts project is like making a pizza. My concern is... how many ingredients can you take off a pizza before it no longer is a pizza?

I want to ensure that our federal investment in your community's New Starts project arrives with enough ingredients to deliver on the promise of the New Starts program.

We need to build it right and build it to last.

In closing, I believe that one of the most important things we as industry leaders must do...is to ask ourselves... "What business are we in?"

For example, private passenger railroads like the Pennsylvania and New York Central, among the most powerful business interests a century ago, are now extinct, because they failed to adapt.

They had what I call "marketing myopia" ... The railroads viewed themselves as being in the "railroad business" instead of the "passenger transport business." Don't think mode... think people!!!

If they had viewed their business as passenger transport, they might have purchased aircraft and might still be with us today.

Every week when APTA's newspaper arrives in your mailbox, think of it as a reminder of the business we are in... Passenger Transport. Through passenger transport, we provide mobility and accessibility to millions of Americans. We help manage congestion. We grow communities oriented around transit.

Finally, I look forward to working with you in the years ahead to share the good work of passenger transport with the people of this great nation.

Thank you.

National Fuel Cell Bus Technology Speech at Thousand Palms, CA

10-12-06

Remarks: Administrator James Simpson, Federal Transit Administration

National Fuel Cell Bus Technology Development Program

Thank you for that kind introduction. I'm delighted to be here today on behalf of President Bush and our new Secretary of Transportation, Mary Peters, to announce the recipients of our national Fuel Cell Bus Technology grants.

Let me first acknowledge and thank our host, SunLine Transit. The Sun Fuels Hydrogen Fueling Station is a perfect venue for today's announcement. This morning, Mike gave me a first-hand look at some of the impressive technological advances Sun Fuels is pursuing. Clearly, this company is a leader when it comes to new transit technology.

I also want to acknowledge the outstanding work of your local Congresswoman Mary Bono. Congresswoman Bono... along with Congressman Jim Oberstar of Minnesota...championed the new National Fuel Cell Bus Technology Development Program in Congress.

The transit industry has long served as an incubator for new ideas and innovation. And thanks to these congressional leaders, it is positioned to continue that tradition. The National Fuel Cell Bus Technology Development Program marshals the know-how, innovation, and experience of the transit community to make hydrogen power a legitimate transportation option.

It is an investment in our transit future... and an investment in an energy future that meets President Bush's goal of ending our nation's addiction to foreign oil.

The \$49 million in approved funding will support development of commercially viable fuel cell bus technologies and infrastructure. And, it will hasten the day when communities across America can enjoy quiet, pollution-free, and efficiently powered fuel-cell buses. We look forward to seeing fuel-cell buses become an affordable option for transit agencies, and an attractive business proposition for bus manufacturers.

Before that day can come, however, there are challenges to overcome - some are technological; others are economic. Among the most pressing are bringing down the costs of fuel cell buses, increasing their durability and reliability, and developing an infrastructure to support them.

So today, I am pleased to announce the three organizations that will receive federal grants to help solve these challenges and make fuel cell buses a viable option.

The Center for Transportation and the Environment in Atlanta, the Northeast Advanced Vehicle Consortium in Boston, and Weststart/CALSTART of Pasadena, California, will each receive a share of the \$49 million for fuel cell bus technology research.

These organizations were selected through a competitive process. They represent diverse geographic areas, and they are leaders in research into fuel cell technologies.

I would like to take this time to recognize our Consortium awardees who are with us here today and congratulate them:

- Dan Raudebaugh (Ro-da-baw), Executive Director of the Center for Transportation and the Environment
- Jack Requa from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority - Representing the Northeast Advanced Vehicle Consortium.
- And..John Boesel - President and CEO of WESTART-CALSTART

In fact, the Weststart/CALSTART team will include SunLine Transit.

It's not surprising that SunLine will be a part of this research. As the first transit agency to run an entire fleet of buses on Clean Natural Gas, it has already blazed a trail in the area of alternative fuels.

SunLine Transit and its research partners—New Flyer Industries, ISE Corp. and UTC Fuel Cells—will receive \$2.8 million to design and demonstrate 40-foot fuel cell buses, and to evaluate their performance in a hot desert climate.

SunLine is also among those receiving \$3.6 million to test the life expectancy of an existing line of fuel cell buses.

The National Fuel Cell Bus Program sets forth a timely mission for the transit community.

We are beginning this work with clear goals, and all possible solutions are on the table.

With energy, years of collective experience, and innovation behind it, we anticipate important breakthroughs from the Fuel Cell Bus Program's research and development.

The Bush Administration has set an ambitious goal: America must break its dependency on Middle East oil by 75 percent in the next two decades. Projects such as these will help ensure that we achieve it.

Hydrogen and fuel cell technologies are a part of the solution to oil dependence. Today, as we announce these funds, I am optimistic that we are on the cusp of a new age for public transit, one in which fuel alternatives can reach their true potential.

Now let me turn this event over to the champion of this program in the U.S. House of Representatives Mary Bono.

Thank you

Administrator Simpson's keynote speech to New York City Transit Museum Board Members and stakeholders.

10-25-06

Thank you for that introduction. What an evening! At 137 years, Grand Central has never looked better. Its grandeur honors the importance of transit to this great city and to our country. As the Transit Museum shows, the story of transit is the story of America.

As I boy growing up here in New York, I viewed public transit as a necessity and it gave me a sense of freedom. Public transit opened a world of social and cultural diversity. It made summers possible at Coney Island, winters in Central Park... and exposed me to Times Square, the Museum of Natural History, Yankee Stadium, the World's Fair, Chinatown and Little Italy.

As a teenager, I rode public transit from home in Staten Island... to school in Brooklyn... and to work in Manhattan after school... via six buses, one ferry, and a subway – each day. All of these influences, fostered by public transportation, shaped my life and account for much of the reason I stand here this evening.

My first ride on New York transit—and the thousands of rides to follow—showed me the best that transit can do. It gave me mobility, in every sense of that word. It introduced me to worlds and possibilities beyond my own neighborhood. It set me on a path of my own choosing.

Many years later, as a businessman and entrepreneur, running my own moving company, I also saw the damage that too little transit, and too much congestion, can cause.

At my Staten Island, New York, facility -- a mere fifteen miles from mid-town Manhattan – I had employees who wasted over four hours a day traveling to and from their jobs during the morning and evening rush on Interstate 278, a commute that is only a half hour each way off peak.

My experience as a businessman in New York plays out many times over, each and every day, in this city. About the only time that New Yorkers sit still is when they are stuck in traffic. Unfortunately that is a more common plight than it was even two decades ago. In 2003, each New Yorker lost an average of almost 60 hours per year to congestion, up from 20 hours in 1983.

This hidden price of congestion costs New York City an estimated \$6.8 billion a year.

Amplify New York's experience to the entire nation, and the country pays a staggering bill for congestion. Nationwide, we lost 3.7 billion hours to

traffic delays and 1.3 billion gallons of fuel to traffic delays in 2003. And the estimated bill for congestion across all modes of transportation is a staggering \$200 billion a year.

Those are the tangible costs that we can measure. But there are intangible—and no less important—costs that are more elusive. Congestion dampens our family, civic and social lives. It discourages participation in our communities, and, if the problem is severe enough, it can shape where we go, whom we see, what we do, and how much we want to take part in community events.

I'm pleased to tell you tonight, on an occasion that celebrates mobility, that the Bush administration and the Department of Transportation refuse to accept congestion as a fact of life. Congestion is not a mystery, and it is not an uncontrollable force.

DOT has a response to this crisis: a national congestion relief initiative. Through this initiative, we will marshal our people, our resources, and our expertise to help our partners at the state and local levels combat congestion.

This might mean building capacity—or making better use of the transit resources that we already have. But mostly it's about thinking outside of the box for innovative solutions to resolving this problem.

As part of this effort DOT has launched a serious effort to establish demonstration projects around the country to combat congestion. We call them "urban partnership agreements," and they are a cornerstone of our congestion relief initiative.

In our urban partnerships we are looking for up to five system wide demonstrations of cutting-edge approaches to congestion relief. These approaches include public transit innovations. It does not take that long for a city to develop Bus Rapid Transit systems, for example, that can deliver quicker and more reliable service for commuters.

New technology is certainly part of the congestion solution. In urban partnerships, cities might devise ways to improve response time to accidents, or to relay traffic information more rapidly to urban drivers. And we cannot forget changes in work routines.

Today, only 3 percent of Americans telecommute on "most work days." If that number can be improved even slightly, then we have effectively removed [hundreds of... thousands of] automobiles from the road during peak travel hours.

These are just some of the solutions that urban partnerships will demonstrate. Congestion is not an easy knot to untangle, but in combination, many new policies and creative approaches can, and will, reverse the trend.

Cities that agree to work with us in urban partnerships and to pioneer new approaches to congestion relief will get all of the help that DOT can provide. We are prepared to assist with technical support, provided by a world-class team of engineers and economists at DOT. We can help to move good ideas and solid plans through the Federal pipeline faster; and, we can provide financial resources—grants, loans, and borrowing power.

Urban partnership agreements, and the broader congestion relief initiative, are looking for practical innovations to congestion. Ultimately, however, urban partnerships aim for something even more ambitious: They will improve the quality of life in our cities and they will make transit an engine of economic growth again.

As we move forward with the congestion relief initiative and urban partnerships, we look forward to discussions with several cities around the country about our plans.

Thanks so much for allowing me to be part of this celebration tonight.

National Conference of State Legislators, San Antonio, TX (As prepared for delivery by Secretary Mary Peters)

12-05-06

Remarks: James Simpson, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

Introduction

Good afternoon! Thank you for that kind introduction, Senator (Bruce) Starr [Oregon, Chair of NCSL Transportation Committee]. It's a pleasure to be here today on behalf of the Bush Administration and Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters.

On the podium:

- (Jack) Shenendorf [Vice-Chair of the National Surface Transportation Revenue and Policy Commission of Washington, DC]
- (Robert) Darbelnet [President and CEO of AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety]

I would like to acknowledge all Chairs of the various States Transportation Committees here today...

The History

This year, we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Interstate Highway System. That system became much more than a network of roads—it connected us across State lines. Without the "dynamic element" of a unified transportation system, President Eisenhower envisioned in 1955, "we would be a mere alliance of many separate parts."

The Interstate was a magnificent feat, of both engineering and politics... President Eisenhower and the Clay Commission had such a bold vision--and the political wherewithal to persuade Congress to create a trust fund with a dedicated income source for highways.

The Problem Today

When we started building the Interstate system 50 years ago, the United States faced a major transportation challenge. Then, we wanted to connect our nation and get goods to market. And we succeeded.

But we are fooling ourselves if we think that we can continue to travel comfortably along the same well-worn path and achieve a similar level of progress in the next fifty years.

In short: This is not the 1950s. The way we live, how we shop, and the very nature of our economy are all dramatically different today than they were half a century ago. And all of these changes have profound impacts on our transportation network.

In 1956, when the Interstate was completed, Americans traveled 628 million vehicle miles a year; In 2002, they traveled almost three trillion. Since 1956, the number of registered trucks has skyrocketed, from about 11 million to almost 95 million in 2003.

In the America of 1956, people usually lived either in cities or in the country. Today, more than half of our population has moved to the suburbs. And while the population of America in the 1950s was 200 million, today's population just crossed the 300 million mark. This growth is a double-edged sword:

It creates more demand for transportation and less space available to build and meet that demand.

In 1956 America we traveled to stores to shop. Today, we are just as likely to go on the Internet. As a result, the "warehouse" of American business today is often an 80,000 pound 18-wheeler.

Companies have come to rely on "just in time" delivery from their suppliers. This can create enormous efficiency—except when congestion delays shut down a day's production.

We experience these historical trends in our daily lives, and congestion is on everyone's mind today. San Antonio is a typical example:

- Polls put congestion first on a list of local issues.
- Area commuters spend almost 24 million hours stuck in traffic each year;
- and they waste 15 million gallons of gas each year doing it.
- The total "congestion invoice" for San Antonio alone was \$401 million in 2003.

Nationwide, the traffic toll is reaching a staggering 2.3 billion gallons of wasted gasoline, and 3.7 billion hours of wasted time each year, for a congestion bill of \$200 billion annually.

That is a tangible, measurable cost. But there are intangible costs—in quality of life, frustration, and the dampening of our civic society. It is impossible to quantify the "cost" of parents who are impelled by congestion to leave home for work before dawn, and to return home just after their children have been put to bed.

The Problem Today: Consequences

Congestion affects people's lives in these very real ways, each day.

Think, for example, of the stress on the mother who hits a traffic jam on the way to pick up her child from day care; who gets hit with a penalty charge for each minute she is late. Does she start cutting short her workday based on the worst-case congestion scenario?

That is a case of what Secretary Peters calls the "buffer index." It refers to the unproductive, wasted time that we have to build into our schedules to accommodate the unpredictability of gridlock.

Congestion hurts the family pocketbook; and it hurts the national economy. Businesses today are in competition not just with the shop on the next corner, or even the next town. They are competing with retailers and e-retailers in the next county... the next state... the next country.

In this intensely competitive economy, transportation costs—freight chokepoints, and "buffer indexes" among them-- have become a make or break factor for business. I experienced this firsthand as the owner of a moving company. We have all been living with congestion for so long that some of us are resigned to it, like death and taxes... But congestion is not a fact of life! And it is not a mysterious force that we must endure.... Congestion is a symptom—a symptom of a transportation model and policies that are not working as well as they once did. To solve gridlock we must be willing to separate good policy solutions from poor policy solutions.

It is important for every one of us, as leaders, to understand that we cannot assume "business as usual" will work in the future. To succeed, we have to think, "business not as usual." We are going to have to recognize that our transportation challenges have changed dramatically in the past 50 years - and so must our approaches to congestion.

Solutions: The National Congestion Initiative

Secretary Peters has promised President Bush that the DOT will not shy away from tough issues like congestion.

In May of this year, the Bush Administration announced a National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America's Transportation Network - you might have heard of it just as the "Congestion Initiative." This plan provides a blueprint for Federal, State, and local officials to follow as we work together to tackle the growing gridlock problem.

The Congestion Initiative is zeroing in on metropolitan area congestion... congestion along major corridors, and at our largest border crossings. It is looking for solutions to congested airways and ports.

Let me share some of the highlights of the initiative, and get you thinking about where your State fits in, and what you can do as State leaders to reduce congestion...

Urban Partnership Agreements

First and foremost, the Congestion Initiative is tackling urban congestion through partnership agreements with metropolitan areas that are willing to apply a full toolbox of solutions to the congestion challenge.

Urban Partnership Agreements will embrace proven, effective strategies for congestion relief and reduction. We call them the four Ts—tolling, telecommuting, technology, and transit. Working in concert, these "4 Ts" are even more powerful tools.

Tolling: Urban Partnership agreements call for new variable pricing programs designed to spread traffic flows throughout the day and to get more out of existing highways. I know that tolling is a "hot button" issue in many States and communities. But cities that have adopted variable pricing have seen some impressive results. London, Stockholm, and Singapore have seen substantial decreases in traffic congestion, major increases in transit use, and tens of millions of dollars in new investments and revenues.

Transit: Second, the Agreements will provide for more efficient and responsive public transit systems--- systems that tailor services for rush-hour commuters. Bus Rapid Transit and Express Bus service are flexible and less costly modes of public transit. And they take less time to establish than light-rail. That means they can contribute some much needed, short-term congestion relief.

Telecommuting: Third, reducing the number of motorists on the road during rush hour is another way to reduce gridlock. Telecommuters drive less than office workers. Flex-time policies can stagger schedules, which also can help decrease the number of drivers during peak travel times.

Our Urban Partners will be seeking commitments from major employers in their region to allow more of their employees to flex their schedules or telecommute.

Technology: And last but not least, the final T-- technology. There are a great number of factors that cause traffic tie-ups, from poor signal timing, to traffic incidents, to weather. Technology can help untangle congestion by providing timely information and alternate routes.

Under Urban Partnership Agreements, both the Department and our Urban Partners will agree to adopt this four-point Plan, and then the Department will agree to assist them in implementing it. We are prepared to offer technical support, provided by a world-class team of engineers and economists at DOT. We can help to move good ideas and solid plans through the Federal pipeline faster; and, we can provide financial resources—grants, loans, and borrowing power.

Private-Public Financing and Partnership

And a very important final element of the Initiative: [pause] We want to encourage States to look at opportunities for public and private partnerships to finance transit. As State leaders, you are in a position to move these partnerships forward.

With Trust Fund balances on a downward slope, and growth in state gas taxes lagging behind transportation needs, we must find new ways of doing business, and tap innovative funding methods.

The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, authorized by SAFETEA-LU, is leading what promises to be an historic transition in the way that highway and transit projects are funded and managed.

The Commission is casting a wide net to find those answers.

State Leadership in PPP.... What You Can Do....

But many forward-leaning States are not waiting for the Federal government or the Study Commission. They are already taking advantage of the flexibilities provided in SAFETEA-LU to find fresh angles and creative ways to improve their transportation systems.

Texas is one of them. This is a State that is willing to innovate. We hold up your public-private partnership law as a model! Last month, Texas became the first State to receive Federal approval to raise more than \$1.8 billion in Private Activity Bonds for road work in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Indiana entered into one of the largest transportation infrastructure contracts in American history when it agreed to lease the Indiana Tollway to a private business for 75 years. As soon as the papers were signed, \$3.8 billion flowed into State bank accounts to complete the lease.

Oregon recently introduced on-board mileage counters that offer an alternative to the "pay at the pump" gas tax. People in the test group are paying user fees based on actual mileage traveled, rather than fuel consumed. And higher fees during peak travel times offer a real-life test of congestion pricing to ease rush-hour commutes.

Private companies and financiers have a growing interest in transportation investment. But first, your States must adopt public-private partnership laws that allow you to tap into the billions of dollars that companies are anxious to invest in highway projects today. The Federal government can create flexibility... But ultimately you, as State leaders, create the momentum for change.

Ongoing Work...Questions for the Future

Parts of the Congestion Initiative that I've just outlined might be familiar to you. That's because States have often been on the leading edge of the issue, and know what we need to do. Other ideas of the Initiative are

new... Some are controversial. That's as it should be. Every idea and solution is on the table right now.

But the Congestion Initiative is not carved in stone. It will continue to evolve as our work with you and other State leaders continues.

The input that we are looking for is not just “how much” but also “how to:”

- How do we design for flexibility, because our systems will need to adapt to a rapidly changing economy?
- How do we encourage and reward innovation, and take better advantage of technology?
- And how do we give consumers a better voice in directing investments to the right place?

Concluding Thoughts

These are all challenging but not impossible questions. Congestion is not a scientific mystery. It is not an uncontrollable force. As I've talked to state and local leaders around the country, I've discovered intense interest in the congestion relief plan. I've sensed a new optimism that gridlock can be solved.

I hope that everybody in this room will be equally enthusiastic, because the stakes are high: We can continue to watch the performance of our transportation system deteriorate while we talk about the need for more funds, the way we always have.

Or, we can take responsibility for developing a sane transportation policy that makes as much sense for the 21st century as Eisenhower's Interstate plan did for the 1950s.

The choice is that stark.

As State leaders, you have a vested interest in reducing congestion. It is our task as leaders to answer the challenge.

On behalf of the Secretary and everyone at DOT, we look forward to working together with this Nation's great state leaders and legislators to do just that.

Thank you.

Remarks on Transit Safety & Security Round Table, Newark, NJ

12-13-06

Summary of Remarks: Administrator James Simpson, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Transit Administration

Administrator Simpson offered advice, views on leadership, and needs pertaining to the current crisis in homeland security.

Post 9/11 Changes in the Definition of Safety and Security

Administrator Simpson described safety and security prior to 9/11 as focusing on preventing “slip and fall” accidents; whereas, post 9/11 efforts are based on the urgent need to protect passengers and infrastructure.

An Entrepreneurial Approach to Government

The Administrator urged participants to engage in planning in order to best apply our limited resource. He recommended an entrepreneurial approach to government where agencies focus on the bottom line, target areas of improvement, and pursue accountability by developing and applying appropriate metrics to measure progress. One way to measure progress is through ridership numbers. Administrator Simpson emphasized the importance of increasing ridership by creating systems where the public feels safe and secure.

Leadership, Vision, and Shared Values

The Administrator emphasized that just like any corporation, transportation agencies are in need of strong leadership. He discussed the transit industry facing intense competition for resources and the need to see results. He illustrated this point by discussing the army’s leadership system. A peacetime army can survive with a good administration and management, up and down the hierarchy, coupled with good leadership at the top. However, a wartime army needs competent leadership at all levels. No one has been able to figure out how to “manage” people into battle—they must be led.

He also discussed the value he places on “management by walking around.” The Administrator said that one must lead by example, have the ability to inspire confidence and provide support to the men and women on whose competence and commitment good performance depends. He said, “you must be able to get from where you are to where you want to go.” Leadership means setting a direction and developing a vision for the future. It means inspiring confidence in others, maintaining integrity, courage, knowledge, decisiveness, and dependability.

The Administrator discussed William Bratton, former Commissioner of the New York City Police Department (current Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department). Bratton provided leadership to his officers and community by declaring his vision in inspiring language, "We will fight for every house in the city. We will fight for every street. We will fight for every block. And, we will win." Scarcely a week after his appointment as NYPD Commissioner, he was on the news promising, "I will end the fear!" He did not stop with idle promises. Bratton had a strategy called Compstat, which dealt with each and every crime problem. To get results, he got down into the weeds of everyday operations.

Simpson challenged the transit leadership in attendance at the Roundtable. He said, "Leadership does not happen from the fifty-second floor of the headquarters building. Leaders stay in touch with trends in the marketplace. They stay in touch with the ideas and advice of others. They stay in touch with social, political, technological, and artistic changes. Most importantly, leaders seek information from front-line employees in their efforts to alter the business as usual environment."

The Administrator concluded by saying that leaders embrace change and work courageously to deal with it. Today's transit environment is about deregulation, global competition, finding effective ways to protect passengers—it is not about business as usual. He admitted that this is a challenge, but one that current transit leadership must face.

Remarks on the St. Charles Streetcars - New Orleans, LA (As Prepared for Delivery by Secretary Mary Peters)

12-19-06

Remarks for James S. Simpson, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

Good morning! Thank you for that kind introduction.

It's great to be here with Senators Landrieu and Vitter, Mayor Nagin and Chairman Burgos ["BURR-Ghose" NORTA] to celebrate a major milestone in the Crescent City's recovery.

And on behalf of President Bush and Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, let me say, congratulations New Orleans!

Today we hail the arrival of the day the President spoke of, when "the streetcars will again rumble down St. Charles, and the passionate soul of a great city will return."

A few minutes from now, the streetcars' familiar sounds will return to St. Charles Avenue for the first time since Katrina hit... heralding to the world the resilience of this city.

Credit for nursing the St. Charles Line back to health goes to the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, or NORTA, working with the local Breaux Brothers firm.

Where shredded cable hung following the storm, today neat rows of overhead wires stand ready to power New Orleans on a streetcar we should call Revival toward a brighter and stronger future.

These are upgraded powerlines, and the three substations that will now serve the system are expected to provide greater flexibility and reliability to keep the streetcars operating.

The Department of Transportation is proud to have helped in the revitalization of this priceless piece of American culture by providing 9.2 million dollars to get power back to the St. Charles streetcars.

Before the storm, more than 3 million people a year rode these streetcars through the Garden District and the Central Business District, to the zoo, the universities, and, of course, the French Quarter.

Now, thanks to the efforts of so many people here today, they are back in service. And come Twelfth Night, the "Funny Forty Fellows" will once again lead their crew of revelers on the St. Charles streetcars around Lee Circle to usher in the Mardi Gras season.

The reopening of the St. Charles Line is just one of many steps in the ongoing recovery process.

Since Katrina, the Department of Transportation has provided more than 1.2 billion dollars in airport and highway emergency relief funds to Louisiana.

Mile by mile, pole by pole, the St. Charles Line... like New Orleans itself... is coming back.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of this very special day. Reconnecting this vintage green car to its cable not only restores energy to the St. Charles Line, but also signals the renaissance of this most vibrant and unique of American cities.