

# You Told Us...

*What the new President  
and Congress should know  
about transportation*



**AASHTO**  
THE VOICE OF TRANSPORTATION



**R**ebuilding our highways, expanding transit, providing safe routes for bicyclists—these are among the ideas offered by more than a thousand Americans who took the opportunity over the past three months to tell Congress and President Barack Obama what they should know about transportation.

By video, email, and hand-written comments, people responded with words of congratulation, encouragement and urgency that America's transportation system be improved. Take a look at what they're saying.

**CAPTURING AMERICA'S IDEAS  
FOR THE FUTURE—JANUARY, 2009**

## TRANSPORTATION AS AN ECONOMIC STIMULUS

**“THE STIMULUS NEEDS TO BE THINKING LONGER RANGE** not just two years. Just doing shovel ready projects may not be the best use of funds. Projects like the multi-modal Tappan Zee Bridge that will build a new cross Hudson Bridge, and a 30 mile new Bus Rapid Transit line will provide needed transport capacity far into the future and would be a engine to economic progress and sustainability. We need a long term stimulus as well.”

**“THE COUNTRY’S ECONOMIC FAILURES** have hurt the prospects of maintaining and improving transportation infrastructure which in-turn affects the economy and well-being of all. A national transportation infrastructure stimulus program is needed immediately to get needed transportation projects back on track.

**“IF TRANSPORTATION REPAIRS ARE NOT KEPT IN CHECK,** then the economy cannot be where it should be. Traveling has kept the United States and its businesses advancing instead of falling and destroying people’s lives. When people are moving they keep improving.”

**“I WORK FOR A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY** in Utah. We’ve had to lay off several people, which means each of those people and their families are going to have a miserable holiday season. UDOT cut back 3 billion dollars of projects which in turn will put that many people out of jobs. Many of the construction workers who will be laid off don’t have other skills. I just hope something can be done before things get too much worse.”

## REBUILD OUR SYSTEM

**“THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM,** funded by the gas tax, is one of the great success stories of American government. We should continue this success by rebuilding and expanding it.”

**“OUR TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES NEED TO MATCH** the population needs not only to address growth but also to address the existing badly needed maintenance for what we have already constructed. Let’s keep our country as one of the best in transportation for now and our future generations!”

**“PLEASE FUND TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS—**For 20 years or more the US Government has neglected to fully fund transportation needs and the States can’t keep up. Our “house” is in need of repair and we need to be ready to serve a growing population. Mobility for people and goods needs to be maintained and enhanced in order for the US to stay competitive.”

**“CRITICAL SITUATIONS REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.** No one will die in a pot hole. Fix the bridges, now. Before anyone else gets hurt. And encourage high density populations to limit the need for improvements, decrease the average commute and limit the energy dependence and pollution. Telecommuting is the cheapest way to get to work!”

**“PLEASE CONSIDER THE SOCIETAL COST** of traffic jams. An hour of sitting in traffic is probably 30-45 minutes of NPMH (non productive man hours). Multiply that by all the people, and it is a drain on society.”

**“I’D LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THE NEED** for inter-modal transportation. We can leverage our investment in infrastructure by insuring that all modes of transportation—motor vehicles, cycles, public transportation, air—are interconnected so users can select a mode of transportation appropriate to their trips. It seems to me this takes careful planning, but not a lot of investment.”

**“AS THE NEW ADMINISTRATION** and Congress look forward in our Nation’s road to economic recovery, infrastructure repair and improvement is key to any sustainable healthy economy. Minimizing dependency on foreign and fossil fuel sources of energy is also a critical component.”

### “TRANSPORTATION ISSUES BY PRIORITY

1. Address aging transportation infrastructure
  2. Develop more transit and incentives to use transit
- The roads and bridges in the U.S. are in terrible disrepair. Improvements need to be designed with a “Complete Streets” approach, which encourages people to ride bicycles and walk. Right now, most cities are not safe for commuting cyclists because a lack of dedicated bicycle lanes and potholed roads.”

## EXPAND AND MAINTAIN TRANSIT

**I CANNOT EXPRESS STRONGLY ENOUGH** the importance of transportation in our rural communities. For many of our people our public transit system is their only link to medical treatment, senior meal programs, personal business and shopping, and for employment. With increased costs for fuel, equipment and drivers, it is my hope that you will consider increasing funding for public transportation in rural areas.”

**“WE NEED MULTI-YEAR FUNDING** to repair the EXISTING infrastructure that is in desperate need of repairs. Allow professionals to decide where the money should be spent not politicians.”

## PROVIDE FUTURE FUNDING

**“I CONTENT THAT INFRASTRUCTURE HAS NEVER** been so poorly funded as it is today. I’m an admitted proponent of smaller government, but government should be not shying away from its fundamental responsibilities.”

**“INCREASE THE GAS TAX** (has not been increased since 1993); people should be accountable for what they use; this is an investment for our future.”

**“ALL HIGHWAY BILLS NEED TO HAVE** a review process to weed out any pork and ensure highway dollars go toward highway projects that will provide the most improved safety and most bang for the buck. God Bless our leaders and America! I hope we see a change, without sound infrastructure we are a weak and vulnerable nation.”

## CREATE A NEW VISION

**“I PROPOSE THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN** to study the feasibility of engaging all stakeholders (private services, public services, airports, airlines, local transportation, fuel and energy providers, and the public and business) into developing a faster, more user-friendly, nationwide, inter-modal, transportation network.

**“IF AN INTERMODAL AND CONCERTED EFFORT** is made now to commit a portion of our nation’s resources to progress to the ultimate goal of a win-win, high speed, inter-modal, intercity, interstate solution, then future generations may reap enormous benefits.”



## MAKE BICYCLING SAFER

**“WE DESPERATELY NEED** the roads to be safer for cyclists and pedestrians. Please focus on alternative transportation so we can not only be safer but so we can lessen congestion, smog and road rage. One of the many benefits would be a healthier population.”

**“USE AN INCREASED GAS TAX** to fix existing roads and widen them to include a lane for bicycles. Most roads in rural areas need widening anyway. The narrow, curving roads are the main problem—please widen and upgrade existing roads!!!”

## EXPAND RAIL SERVICE

**“IT’S TIME TO BRING NORTH AMERICAN RAIL** into the 21<sup>st</sup> century! Just as we did with the Interstate road system a generation ago, we must connect all cities with a high-speed network of trains! Rail is far safer and more energy-efficient than personal motor transport.”

**“WE HAVE TO SEPARATE** passenger rail from freight rail. High speed passenger monorail service is what’s needed. This would increase safety by eliminating rail crossings and would require minimum right-of-way acquisition because the monorail system could be built within the right-of-way in the middle of our interstate system, land that I might add is currently owned by all states.”

**“AS A LONG PROPONENT OF MASS TRANSIT,** I am very excited about the possibilities of High Speed Rail and how it could be implemented in solving some transportation problems including reducing the negative environmental effects of air travel.”

*The comments above are only a few excerpts from the many received by AASHTO. For complete information on all submissions, please visit [www.IToldThePresident.org](http://www.IToldThePresident.org) Thanks to all who participated!*

## OFFER MORE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

**“PARTNER WITH EMPLOYERS** to encourage alternate work schedules; teleworking to minimize congestion.”

**“I’D LIKE TO SEE THE GOVERNMENT** promote the 1-mile Solution. The idea is simple: Find your home on a map. Draw a circle with a 1-mile radius around your home. Try to replace one car trip per week within that circle by riding a bicycle or walking. At an easy riding pace you can travel one mile on a bicycle in about seven minutes. Walking takes about 20 minutes at an easy pace.”

**“EVERY SINGLE ROAD** improvement project should be evaluated for usage by cars, mass transit, bikes and pedestrians, and then designed with all those users in mind.”

## SUSTAIN THE ENVIRONMENT

**“IF WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY** and reducing our impact on global warming, the federal government must come up with a funding equation that establishes long term maintenance and operating assistance for our country’s public transit system. They are one of our greatest resources for reducing GHG emissions as well as dependence on foreign oil.”

**“TO REDUCE OUR CLIMATE FOOTPRINT** and have a chance of keeping planet Earth livable, this means transportation policy should prioritize good rail connections between cities building up to high-speed rail, transit service in urban areas, pedestrians, and bicycles. We should promote transit-oriented development that reduces the spread of sprawl and the need to drive everywhere while offering people more choices for how to move about and access the ‘stuff of life’.”