

# American Planning Association Surface Transportation Policy Guide

## DRAFT For Comment

### *Introduction*

The United States is truly at a transportation crossroads. We have operated from a perspective that largely dates to the 1950s to build, maintain and operate the nation's transportation infrastructure. With major energy, environmental, social and economic challenges occurring as the current federal transportation law expires, now is the time for substantive change in our approach to delivering transportation projects and services that will position America for prosperity for the next 50 to 100 years.

There are six foundational pillars to APA's position on transportation policy as we approach authorization of a new federal transportation bill. These pillars emanate from APA's core values and our role in the planning profession to think comprehensively, and to understand and integrate various perspectives to create communities of lasting value. The following pillars have guided our transportation policy positions outlined in this document:

#### **I. Empower and Improve the Mobility of Metropolitan Regions**

Transportation decision-making requires leadership that delivers actions in the form of projects, programs and services. This leadership is especially needed at the metropolitan regional level, where many distinct voices compete to define and advance priorities, and where transportation and the environment frame settlement patterns, economic opportunity, and social interaction. With three-fourths of our nation's population living in urban areas, the metropolitan regions have increasingly become the country's economic engine. Getting it right at the metropolitan level means these regions need the empowered leadership, governance authority and funding flexibility to meet their multimodal transportation needs.

#### **II. Support Integrated Planning for Sustainable Communities**

For too long our transportation plans, land use plans, economic development plans and other community planning activities have occurred in a linear, functional manner that creates silos based on professional disciplines and areas of specialty. This process typically builds upon fixed assumptions that drive decision-making, when in reality there is a symbiotic and interactive relationship between land use and transportation decisions. We must align federal, state, regional and local plans to solidify the integration of comprehensive plans and transportation plans in order to anticipate and plan for change. Results of successfully integrating transportation planning will be enhanced air and water quality, reduced climate impacts and the region's carbon

footprint, and protected high priority natural resources rather than just mitigation of the impacts upon the environment of transportation system investments. Long Range Transportation Plans, when properly integrated with community-based comprehensive plans, can provide the framework for urban and regional sustainability through wise, resource-efficient investments and short-term strategies.

### **III. Invest in Transportation that Promotes Economic Growth, Competitiveness and Resiliency**

With the 50-year era of the Interstate Highway System coming to a close, our nation needs a bold new transportation vision for economic competitiveness. Maintaining our infrastructure of highways, bridges and rail lines is critical to our economic success. Reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers as well as expanded business access to markets improves economic competitiveness. We also need to expand our transportation networks in ways that offer competitive travel choices for people and goods, promote clean energy, create better balance and connectivity among modes in urban and rural areas, enhance affordability, and enable us to respond quickly to disasters and emergencies. Finally, transportation projects themselves can create jobs in planning, engineering, and construction that will help in economic recovery.

### **IV. Foster Location-Efficient Decisions**

For a majority of Americans, transportation and housing costs combine to exceed 50 percent of household expenses. We need to create new models of housing and transportation that increase affordability through an emphasis on livability, choice and access to economic opportunity. It is imperative to create cost structures based on location efficiencies that enable people and goods to reach their destinations at less expense and with reduced dependence on declining natural resources. More specifically, movement of people and goods in an efficient manner should focus on minimizing person delay across modes, rather than exclusively on minimizing vehicle delay.

### **V. Create Safe, Healthy and Accessible Communities for Everyone**

Our transportation networks must serve all users equitably, whether they walk, ride a bicycle, take transit or use an automobile. Investment benefits and impacts should be shared equitably among all population groups within communities. We should take advantage of opportunities created to employ economically disadvantaged persons in the development of the transportation system. As our population ages, it is imperative that we focus attention on ensuring adequate personal mobility for daily needs and social interaction. We can reduce negative impacts to public health by improving roadway user safety, improving air quality, promoting physical activity and fitness, increasing community cohesion, improving access to medical services and increasing transportation affordability. We need to expand transportation options that promote

healthy lifestyles and a safe environment. We must work toward the elimination of accidents and crashes, but where accidents and crashes do occur, we can reduce their severity. Our vital infrastructure - from ports to inter-modal terminals - need to be secure against natural and man-made threats.

## **VI. Expand Funding Sources to Meet Transportation Needs in ways that are Flexible, Performance-Driven and Linked to Outcomes**

With a declining revenue source - the gas tax - comprising the majority of federal and state transportation funding, we need to move away from single-mode funding streams and toward funding strategies that reward integrated planning, provide flexible funding to leverage greater transportation choices, and balance user fees across all system users based on the goal of balancing transportation demand across modes. Affordable transportation investments need to consider the initial investment to plan, design and construct; the life-cycle costs to maintain and operate; and the economic benefits to the community. Enhancement, maintenance and expansion of the existing system should support an efficient and well maintained overall transportation system. Our states, regions and localities need a financial model that enables mode-neutral, locally defined transportation investments within a system of accountability that is tied to outcomes defined through an integrated planning process.

The guide is organized around these foundational pillars and reflect these guiding principles.

### ***Findings***

Over the last decade, many have come to the conclusion that our transportation system is both broke and broken. At the statewide, metropolitan and rural levels, there is mounting frustration over the inability to deliver transportation projects and programs to keep pace with needs. Funding backlogs persist for years, resulting in a lack of funding certainty and lengthy delays to improve mobility and access, which are critical to achieving economic and social vitality. The convoluted and protracted process of moving projects through the federal funding pipeline contributes to the proliferation of Congressional earmarks, which can thwart carefully considered statewide, regional and local priorities.

Key Issues:

### **Funding**

Excellent transportation is an economic game-changer. However, funding streams have not kept pace with mounting needs and changing national priorities. Over-reliance of the stagnant gas tax, and a formula-driven approach to funding that rewards states for miles driven runs counter to the broader goals for transportation, location efficiency, clean energy and sustainable economic growth. Single-mode funding streams reduce

flexibility in meeting the needs of states, metro areas and rural communities, and the inequity in funding approaches between highways and transit display an ingrained institutional bias that favors solutions that are often inconsistent with community plans and aspirations. We need to broaden the capital and operating funding base for transportation. Federal policy should encourage and support innovative solutions for new sources for state and local matching funds, build on regional partnerships, diversify revenues, and require user fees between auto access and transit access that are applied equitably between auto and transit modes, and are maintained at levels that account for inflation over time.

### Comprehensive Planning

It has long been recognized that long-range transportation planning can be most effective when it is linked to long-range comprehensive planning. At the local level, city and county general plans look at the connections among land use, transportation, other public facilities, the natural environment, the economy, and social equity.

At the regional scale, comprehensive planning or "regional blueprint planning" has evolved more recently as an effective means of looking at regions in a comprehensive manner. In California, funding for regional blueprint planning programs has been provided to Metropolitan Planning Organizations by the state Department of Transportation, which recognized the importance of developing long-range regional transportation plans in the context of land use, environmental, economic, and social factors. Regional blueprint planning moves development in a more sustainable direction by examining scenarios and outcomes. Its collaborative governance approach helps integrate state, regional and local priorities and needs in a context of much conflict between "no-growth" and "pro-growth" forces and attitudes. Its frame links local choices to wider - even global - consequences. And it focuses attention on achieving the three E's (environment, economy, and social equity) simultaneously.

### Structural Requirements for Effective Transportation Planning

USDOT is divided into modal stovepipe administrations (i.e., FHWA, FTA, FRA, FAA) that more easily leads to competition rather than cooperation, and a focus on narrower project and programmatic outcomes. This setup leads to mode-centric solutions rather than corridor-wide approaches to mobility across modes.

In our metropolitan regions, MPOs are the nucleus of regional transportation partnerships. Across the nation, we have wide variability in how MPOs are organized. Some are Councils of Governments with broad agency powers. Others are planning commissions. Some are little more than city or county departments of transportation, while others are independent MPOs. The designation agreements establishing the MPOs often haven't been read, let alone updated, for decades. Like any partnership, the foundational documents must be reviewed to make sure the partnership is functioning properly.

With some exceptions, MPOs are almost exclusively planning and programming entities. It is up to other organizations like cities, counties, transit agencies and state DOTs to implement the plans MPOs produce. This creates challenges that are not always met. Financial incentives, governance mechanisms and policy tools need to be developed to strengthen these planning and implementation partnerships.

MPOs, state DOTs and transit agencies typically have no land use powers. Most land use planning and development regulation occurs at the local level and is carefully guarded. Transportation planning most often occurs at the regional and statewide level. This is not a financial issue; money does not solve the disconnect that can occur as a result of these structural fissures. Ultimately, people solve problems through partnerships, meaningful public participation and sustaining agreements that reflect the longer view and meet the goals of both the region and the locality.

### Environmental/Climate Change

Since the beginning of the modern environmental movement in the early 1970s, it has been recognized that transportation plans and projects can have significant negative impacts on the natural environment. Impacts on air quality, water quality, and sensitive habitats have been identified, and federal and state environmental laws require that such impacts be evaluated and mitigated whenever possible.

More recently, it has been recognized that the transportation sector is responsible for one third of overall greenhouse gas emissions, and if current trends continue, those emissions are projected to increase rapidly. The transportation sector's emissions are a function of vehicle efficiency, fuel content and vehicle use. It is important to develop integrated land use and transportation planning strategies to reduce and shift travel demand to modes that have the lowest carbon output and reduce vehicle miles of travel (VMT).

### Social Issues – Social Justice, Environmental Justice, and Public Health

Social justice and environmental justice have become increasingly important considerations in transportation planning and comprehensive planning. "Social justice" can be defined as fairness in the distribution of goods, services, rights, and opportunities. "Environmental justice" can be defined as fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Federal and state laws enacted since the 1990s require planners to give careful consideration to equitable distribution of impacts and benefits in transportation planning and program implementation.

In addition, there has been greater attention paid in recent years to the relationship between the built environment, including transportation systems, and public health. There is increasing evidence that improvements in accessibility can be tied directly to

improvements in community health. Behavioral changes caused by accessibility improvements can contribute to achieving sustainable activity patterns by, for instance, improving air quality and encouraging individual physical activity from walking and bicycling. Holistic strategies to community transportation planning can make significant contributions to lower health care costs and higher economic output. Funding strategies that reduce the cost of sustainable modes tie together the goals of social and environmental justice.

### Economic Development

Historically, economic development in transportation has meant providing good highway access and facilitating the optimum movement of people and goods. While access remains the principal objective of transportation, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, economic development also means providing access to jobs and using transportation to promote a clean energy economy. The goal of economic development remains to create and sustain jobs, and transportation should also be used to create places that attract and retain not only workers, but people who want to live, work, shop and play in proximity to their other needs and destinations.

Transportation mobility is a critical element to maximize the flow of dollars through the economy, when supply and demand meet, and is directly attributable to goods being on the shelf, people being able to get to the markets to purchase goods on the shelves, and the goods themselves being able to reach the market on time and cost efficiently. Increasingly, however, we need to think of access in terms of good transit service to connect our regions, downtowns, major activity centers and the people who will work there, and direct, safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle facilities to help people of all ages and abilities acquire the knowledge and income they need to be productive members of society. This gives people an opportunity to spend their income on more than transportation and housing. Thus, economic development depends on a variety of modes to meet a wide range of demand to support an environmentally sustainable economy.

### Safety and Security

Safety and security in transportation planning involves several elements:

1. National security (threats from terrorism)
2. Natural disasters
3. Daily urban planning

Safety and security has always been a priority in the United States, not just since September 11, 2001. All modes are affected. For instance, Class I railroads can no longer travel with hazardous materials on certain lines in the District of Columbia.

### *Natural disasters*

The Federal Emergency Management Agency and other agencies like the Department of Transportation are important to natural disaster response, as outlined by the National Response Framework. Further, FEMA, like the Economic Development Administration, undertake cost-benefit analysis to consider the cost-effectiveness of sustainable improvements. But thanks to transferring development rights, developers in some states have been able to build homes in natural wetlands. This means that roadways on which residents and commercial users have become dependant are likely to be intraversable during or after a major disaster. The effects were seen in Orleans Parish near Lake Pontchartrain after Hurricane Katrina.

### *Daily urban planning*

Safety is often an overlooked factor in transportation planning. Yet every year roughly 50,000 Americans die in automobile crashes, and many others, including pedestrians and cyclists, are injured or die as a result of being marginalized on our roadways due to design and a lack of proper education and awareness of their rights and responsibilities. An over-emphasis on speed and automobile mobility in the transportation planning and project development process has contributed to this situation, resulting in low levels of walking and bicycling for transportation, and poor transit ridership in many areas because of a poor walking and waiting environment. Creating a more balanced transportation network means designing roadways for slower speeds, accommodation of all modes and a rigorous prioritization of safety in the long-range and short-range transportation planning process.

### Measuring Performance

Transportation needs to be driven by outcomes. This is the essence of blueprint or scenario planning, in which desired end goals drive land use and transportation planning and decision-making. There is an old saying that you fund what you measure. Conventional indicators of transportation performance focus on speed (roadway level of service or travel time, duration of congestion, etc.), and this results in an emphasis on highway capacity improvements at the expense of other modes. Transportation planning and development agencies need shared measures of performance that focus on multimodal transportation quality of service (not just speed), as well as the contextual impacts of potential investment decisions on the environment, historic and natural resources, land use and energy sustainability.

### ***Policy Recommendations***

The following recommendations are organized by the foundational pillars that have guided APA's position: empowering and improving metropolitan mobility, integrated planning for sustainable communities, investments that promote economic growth and

competitiveness, location efficiency, safety and accessibility for all users, and flexible, performance-driven funding options.

## **I. Empower and Improve the Mobility of Metropolitan Regions**

**General Policy #1: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support a greater focus on transportation policy and funding authority within the country's metropolitan regions to strengthen urban centers, improve multimodal connectivity within and between metropolitan regions, and to reinforce the metropolitan planning process for transportation decision-making.**

*Reasons to support: Metropolitan regions are where our nation's transportation and economic needs converge. With three-fourths of our nation's population living in urban areas, the metropolitan regions have increasingly become the country's economic engine, and need empowered leadership and expanded funding authority and flexibility to meet their growing multimodal transportation needs.*

**Specific Policy # 1.1: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support a vertically and horizontally aligned transportation planning governance structure that is built on the foundation of regional framework plans to provide vision, leadership and policy direction for federal, state and local funding and project development strategies across the spectrum from rural to suburban and urban landscapes within those regions.**

*Reasons to support: Planners support the role of the federal government in setting a national transportation policy agenda that takes the longer view toward achieving economic and environmental sustainability, social equity and livable, safe and accessible communities. We believe that transportation is best planned and implemented with a regional perspective, using long range regional framework plans as the basis for federal funding support and state and local implementation plans that guide both long-term and short-term strategies for mobility and livability. With the interstate highway system now complete, the federal government's focus must shift toward creating a more resilient, sustainable and multimodal transportation network that connects economic regions. The role of the states and local governments is to define those regions and develop plans and programs that reflect their defining vision, context and character, while also ensuring that rural communities and agricultural lands can enjoy the access to regional transportation networks that provides economic opportunity while retaining their distinct identity.*

**Specific Policy #1.2: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support a hierarchy of metropolitan mobility that begins with an emphasis on pedestrians as the foundational element of mobility and access.**

*Reasons to support: Walking is the one required element of all trips. Regardless of the mode used to travel the greatest distance or time, every trip starts and ends with a walk. Because walking is required for all transportation, transportation planning should accommodate the pedestrian as a foundational element of mobility and access. APA's policy should be to prioritize the pedestrian for all trips within the developed context, highlighted by those trips of distances of one mile or less. For trips of greater than one mile, projects should comfortably accommodate pedestrians and never preclude pedestrian activity.*

**Specific Policy #1.3: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support bicycling as a viable transportation mode that includes development of connected on-road and off-road facilities designed to accommodate all types of users, as well as program elements that promote bicycle safety, encourage people of all ages to ride, provide education for better awareness, foster partnerships with law enforcement, and evaluate implementation efforts.**

*Reasons to support: Bicycles provide an extremely efficient means of transportation, requiring less right-of-way space than either vehicles or pedestrians. Bicycles also extend the reach of the non-motorized network to maximize geographic coverage without emitting greenhouse gases. APA's policy is to comfortably accommodate the bicycle for trips within the developed context, highlighted by those trips of distances between one to five miles.*

**Specific Policy #1.4: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support an increased emphasis on public transportation, including buses, passenger rail, personal rapid transit and other technologies, as a principal mode to meet the mobility and access needs of our metropolitan regions.**

*Reasons to support: Transportation planning should seek opportunities to provide safe, secure modal choices that contribute to healthy lifestyle choices and an accommodating environment for transit users from the beginning to the end of the trip. Transit facilities and services have the potential to guide compact, mixed-use, walkable development patterns that can lower housing and transportation costs, while providing choices to people of all ages and abilities to improve mobility and access.*

**Specific Policy #1.5: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support the creation of a new pre-Alternatives Analysis step in the federal transit planning process that gives local and regional planning agencies a greater level of guidance and assurance to plan for a preferred transit alignment and technology, along with a land use strategy to create transit corridors with transit oriented development.**

*Reasons to support: The current federal transit planning process presents a major “chicken-or-egg” conundrum, in which local governments are often unwilling to seriously plan for transit oriented development or a future transit alignment because of funding uncertainties, which skews federal New Starts funding toward communities that are transit-ready. The Federal Transit Administration should create a mechanism for local and regional planning agencies to gain some level of assurance that their land use and transit strategy for a given corridor or sub-area is valid and viable, subject to the timing of the market and commitment of local funding. This would be a valuable way to align public and private interests to provide a land use-transportation planning framework for future transit investments in a given corridor.*

**Specific Policy #1.6: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support a revision of federal transit funding policy to give at least equal or greater weight to land use in the selection of a preferred transit alignment over measures of cost efficiency and effectiveness.**

*Reasons to support: The current federal transit planning process, with its policies and institutional emphasis on cost effectiveness, biases the alternatives analysis toward routes with existing right-of-way and ease of obtaining right-of-way, especially for rail service, without regard to existing land use and adopted land use plans. This results in transit lines that are direct and cost-efficient from an engineering standpoint, but do not serve the right land uses for mobility and access. The planning profession needs to drive the identification of preferred transit alignments to ensure broader community goals for economic development, community livability and social equity can be achieved.*

**Specific Policy # 1.7: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support planning for passenger rail networks and intermodal passenger facilities that can help to meet a significant portion of the travel demand currently being met through short-haul commercial aviation.**

*Reasons to support: Many U.S. airports are nearing saturation. More than half of all flights in and out of U.S. airports are less than 500 miles. By expanding the network of passenger rail service in urban areas of the U.S. and by connecting this network to airport facilities through construction of intermodal passenger facilities (known as “travel ports”), a significant amount of future travel demand could be met through this integrated air / rail network in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner. Much of the planning for future high speed rail systems in California, Florida, and other states is focused on creating these air / rail networks with strategically located travel ports. Furthermore, these “travel ports” could evolve into airport cities that provide both a regional gateway and major destination accommodating a wide variety of modal options and land uses that complement the airport function.*

**Specific Policy #1.8: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support enhanced waterborne transportation for both**

**movement of goods and people as a key element of economic vitality in our metropolitan regions.**

*Reasons to support: Transportation planning is multimodal and historically includes surface transportation (land-based). Yet it should also include marine transportation for the movement of both people and goods (freight). Ferry services have historically provided people and goods movement. Before the need for faster transportation, ferry services "bridged" unpassable waterways, chasms, and gorges. Today, these services connect to other modes including to planned streetcar lines in Seattle and existing lines in downtown New Orleans. They also provide goods movement from Connecticut to Long Island, helping remove cars and trucks from local, regional, state and national roadways.*

**Specific Policy #1.9: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support the use of highways as a component of overall multimodal transportation plans where necessary to meet specific mobility objectives that cannot be met effectively through other modes. New highway facilities should be designed to accommodate multimodal use (e.g. use of corridors for Bus Rapid Transit service), and should be compatible with transportation systems management strategies (e.g., high-occupancy toll facilities).**

*Reasons to support: The Interstate Highway System, as well as state, regional and local highway and road systems, serve many important functions and should be maintained and enhanced to help meet existing and future mobility needs. At the same time, planners recognize that expansion of existing highway systems, and creation of new highway corridors, is becoming increasingly expensive, and in many cases is leading to undesirable impacts on communities and the environment. Therefore, in developing long-range transportation plans, highway expansion should be focused in areas where other transportation modes are not feasible, and new highway facilities should be designed in ways that accommodate other transportation modes and systems management technology.*

**Specific Policy # 1.10: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support parking policy to maximize efficiency of this high value resource within both the public realm (on-street) and on private property (off-street). The goal should be to provide the least amount of parking necessary to meet a community's overall goals.**

Provide the parking supply needed to meet community demands in a cost-efficient and equitable manner while being careful not to create inducements to encourage more driving or reduce the walkability of the community. Communities should manage the parking supply to maximize utilization in commercial areas, minimize the impacts on residential areas, and enhance user convenience while employing equitable, fiscally-sound, and environmentally sustainable practices. In order to allocate the scarce

parking resource (and the most valuable, on-street parking resource), communities should allow the market to dictate the value of the space. Meter rates should be set at the lowest price necessary to achieve 85 percent occupancy – the rate that represents the best balance between making it easy to find a space while maximizing utilization. This will require differential rates by location, with higher rates in the most dense commercial cores, and time of day.

*Reasons to support: On-street parking is one of a community's most valuable resources. The supply of curbspace is essentially fixed – at the same time that growth places new demands on the limited supply. In addition, every parking space has annual operating and maintenance costs that accrue to the community and are not recovered unless the auto operator bears the costs directly through parking charges, meters, or permit fees. Careful management of a community's curbspace parking resources is therefore essential for the financial health of the community.*

**Specific Policy #1.11: For off-street parking, the American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support the elimination of all minimum parking requirements not established from locally studied conditions, and recommends that municipalities establish parking standards tailored to meet their unique community goals. The cost of parking should be separated from the cost of real estate lease or purchase.**

*Reasons to support: Off-street parking requirements have traditionally been established to avoid spill-over parking from people driving to specific land uses and crowding out spaces used by local residents and their visitors. Most minimum requirements have been set high enough to protect against excess demand at any point. With the absence of excess demand, there is no market for these spaces, so this valuable land and financial resource is provided free to the direct user. Perceived as a free asset, free parking offers no incentive not to drive, and requires non-drivers to share in the cost of providing the service. The result is more drivers seeking to take advantage of this free resource.*

*This inefficient economic pattern contradicts several of APA's policies, especially guidance of balancing use of the transportation system and the prioritization of users paying for a service that benefits them directly. APA's policy should be to eliminate all minimum parking requirements, and recommend that municipalities establish parking standards that meet their unique community goals. In addition, the cost of parking should be separated from the cost of real estate lease or purchase. As stated in APA's Housing Policy (2006), Specific Policy Position #5C, "Where applicable, planners should seek to unbundle the cost of parking from basic housing costs."*

**Specific Policy #1.12: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support the establishment of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) as an overarching guideline to transportation planning, to**

**nurture sustainable communities that embrace all modes of the transportation realm.**

*Reasons to support: TDM is a set of specific strategies that influence travel behavior by mode, frequency, time, route, or trip length in order to help achieve a maximally efficient and sustainable use of transportation facilities. While TDM is not a transportation mode, it is a set of policies that help all modes within the transportation network work most efficiently. To affect meaningful travel behavior change and encourage the wide-spread utilization of alternatives to Single Occupant Vehicles (SOV), travelers must first understand the options available in the multimodal transportation network – how they work, how to use them, and the benefits they offer. For many people accustomed to a car-dependent community, this conversion requires education and often incentives – in short, a level of information and support that demystifies travel options and makes them rational and desirable alternatives to the car. TDM can therefore be applied to all modes, as well as all types of travel trips.*

**Specific Policy #1.13: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support the use of Transportation Systems Management (TSM) to improve the efficiency and safety of transportation operations within multimodal networks, intermodal facilities and services that can provide interchangeable service configurations as necessary and appropriate.**

*Reasons to support: The rapid advances in intelligent transportation systems (ITS) are providing planners with an ever expanding toolkit of ways to make existing and future transportation networks operate more efficiently and safely, and with better information for users. These technologies can be used to provide real-time traffic information, performance characteristics of autos, trucks, and transit vehicles, actual vehicle locations and speeds, vehicle-to-vehicle communication, driver performance, maintenance histories of transportation facilities, material behavior (e.g., fatigue of bridge structure elements, etc.), vehicle loads, network traffic characteristics, real-time schedule information for transit and freight vehicles, capacities and availability of parking lots and spaces. These tools allow transportation operators to adjust traffic flow or reschedule transit vehicles in real time, and to be more responsive to incidents. They also provide transportation users with much better information to make more choices than they had in the past.*

## **II. Support Integrated Planning for Sustainable Communities**

**General Policy #2: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support an integrated, multimodal approach to transportation planning that links land use and transportation decision-making to create sustainable communities of lasting value.**

*Reasons for support: As planners, we are uniquely trained to think and plan comprehensively, yet the planning field – particularly transportation – has become increasingly specialized. Our regions and our communities benefit when transportation planning takes place within a broad context and where it can be integrated with local comprehensive plans, environmental stewardship, socio-cultural awareness, economic opportunity and resource conservation.*

**Specific Policy #2.1: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support the development of long-range transportation plans that incorporate a variety of transportation modes, and include intermodal systems components, along with systems management and demand management strategies. These plans should be linked to a national vision for transportation that leads to a national network of intercity passenger rail, of goods movement, metropolitan mobility networks and linkages between rural areas and economic centers that will carry this country forward in the next 50 years.**

*Reasons to support: It is widely recognized that the national vision for transportation planning over the past 60 years has placed primary importance on the development of the U.S. Interstate Highway System. While this system was able to meet many national objectives that were envisioned when it was launched in the 1950s, it has also led to many unintended consequences and negative impacts on the natural environment, the national economy, and social structure. It is important that a new national vision for integrated, multimodal transportation systems be created, and that transportation plans at all scales be developed in ways that will lead toward attaining this vision.*

**Specific Policy #2.2: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support policy approaches that integrate transportation policy goals with broader sustainability goals.**

*Reasons to support: Sustainability essentially means being prepared for possible future outcomes; anticipating and adapting to change. Our society is threatened by major global and national issues like climate change and the declining production of oil, as well as economic and social change related to our aging society, among others. Transportation is the foundation for how people interact and lead productive lives, and how it is planned, funded and evaluated shapes our cities and regions. But it is not a closed system or an end in itself; it is a means to an end. To ensure a sustainable and economically vibrant future, the planning profession supports integrated approaches to meeting our transportation needs that tie directly to broader goals involving clean energy, livable, healthy communities and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.*

**Specific Policy #2.3: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support transportation plans and strategies that lead to protection and enhancement of the natural environment and socio-cultural resources.**

*Reasons to support: The needs of a highly mobile, expanding society need to be in proper balance with natural resources that sustain and support our quality of life and the health of the planet. In addition, the historic and cultural legacy of our diverse population and community character cannot be sacrificed singularly for the economic gain that might result from improved mobility or access. Both are legacies of the last century, and it is imperative that planning guide the identification and design of needed transportation projects that do least harm to these valuable resources while providing equitable access and benefits to historically disadvantaged communities.*

**Specific Policy #2.4 The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support transportation planning that leads to improved air quality and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector.**

*Reasons to support: Transportation accounts for approximately one-third of greenhouse-gase (GHG) emissions in the U.S., two-thirds of oil consumption, and about half of urban air pollution. Transport GHG emissions are also growing faster than those from any other sector. Since the enactment of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act in 1991, transportation planners have required to address the air quality impacts of their plans and strategies. More recently, states like California and Washington have begun to require that transportation planners address the impacts of the transportation sector on GHG emissions, and to develop strategies that will lead to significant reductions in GHG emissions over time. These strategies include vehicle efficiency, GHG intensity of fuels, reductions in vehicle use, and in some cases system efficiency.*

**Specific Policy #2.5: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support transportation planning that addresses and minimizes the potential adverse impacts of transportation facilities and associated urban development on water quality.**

*Reasons to support: Another important environmental issue that must be addressed in transportation planning is the impact of paving roads, along with associated urban development, on storm water runoff and resulting water pollution; here, transportation and land use become closely intertwined. Rain or snow on impervious surfaces like roads results in the runoff of highly contaminated water (including trash, bacteria, and toxic compounds) into the ocean, lakes, rivers, and streams. The U.S. EPA has highlighted this problem by setting new goals for storm water runoff; namely, that such runoff should attain the quality of drinking water. Therefore, it is important that transportation plans include an evaluation of alternatives that would reduce impacts on water quality.*

**Specific Policy #2.6: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support transportation planning that addresses and**

**minimizes the potential adverse impacts of transportation facilities and associated urban development on natural habitats.**

*Reasons to support: Transportation facilities, especially in environmentally sensitive areas, can disrupt the migratory pathways of wildlife and/or disturb wetlands. Roadkill is a major problem with respect to some species. In addition, landscape ecologists report that the ecological impact of "road avoidance, especially due to traffic noise," is greater than that of roadkill. Furthermore, the urban development that is often associated with road extensions can lead to fragmentation of wildlife corridors and removal of core habitat areas. In addition to avoidance of these direct impacts, planners can develop mitigation strategies that can lead to long-term preservation of important resources through development and implementation of "habitat conservation plans" pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act. In some cases, MPOs have developed mitigation programs that provide funding for acquisition, management and monitoring of sensitive habitats in conjunction with the development of transportation facilities.*

**Specific Policy #2.7: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support the development of "regional blueprint plans" (also known as "regional framework plans" or "regional comprehensive plans") that look at the integration of land use, transportation, and other public facilities at a regional scale, leading to sustainable development that addresses environmental quality, economic health, and social equity.**

*Reasons to support: Regional blueprint plans are now being developed and implemented in regions throughout the U.S., as a means of addressing the interrelationships among between land use and transportation at a regional scale, and developing strategies that integrate land use and transportation plans in ways that lead to sustainable outcomes. These plans are then used to align regional transportation plans with local government land use plans, using "place typologies" that can translate between preferred regional development patterns and local land use planning and zoning policies and techniques.*

### **III. Invest in Transportation that Promotes Economic Growth, Competitiveness and Resiliency**

**General Policy #3: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support wise investments in transportation infrastructure and services necessary to expand economic opportunity, improve national and regional economic competitiveness in the global economy and foster greater economic resiliency.**

*Reasons to support: Job creation and retention are major challenges facing much of the country, and transportation planning can play a key role in shaping a 21<sup>st</sup> Century clean energy economy. Transportation also has the ability to shape our communities to create great places that attract and retain higher wage workers who can choose where they*

*live and work. How we plan our transportation networks plays a large role in making our economy more diversified and resilient.*

**Specific Policy #3.1: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support development of statewide transportation plans that identify and support the interconnectivity of economic regions and provide policy guidance and investment support to develop transportation networks that support and strengthen those regions.**

*Reasons to support: States should have the responsibility of identifying critical areas of statewide economic concern as a basis for job creation and retention. Assets like air and deep water ports, universities, clean energy zones and major metropolitan central business districts serve as economic catalysts. These locations depend on excellent regional, statewide and often international accessibility, and their supporting transportation networks and intermodal hubs should serve as the backbone of statewide investment priorities.*

**Specific Policy # 3.2: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support the inclusion of commercial ports, marine/intermodal terminals and marine highways (short sea shipping) in transportation planning to enhance economic competitiveness, alleviate traffic congestion, mitigate emissions per ton-mile, and improve highway safety in and between major metropolitan areas.**

*Reasons to support: Ports provide a valuable resource for jobs and economic activity throughout the United States. Goods enter the United States and in many cases get transferred to rail or truck using urban and rural corridors which are congested, thereby emitting more pollutants into the atmosphere. However, marine highway services along the US coastlines and commercial waterways, notably with the reopening of the expanded Panama Canal, can alleviate road and rail congestion, thereby providing public benefits in the form of time, air quality, and safety.*

**Specific Policy #3.3: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support the development of intercity high speed rail corridors and the integration of air and rail as a cornerstone of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century clean energy economy in the United States.**

*Reasons to support: With the completion of the interstate highway system, an intractable level of traffic congestion on many of those highways in metropolitan regions, and the twin threats of global climate change and declining oil production, our national transportation network needs regional options that offer viable travel choices and increase the resiliency of the network. High speed rail can help America retain its competitive edge in the global economy.*

**Specific Policy #3.4: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support economic growth and opportunity through the creation of great communities and livable places that offer a variety of transportation options and accessible destinations.**

*Reasons to support: Transportation has the power to shape communities, and their ability to attract and retain higher wage jobs, workers and their families. By focusing less on speed-based measures of mobility and more on the quality of the transportation networks and the proximity of where people live, work and play, it is possible to use transportation to create highly livable and accessible places. These are the places people where people want to live, raise their families, and where their children want to return after they grow up and leave the household. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century model for transportation incorporates these multimodal networks and livability into the planning process to promote great communities of lasting value.*

#### **IV. Foster Location-Efficient Decisions**

**General Policy #4: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support policies at the federal, state and local levels that encourage the efficient location of transportation, housing and community facilities to reduce public and individual household costs, limit greenhouse gas emissions and foster social equity.**

*Reasons to support: A history of developing and applying housing, transportation and public facility policies in isolation, according to their own criteria, has fostered sprawling development patterns in many communities that force an over-reliance on automobiles for travel. This tends to separate people from their destinations, and creates communities designed around the automobile. Federal leadership is needed in the mortgage lending industry and in educational facility capital funding to promote location-efficient decisions so that people do not have to “drive to qualify” for a home mortgage they can afford on the urban fringe. Schools and other facilities should be built in places that enable walking and bicycling access.*

**Specific Policy #4.1: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support prioritizing investments in the maintenance of critical transportation infrastructure to connect existing communities.**

*Reasons to support: Due to prolonged lack of investment in aging infrastructure, such as bridges, highways, transit facilities, airports and ports, the United States faces rapidly mounting bills to repair and replace these facilities. This places many Americans at a distinct safety risk and leads to private disinvestment in older urban areas where the aging infrastructure inhibits new development and economic investment.*

**Specific Policy #4.2: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support co-location of public schools and other**

**community facilities, with locations in areas that are close to where people live who will use those facilities, and where modal options exist to serve the facilities by means other than the automobile.**

*Reasons to support: Public schools are often located on the fringe of communities, far away from residential areas because local or state siting standards require a minimum size facility. This results in auto-dependent travel patterns and schools that are disconnected from the communities in which the students live. Schools are also typically closed to joint- or after-hours use by other community groups, which places pressure on local governments to acquire and maintain other recreational facilities apart from public schools. These policies negatively affect public health and community livability.*

## **V. Create Safe, Healthy and Accessible Communities for Everyone**

**General Policy #5: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support transportation policies and investments that create safe, healthy and accessible communities.**

*Reasons to support: Transportation networks should serve all users equitably, whether they walk, ride a bicycle, take transit or use an automobile. As our population ages, it is imperative that we focus attention on ensuring adequate personal mobility for daily needs and social interaction. We can reduce negative impacts to public health by improving roadway user traffic safety, improving air quality, promoting physical activity and fitness, increasing community cohesion, improving access to medical services and increasing transportation affordability.*

**Specific Policy #5.1: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support a policy of Complete Corridors, ensuring that transportation corridors can accommodate all modes for people of all ages and abilities to provide access to destinations along the corridor.**

*Reasons to support: Ideally, every mode would be accommodated on every street. However, this would result in significant space requirements and potentially significant cost. Instead of forcing every mode on every street, ensuring that every mode provides access throughout a corridor allows opportunities to tailor land uses and streets to different configurations and efficiencies. Network continuity and connectivity are essential principals to making this policy effective.*

**Specific Policy # 5.2: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support modes of Active Transportation as high priority investments to connect people with their destinations, recreational opportunities and other modes.**

*Reasons to support: Active Transportation (human-powered) modes are the most environmentally sustainable, produce the healthiest and most economically viable*

*communities equally accessible by all, and result in the great places that are the core of APA's mission.*

**Specific Policy # 5.3: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support the development, implementation and evaluation of transportation plans that foster the equitable distribution of benefits and avoid the disproportionate burden of negative impacts.**

*Reasons to support: A central tenet of comprehensive planning is to understand the impacts of public decision-making on communities, especially those that are disadvantaged. Over time, transportation projects and services that only follow needs as defined by levels of traffic congestion or in pursuit of economic development may not fully serve all members of the community equitably, and may also prove very disruptive to communities. There should be a continuing review and evaluation of transportation funding priorities and allocation of dollars to ensure that social equity is considered in the planning process.*

**Specific Policy # 5.4: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support comprehensive Safe Routes to Schools Programs that involve school districts, teachers, parents, staff, students and implementing agencies in the development of facilities, programs and policies that support walking and bicycling to school.**

*Reasons to support: This policy relates directly to public health, improves learning, reduces traffic congestion and helps educate young people on the values and practices of community design that supports walking and cycling.*

**Specific Policy #5.5: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support transportation plans and programs that enable people to age with dignity and purpose by having transportation options that connect them to their destinations. For instance, housing and transportation options need to be linked to enable people to age in place.**

*Reasons to support: We live in an aging society, where the Baby Boom generation is now entering retirement. An increasing percentage of the American public will be age 60 and older. The planning profession needs to address the impact of street design, transit service and overall accessibility on the mobility needs of people as they age so they continue to have transportation options to live their lives to the fullest.*

**Specific Policy #5.6: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support meaningful and substantive public participation in the development of transportation plans and programs by engaging stakeholders, including the general public, interest groups, transportation providers, implementing agencies and advocates early and throughout the planning process, and taking their input into consideration. The APA believes**

**effective public involvement is both necessary and essential in the creation of great plans and great places.**

*Reasons to support: Previous federal transportation laws, the Civil Rights Act and Presidential Executive Orders have greatly expanded the role of public participation in the transportation planning process. Whether in metropolitan or rural areas, early and continuing consultation with the public is a valuable part of the transportation planning process to understand needs, benefits and potential impacts of transportation projects or programs. Effective public participation also plays a key role in building community consensus and support for transportation investments and strategies that can move a state, region or community forward.*

**VI. Expand Funding Sources to Meet Transportation Needs in ways that are Flexible, Performance-Driven and Linked to Outcomes**

**General Policy #6: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support a shift in transportation financing methods that provide the ability to better achieve our transportation needs by linking funding to performance benchmarks and clearly defined outcomes that reflect state, regional and local flexibility.**

*Reasons to support: The primary transportation funding program is the gasoline tax, which is a regressive and declining revenue source that not only cannot keep pace with our 21<sup>st</sup> Century transportation needs, its popular acceptance as a “user fee” fosters a single-mode funding and programming approach to mobility problems.*

**Specific Policy #6.1: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support an expansion of transportation funding methods, including innovative approaches like infrastructure banks and mobility fees based on vehicle miles of travel that move away from single-mode funding streams, with declining reliance on the gas tax over time.**

*Reasons to support: The gas tax will continue to be with us for some time, and may need to be raised to cover the costs of critical infrastructure needs facing the country. However, gas tax revenue is declining due to vehicle fuel efficiency improvements and higher federal standards, and it tends to foster automobile-oriented solutions because it is commonly accepted as a user fee.*

**Specific Policy #6.2: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support the continued structure of proportional partnerships that requires state and local cash matches for federal transportation funding investments.**

*Reasons to support: There is an established tradition of state/local funding match for federal-aid transportation projects. While there is room for debate over the level of the*

*required funding match (e.g., 80/20, 50/50, etc.), this is a good practice that should continue because it ensures a shared commitment to construct the project and a clear understanding of the potential benefits, community impacts and outcomes of the planning and project development process. In short, it requires a thorough planning process leading to buy-in from all stakeholders.*

**Specific Policy #6.3: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support a system of flexible transportation funding and accountability that links long range transportation plans, “regional blueprint plans” and comprehensive plans with benchmarks and outcomes. Planners support the use of transportation block grants, greater sub-allocation funding authority for metropolitan planning organizations, and other flexible funding methods to incentivize comprehensive, community-based transportation plans.**

*Reasons to support: Effective planning should be able to withstand the scrutiny of performance-based accountability. However, with that scrutiny and accountability should come increased flexibility on the behalf of states, metropolitan regions and local communities to allocate their transportation funds in a mode-neutral way to locally-defined priorities that best achieve the vision, goals and measurable objectives outlined in the planning process.*

**Specific Policy #6.4: The American Planning Association, its Chapters and Divisions, and planners support the following structural changes in the federal transportation planning process:**

- **Rural planning organizations need to be created to cover the balance of states not covered by MPOs.**
- **FHWA, FTA and FRA to be consolidated into a new “Surface Transportation Administration” centered on multi-state regions.**
- **MPO designation agreements need to be modernized. Too many “grandfathered” MPOs still do not have local elected officials, appropriate state officials and/or public transit representatives on their policy boards. This requirement for new MPOs has existed since passage of ISTEA in 1991. Two decades have passed. It is time to clean up representation on these boards.**

*Reasons to support: Effective planning depends on collaboration and cooperation among responsible agencies regionwide. We need to reduce duplication of policies as well as unclear or inconsistent policies across agencies. We need to move away from modal silos that inhibit the development of multimodal transportation plans, programs and funding streams that give states, regions and localities adequate flexibility to meet their needs.*