ADVANCING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY THROUGH THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION

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Lifting Up What Works

PolicyLink

Philadelphia, May 13, 2010
Reinventing Older Communities
Overview

- Principles for Equitable Reform
- The Context for Policy Change
- Eleven Policy Ideas
- Legislative Landscape
Guiding Principles for Reform

- Create Robust, Affordable Transportation Choices for All
- Ensure Access to Jobs, Workforce Development, and Contracting Opportunities in the Transportation Industry
- Promote Healthy, Environmentally Sustainable Communities
- Invest Equitably and Focus on Results
Federal Policy Timeline

- **1991, ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act)**
  - new vision for surface transportation
  - expanded funding to air quality, reducing congestion and pedestrian and bicycle access

- **1998, TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century)**
  - Declared interstate highway system complete
  - Increased funding levels and added local flexibility to programs
  - Reverse commute

- **2005, SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users)**
  - Safe Routes to School Program
Transportation Authorization: Time for Transformation?

- SAFETEA-LU expired September 2009 (under extension)
  - An opportunity that arises only once every 5 to 6 years

- SAFETEA-LU signed into law in 2005
  - Over $244 billion for 5 years
  - 6th largest federal expenditure – much of which is matched by states, regions, and locales

- An unwieldy bill
  - Over 6K earmarks
  - 108 programs (from very small to very big)
  - Funding distributed through formula funds and competitive grants
New momentum for policy reform and transportation equity

- Coalitions working to create a strong and equitable authorization bill:
  - Transportation For America, including the new T4A Social and Economic Equity Caucus
  - Transportation Equity Network
  - Transit Riders for Public Transportation

- In general, many more advocates and interests concerned with smart growth, sustainable development, environmental quality, sustainability, economic opportunity, access for all, and more democratic decision-making
Policy Idea #1

*Increase federal funding for public transportation—from both to build and operate the system.*

- Direct at least one-third of all funding to public transit
- Equalize local match
- Support for operations
Policy Idea #2

Foster access and mobility by increasing funding and improving the delivery of programs that serve those dependent on transit.

- Job Access and Reverse Commute, New Freedom Program, Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program
- Significantly increase funding levels for these programs to a total of $7 billion over six years (or approximately $1.2 billion per year on average)
Policy Idea #3

Promote job quality and job access in transportation construction careers.

- Target jobs to local, low-income workers (15% of work hours)
- Ensure quality job training opportunities by maximizing the use of apprentices (1% of funding)
- Support quality pre-apprenticeship training programs and recruitment
- Use community workforce agreements
Policy Idea #4

*Increase affordable housing near quality public transit and job centers.*

- Create new resources for TOD that encourages creation and preservation of affordable housing and supports critical community services
- Structure federal transportation funding to create incentives to preserve and expand affordable housing near public transit and job centers
Policy Idea #5

Make streets safe, complete, and welcoming for all.

- **Complete Streets**: Require states and local governments to adopt these policies and use these practices in federally-funded projects.
- **Safe Routes to School**: Provide $600 million in annual funding; expand eligibility to include high schools; and dedicate 10 percent of funding to create safe routes to bus stops.
Policy Idea #6

*Promote integration of transportation, housing, environmental, and community revitalization strategies.*

- Establish an Office of Livability at US Department of Transportation
- Provide increased funding to help local communities develop and implement coordinated regional plans
Policy Idea #7

**Make transportation investments that foster healthy people and healthy communities.**

- Funding and TA to mitigate health impacts, ozone hot spots, and poor air quality
- Health impact assessments
- Modernize ports and freight systems to reduce pollution and other health impacts
- Targets spending toward maintenance and repair
Policy Idea #8

Establish *national transportation objectives with clear measures to assess progress toward equity.*

- Increase by five percent the number of essential destinations accessible within 30 minutes by public transit, or a 15-minute walk for low-income, senior, and disabled populations
- Reduce by 25 percent the average combined housing and transportation costs for a household
- Achieve zero percent population exposure to at-risk levels of air pollution
- Triple biking, walking, and public transportation use
Policy Idea #9

Strengthen civil rights protections.

- Renewed energy at the Office of Civil Rights
- Broad range of advocacy, organizing, and legal strategies to reverse Sandoval
- Establish a private right of action that enforces the disparate impact regulations adopted by the USDOT
Policy Idea #10

Reform Metropolitan Planning Organizations to foster greater accountability and representation.

- MPOs have not historically been representative of the geographic or racial composition of the communities they represent
- Reforms needed (e.g., proportional voting system)
Utilize equitable financing and revenue options.

- Highway Trust Fund bankrupt
- Must ensure financing mechanism does not disproportionately burden disadvantaged communities
- Dedicate a portion of new revenues toward expanding mobility options and lowering transportation costs for low-income people and communities of color
The Authorization Process

Surface Transportation Act Reauthorization Process

1. Administration bill introduced in Congress.
   - 9-12 MONTHS

2. Administration and DOT draft legislative proposal.
   - 24 MONTHS

3. Separate House and Senate committee hearings occur.
   - 6-8 MONTHS

4. Separate House and Senate subcommittees and committees draft and refine legislation through a comprehensive approval process.
   - 4-5 MONTHS

5. Once approved, each bill is "reported out" to the full membership of both the House and Senate. Voting on both bills follows any further debates and amendments.
   - 2 MONTHS

6. Once each bill is approved, a conference committee works to resolve the differences between the two bills. When the conference committee reaches agreement, a single bill is submitted to both the House and Senate for final passage.
   - 1 MONTH

7. Once passed, the bill is sent to the President for final approval.
   - SEPTEMBER 30

FIRST 4 YEARS

24 MONTHS

9-12 MONTHS

6-8 MONTHS

4-5 MONTHS

2 MONTHS

1 MONTH

SEPTEMBER 30

Once passed, the bill is sent to the President for final approval.
Committees of Jurisdiction

- House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (Oberstar - Minnesota)
  - Highways and Transit Subcommittee (DeFazio - Oregon)

- Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee (Boxer –California)
  - Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee (Baucus - Montana)

- Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee (Dodd-Connecticut)
  - Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee (Menendez—New Jersey)

- House Ways and Means (Levin—Michigan)

- Senate Finance (Baucus—Montana)
Legislative Landscape

- June 2009 – draft House bill by Chairman Oberstar
- Big Hurdle – the financing mechanism
- Extension of SAFETEA-LU through 2010 (several possible scenarios in terms of when authorization will happen)
- Senate EPW has begun hearings and says they will write a bill by Memorial Day
- Unclear whether we will see jobs legislation with infrastructure spending in 2010
- Some exciting policy shifts have started from Administration absent a bill
Resources on the internet

www.policylink.org

www.T4america.org

www.transportationequity.org

www.thestrategycenter.org/project/transit-riders-public-transportation