



VITAL CONDITIONS

Reliable Transportation

The vital condition of Reliable Transportation is about compact, walkable, accessible communities, in which mobility is ensured no matter a person's means, mode or ability. Where streets are safe, and transportation systems are sustainable.

Reliable transportation is an indispensable vital condition that we all depend on for our health and well-being. Everyone needs transportation to move consistently and safely between the many places we must be - home, work, school, stores and more. In the United States, personal vehicles are the predominant transportation mode, yet they produce many negative externalities from pollution to traffic to sprawl. Many people can't or don't drive, and rely on public transit and other means to get around. Transportation options have a strong influence on access to jobs and social mobility. Transportation also plays a role in our activity levels, with active transportation - walking, biking and transit use - helping us to incorporate physical activity into our day-to-day lives.

Continuing influence of past legacies

Rise of the automobile: Henry Ford introduced the Model T, an affordable car for regular consumers, in 1908, and by 1927 Ford Motor Company had sold 15 million and cars had become an icon of American life. During the 20th Century, the personal automobile would rise to predominance, transforming transportation patterns and communities forever. In the 1940s and 1950s automakers led efforts to dismantle the nation's then-extensive public transit systems.

Interstate highways: The vision for a network of highways that stretched across the country began to take shape in the 1930s, but the vision wasn't realized until the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 authorized and funded the construction of a 41,000 mile interstate highway system. Since the 1950s, transportation priorities have focused on providing critical transportation access almost exclusively through the automobile. In 1966, the U.S. Department of Transportation was established to ensure a safe, modern, transportation system that improves the quality of life for all while increasing productivity and competitiveness of American workers and businesses; yet, the federal agency has focused primarily on building freeways and large roads. The result has been an unprecedented level of auto mobility which has benefits, as well as unintended consequences.

Disconnection and displacement: During the 1950s and 1960s urban neighborhoods were cleared to site freeways and roads as part of a process known as urban renewal. People from low income communities and communities of color were disproportionately disrupted and displaced by urban renewal which exacerbated spatial and economic inequities.

Land use: A national mindset suggesting that suburban-style land use and transportation were ideal - driven by racism, crime, schools, and pollution - has produced sprawl and a pattern of land development that provides few choices but the automobile.

Vehicle emissions: Automobiles are a major source of environmental air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Despite improvements to fuel efficiency standards and a growing variety of hybrid and electric vehicles, gains are undermined with: more vehicles on the road, older vehicles on the road, and people are driving more.

Current conditions

221 million people have a driver's license (68% of the population).¹

45% of Americans have no access to public transportation. **86%** of people living in rural communities don't have access to public transportation.²

Americans spend an average **\$9,000 per year** on transportation - more than food (\$7,200) and nearly as much as healthcare (\$10,300).³

About **5,000 people** are killed by cars while walking each year.⁴

21% of roads in the U.S. are classified as in poor condition.⁵

Around a **quarter of a million** (130-340K) premature deaths are attributed to ground level ozone and PM 2.5 exposures.⁶

¹University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute; ²American Public Transportation System; ³Bureau of Labor Statistics; ⁴Fatality Analysis Reporting System; ⁵Infrastructure Report Card

Accessibility: Many Americans can't or don't drive, and many don't own or have access to private vehicles. Many who don't drive rely on alternative and public transportation options. Mass transit systems provide critical services that are affordable and accessible to people of all ages, abilities and income levels. Across regions, mass transit systems can help to reduce air pollution, and can be leveraged for economic and community development. Although mass public transit systems are critical to assure reliable transportation for all, they have been underfunded and deprioritized for decades, resulting in a system that continues to fail too many people.

Major forces shaping current and future priorities

Infrastructure: Transportation infrastructure is aging and woefully inadequate. Our aging infrastructure presents a safety issue, creates economic inefficiencies, and lacks capacity for the growing population. Transportation needs far outstrip available funding. And, while innovative approaches like public-private partnerships are emergent, they remain insufficient to address the problem at-scale.

Active transportation: In recent years, active transportation - walking, biking and transit use - has emerged as a powerful strategy to increase mobility for all, while encouraging physical activity, and building safer, more complete communities.

Travel Demand Management: Travel Demand Management refers to the application of strategies that reduce and redistribute travel demand as a means to control vehicle traffic and its externalities. TDM has emerged with the growing realization that the old paradigm of faster, wider, and straighter highways does not work because we can't build our way out of congestion.

New technologies: Travel habits and market preferences are changing alongside technologies. Conventional travel markets are being disrupted by autonomous vehicles, ride-sharing, and TNCs or Transportation Network Companies (i.e., Uber, Lyft), as a growing number of transportation options emerge.

Streets for all: Communities increasingly recognize streets as public places- not just roads that aid the movement of vehicles from Point A to Point B. They are places for socializing, entertainment, commerce and civic expression. "Complete streets" is an important movement seeking solutions to accommodate all kinds of users - pedestrians, cyclists, transit and cars - and create human-centered places. The notion of reclaiming our streets extends to highways as well, with several communities undertaking highway removals in order to reconnect neighborhoods and regain valuable land.

Transit Oriented Development: Transit Oriented Development has emerged as an important strategy that links housing, land and economic development with transit systems to build community wealth and assets while reducing reliance on private vehicles.

What are important priorities or ways to ensure a positive legacy?

There are infinite opportunities to make progress, across every sphere of influence.
Here are just a few that could yield great benefits:

1. Capitalize on changing preferences: more and more people want to live in walkable, transit-served communities
2. Implement complete streets policies and projects
3. Pursue safe routes to school, safe routes to parks and safe routes for seniors strategies
4. Invest in smart public transportation systems that increase mobility, accessibility and opportunity for people, and contribute to local and regional economic growth
5. Use disruption in the transportation field (i.e., ride hailing, autonomous vehicles) as an opportunity to proactively and intentionally reshape the transportation system in ways that increase population well-being
6. Adopt new measures of success—multimodal measures and correlated co-benefits related to quality of life, health, safety and equity