



BARACK OBAMA AND JOE BIDEN: STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

REVITALIZE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Strengthen Core Infrastructure: As our society becomes more mobile and interconnected, the need for 21st-century transportation networks has never been greater. However, too many of our nation's railways, highways, bridges, airports, and neighborhood streets are slowly decaying due to lack of investment and strategic long-term planning. Barack Obama believes that America's long-term competitiveness depends on the stability of our critical infrastructure. As president, Obama will make strengthening our transportation systems, including our roads and bridges, a top priority. Barack Obama and Joe Biden will enter into a new partnership with state and local civic, political, and business leaders to enact a truly national infrastructure policy that recognizes that we must upgrade our infrastructure to meet the demands of a growing population, a changing economy, and our short and long-term energy challenges.

New Jobs through a New National Infrastructure Investment: Barack Obama believes that it is critically important for the United States to rebuild its national transportation infrastructure – its highways, bridges, roads, ports, air, and train systems – to strengthen user safety, bolster our long-term competitiveness and ensure our economy continues to grow. Investing in national infrastructure is especially important in our efforts to bolster our homeland security to meet international terrorism and natural disaster threats. Additionally, a robust federal infrastructure investment program today will help strengthen the U.S. economy and provide at least one million more U.S. jobs at a time when the housing and construction industries are slowing. Barack Obama and Joe Biden will address the infrastructure challenge by creating a National Infrastructure Reinvestment Bank to expand and enhance, not supplant, existing federal transportation investments. This independent entity will be directed to invest in our nation's most challenging transportation infrastructure needs. The Bank will receive an infusion of federal money, \$60 billion over 10 years, to provide financing to transportation infrastructure projects across the nation. These projects will create up to two million new direct and indirect jobs and stimulate approximately \$35 billion per year in new economic activity.

Improve and Modernize Air Traffic Control: Because of an outdated air-traffic control system and overscheduling at airports already operating at full capacity, there were a record number of flight delays during the first half of 2007. Moreover, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has failed to work well with our nation's air traffic controllers, neglecting to treat them with the respect they deserve. There are nearly 1,100 fewer air traffic controllers working in U.S. air traffic facilities today than three years ago, despite increasing air traffic. Obama and Biden will work with Congress to modernize the nation's air traffic control system and he will direct the new FAA Administrator to work cooperatively with the frontline air traffic controllers to restore morale and improve working conditions and operations at the agency.

Strengthen Airline Safety and Regulations: Over the past several months there have been reports that FAA leadership ignored warnings from FAA employees that too many commercial planes failed to meet federal safety guidelines. As a result of FAA whistleblowers coming to the public with this information, there have been widespread groundings of commercial planes which have added considerable strain to our airline industry. Barack Obama believes that we must restore competence, independence and credibility to the FAA. As president, Obama will appoint a qualified FAA Administrator who will not play politics with the safety of American travelers and he will work with Congress to strengthen the FAA's mandate.

Support Amtrak Funding: Barack Obama has been a strong supporter of federal financial support for Amtrak. Obama believes we need to reform Amtrak to improve accountability. In many parts of the country, Amtrak is the only form of reliable transportation. In the U.S. Senate, Obama is a cosponsor of the Passenger Rail Investment and Innovation Act of 2007, a leading act to provide long-term federal investment to Amtrak. As president, Barack Obama will continue to fight for Amtrak funding and reform so that individuals, families and businesses throughout the country have safe and reliable transportation options.

Support Development of High-Speed Freight and Passenger Rail: Barack Obama and Joe Biden support development of high-speed rail networks across the country. Providing passengers with safe high-speed rail will have significant environmental and metropolitan planning advantages and help diversify our nation's transportation infrastructure. Our domestic rail freight capacity must also be strengthened because our demand for rail transportation has never been greater, leaving many key transportation hubs stretched to capacity. Obama and Biden are committed to renewing the federal government's commitment to high speed rail so that our nation's transportation infrastructure continues to support, and not hinder, our nation's long-term economic growth.

Strengthen Air Transportation in Underserved Areas: Obama has worked across party lines to protect funding for the Essential Air Service program, which provides vital funds for air transportation in rural areas. Obama supports the continuation of the Small Community Air Service Development Program that helps small and mid-sized communities attract new air service, which is critical to local economic development. Obama and Biden will work to improve the effectiveness of these programs and increase the availability of rail transportation options for residents of rural communities.

Modernize our Water Infrastructure: Obama strongly supported the enactment of the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA), which will provide funding for upgrading our nation's water infrastructure, including modernizing the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers' system of locks and dams and strengthening levees. The bill also provided funding for environmental restoration along the upper Mississippi and other important national resources like the Everglades. The decay of our water infrastructure has led to stagnating economic development for areas along our ports and rivers because of the decreasing ability of farmers and other producers to ship their goods both domestically and internationally. Obama's work to pass the Water Resources and Development Act has been praised by the National Corn Grower's Association and the American Soybean Association. When Obama is president, he and Biden will continue to ensure that the federal government invests in upgrading our national water infrastructure to support economic growth and protect our communities from storms, floods and hurricanes.

Improve Transportation Access to Jobs: Three-quarters of welfare recipients live in areas that are poorly served by public transportation and low-income workers spend up to 36 percent of their incomes on transportation. Barack Obama has spent years working to improve transportation access for low-income Americans. As an Illinois state senator, he was the chief sponsor of the bill that created the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation, a body that was charged with building public-private partnerships to help connect low-income Americans with jobs. As president, Obama will work to eliminate transportation disparities so that all Americans can lead meaningful and productive lives. Obama and Biden will double the federal Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program to ensure that additional federal public transportation dollars flow to the highest-need communities and that urban planning initiatives take this aspect of transportation policy into account. JARC funds have been used to connect low-income workers around the country with job opportunities.

IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Invest in Public Transportation: Public transit not only reduces the amount of time individuals spend commuting, but also has significant benefits to air quality, public health and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Barack Obama and Joe Biden will re-commit federal resources to public mass transportation projects across the country. Obama and Biden will work with state and local governments across the country on efforts to create new, effective public transportation systems and modernize our aging urban public transit infrastructure.

Create Greater Incentives for Public Transit Usage: The federal tax code rewards driving to work by allowing employers to provide parking benefits of \$205 per month tax free to their employees. The tax code provides employers with commuting benefits for transit, carpooling or vanpooling capped at \$105 per month. This gives drivers a nearly 2:1 advantage over transit users. Obama and Biden will reform the tax code to make benefits for driving and public transit or ridesharing equal.

Strengthen Metropolitan Planning to Cut Down Traffic Congestion: Our communities will better serve all of their residents if we are able to leave our cars, to walk, bicycle and have access other transportation alternatives. As president, Barack Obama will re-evaluate the transportation funding process to ensure that smart growth considerations are taken into account. Obama will build upon his efforts in the Senate to ensure that more Metropolitan Planning Organizations create policies to incentivize greater bicycle and pedestrian usage of roads and sidewalks. As president, Obama will work to provide states and local governments with the resources they need to address sprawl and create more livable communities.

Require States to Plan for Energy Conservation: Obama and Biden will also reform current law which simply asks governors and their state Departments of Transportation to “consider” energy conservation as a condition of receiving federal transportation dollars. As president, Obama will require governors and local leaders in our metropolitan areas to make “energy conservation” a required part of their planning for the expenditure of federal transportation funds.

SAFEGUARD TRANSPORTATION FROM TERRORISM

Protect Transportation Infrastructure from Terrorism: The federal government’s National Asset Database, which is intended to guide homeland security priorities, lists 77,069 potential U.S. targets including petting zoos and popcorn factories. Experts say this database is not useful for homeland security planning. Barack Obama’s Department of Homeland Security will develop a meaningful critical infrastructure protection plan across the nation and will work with the private sector to ensure that all high-risk targets are prepared for disasters both natural and man-made.

Bolster Airport Security: Between October 2005 and January 2006, Government Accountability Office investigators were able to smuggle bomb components past federal screeners at all 21 airports they targeted. And airline passengers are still not screened against a comprehensive, accurate terrorist watch list. As a result, almost six years after 9/11, we still have a security system that results in eight-year olds and grandmothers being repeatedly questioned and even stopped from flying. Developing a comprehensive, accurate list must be a priority and used in a way that safeguards passengers’ privacy while ensuring the safety of air travel. As a member of the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, Barack Obama believes we must redouble our efforts to determine if the measures implemented after 9/11 are adequately addressing the threats our nation continues to face from airplane-based terrorism. Obama has supported increased numbers of federal airport screeners and improved funding for aviation security.

Safeguard Mass Public Transportation: Every weekday, Americans take 34 million trips on public transportation systems to get to work, school and beyond. Even though recent attacks have happened on public transit in Madrid, Mumbai and London, the Bush administration has invested only a small fraction of the \$6 billion that transportation officials have said is necessary to implement needed security improvements. Barack Obama and Joe Biden believe that this critical hole in our homeland security network must be addressed. They will fight for greater information-sharing between national intelligence agents and local officials and provide local law enforcement agencies with the everyday tools they need to protect their transportation systems. As a

U.S. Senator representing Chicago, Illinois, one of the nation's major rail transportation hubs, Obama has consistently advocated stronger rail and transit security programs.

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