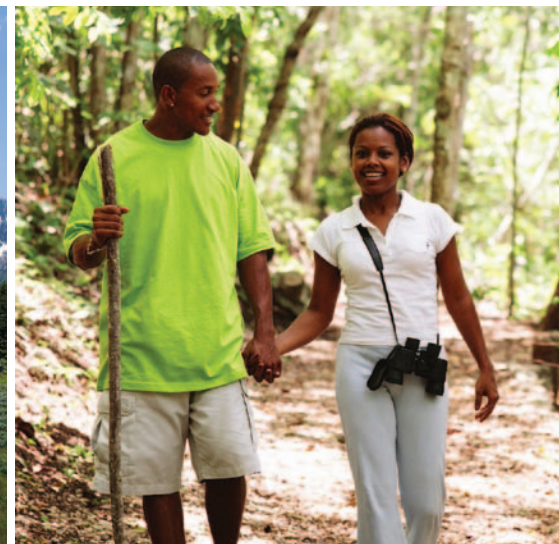


Transportation Reboot:

Restarting America's Most Essential Operating System

Connecting Rural and Urban America, Part 3 of a Series Key Findings



Inadequate roads to serve growing agricultural and energy output, rising congestion in popular rural tourist destinations, and emerging cities that are not connected to the Interstate system all require immediate attention and investment to ensure that our rural areas stay connected.

Yet too often policy discussions overlook the need to improve connectivity and mobility outside metropolitan areas. *Connecting Rural and Urban America* outlines what's at stake and offers a three-point plan to ensure the connectivity of rural and urban America into the future.

AASHTO's Recommendations

AASHTO recommends that any reauthorization of federal transportation legislation should:

1. Continue to fund rural portions of the Interstate Highway System and other Federal-aid highways that connect America;
2. Double federal investment in rural transit systems to meet rising demand; and
3. Expand the existing capacity of the Interstate system; upgrade rural routes to Interstate standards; and connect newly urbanized areas to the Interstate system.

What's at Stake?

More transportation capacity is needed to connect rural and urban America.

- America needs to add new capacity to:
 - ✓ **Improve connectivity and mobility for rural America;**
 - ✓ **Improve access for the travel, recreation, and tourism industries;**
 - ✓ **Enhance and expand rural transit opportunities;**
 - ✓ **Provide connections to new and emerging centers of population and commerce; and**
 - ✓ **For homeland security, assure reliable access to defense installations and critical industries.**

- Most interstates were planned 60 years ago, yet little new capacity has been added.

A changing and growing rural economy will require the U.S. to expand its highways and transportation options.

- Narrow two-lane rural roads, many built in the 1960s and 1970s, cannot safely carry the kinds of trucks and commercial vehicles now moving across America's heartland.
- The nation's 2.2 million farms produced \$365 billion in 2008, including crops, livestock and forestry products. As the U.S. and world populations grow, this will only increase, accelerating the need for better access to markets.
- The renewable fuels industry and wind farm electric energy production are essential if our nation is to reduce its dependence on foreign oil. An excellent highway transportation network in rural areas is essential to support agriculture and the development of energy resources.
- Trade between the U.S. and Canada and Mexico is expected to increase by \$125 billion by the end of 2010. Seventy percent of this trade is moved by truck, much of it on rural highways.
- Since the Interstate was launched in 1956, the nation has grown from a population of 165 million to 308 million—and is expected to reach 420 million by 2050.

The growing rural elderly population will require more transit service on rural highways.

- In 2008, almost one out of eight people aged 65 and older lived in rural areas. This elderly population exceeds 9.6 million people.
- New and emerging cities and towns need better transportation connectivity to keep competitive and support jobs.
- Sixty-six cities with populations of 50,000 or more—including one state capital—do not have immediate access to the Interstate system.
- During the next 30 years, 80 percent of the nation's population growth is expected to concentrate in the South and West.



Many tourism “hotspots” face major congestion and seasonal bottlenecks.

- Overall, tourism, travel and recreation are among the top ten industries in all but two states.
- Many of the nation's most popular tourist destinations—including ski slopes, seashores, and National parks—experience significant traffic delays. Many of these destinations are not close to Interstate or National Highway System routes.

Homeland security and the defense industry require a reliable transportation network.

- Movement of military equipment and personnel for overseas deployment has increased during the last 15 years.
- Growing populations in areas along the coast depend upon safe hurricane evacuation options.
- Alternate routes are needed to ensure reliable access to defense facilities.

About the AASHTO Report Series

Connecting Rural and Urban America is the third in a series of reports generated by AASHTO to identify the need to increase capacity in our transportation system to unlock gridlock, generate jobs, deliver freight, and connect rural and urban America.

To see state examples of rural capacity needs and for more information, go to

<http://ExpandingCapacity.transportation.org>.