

# National Surface Transportation Legislation: National Outlook

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~~Reauthorization~~

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# Visioning Transportation's Future

I

The context for the discussion about transportation

II

Nationally, major transportation challenges still exist

III

There are a set of major policy problems

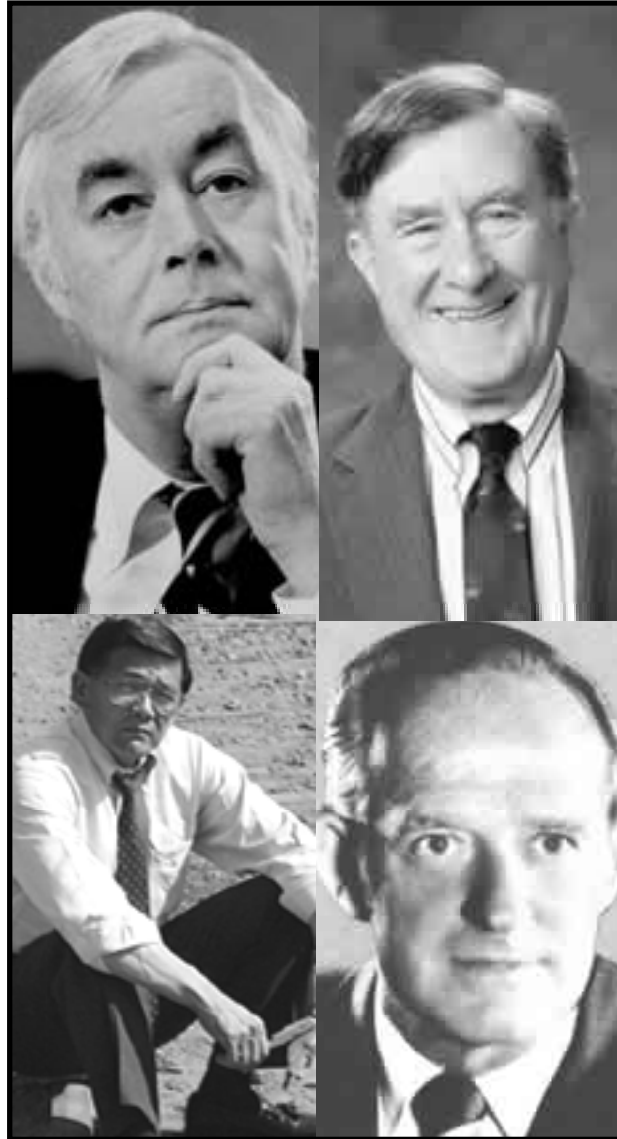
IV

A framework for a new transportation agenda

# Today, our national transportation program is at a crossroads



**1956**



**1991**

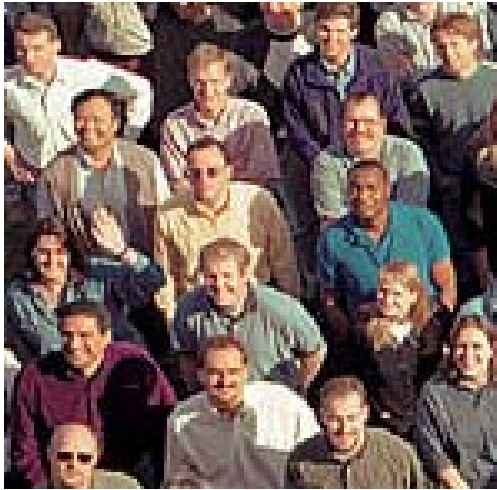
**?**

**What is the  
vision?**

**What are our  
national  
transportation  
priorities?**

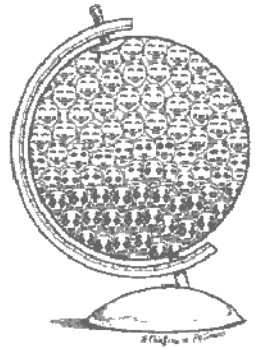
**2008**

# Profound demographic, economic, social, and cultural forces are reshaping the nation



Demographically, the country is growing, aging, and diversifying.

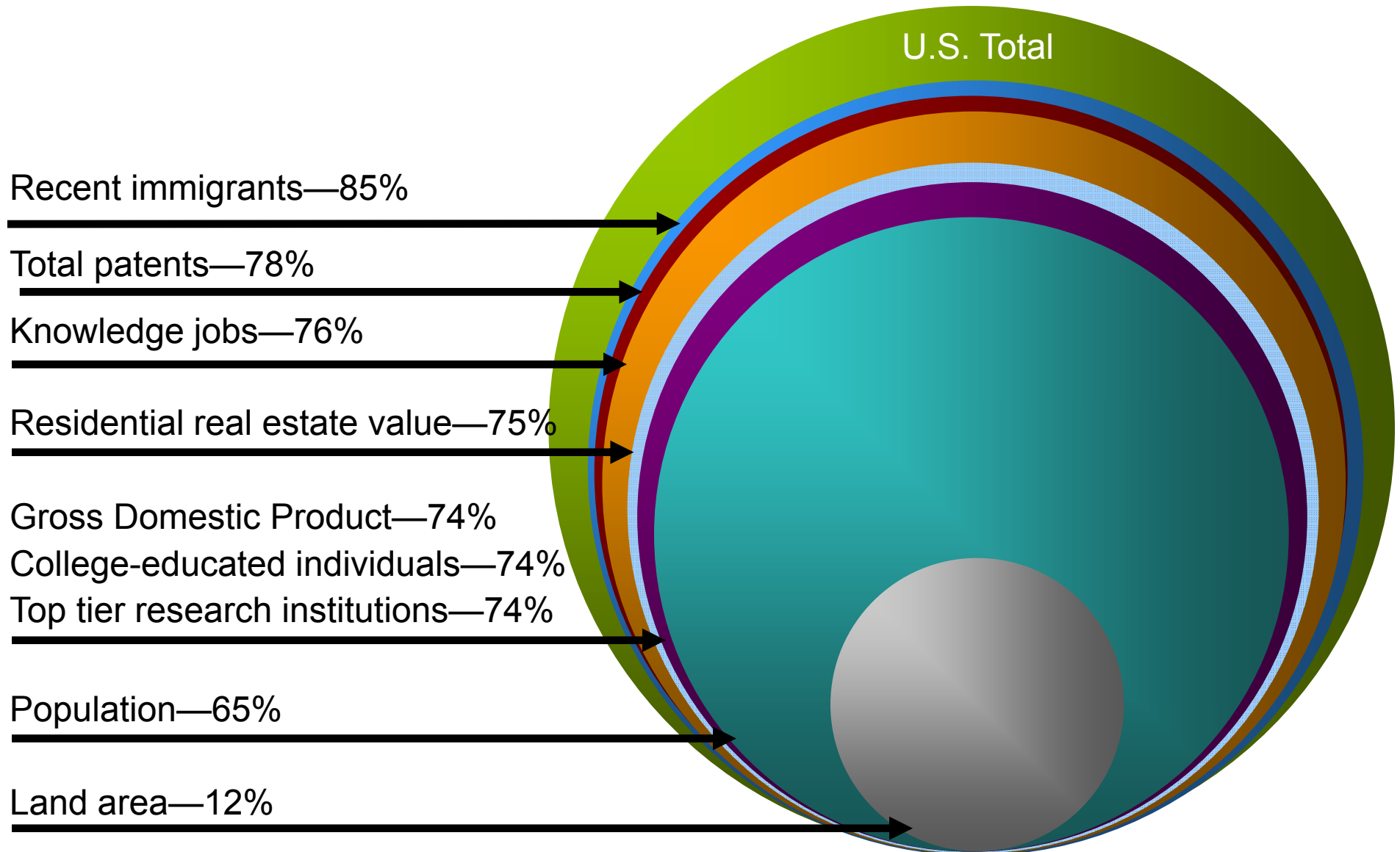
Economically, the nation is being transformed by globalization, deindustrialization, and technological innovation.



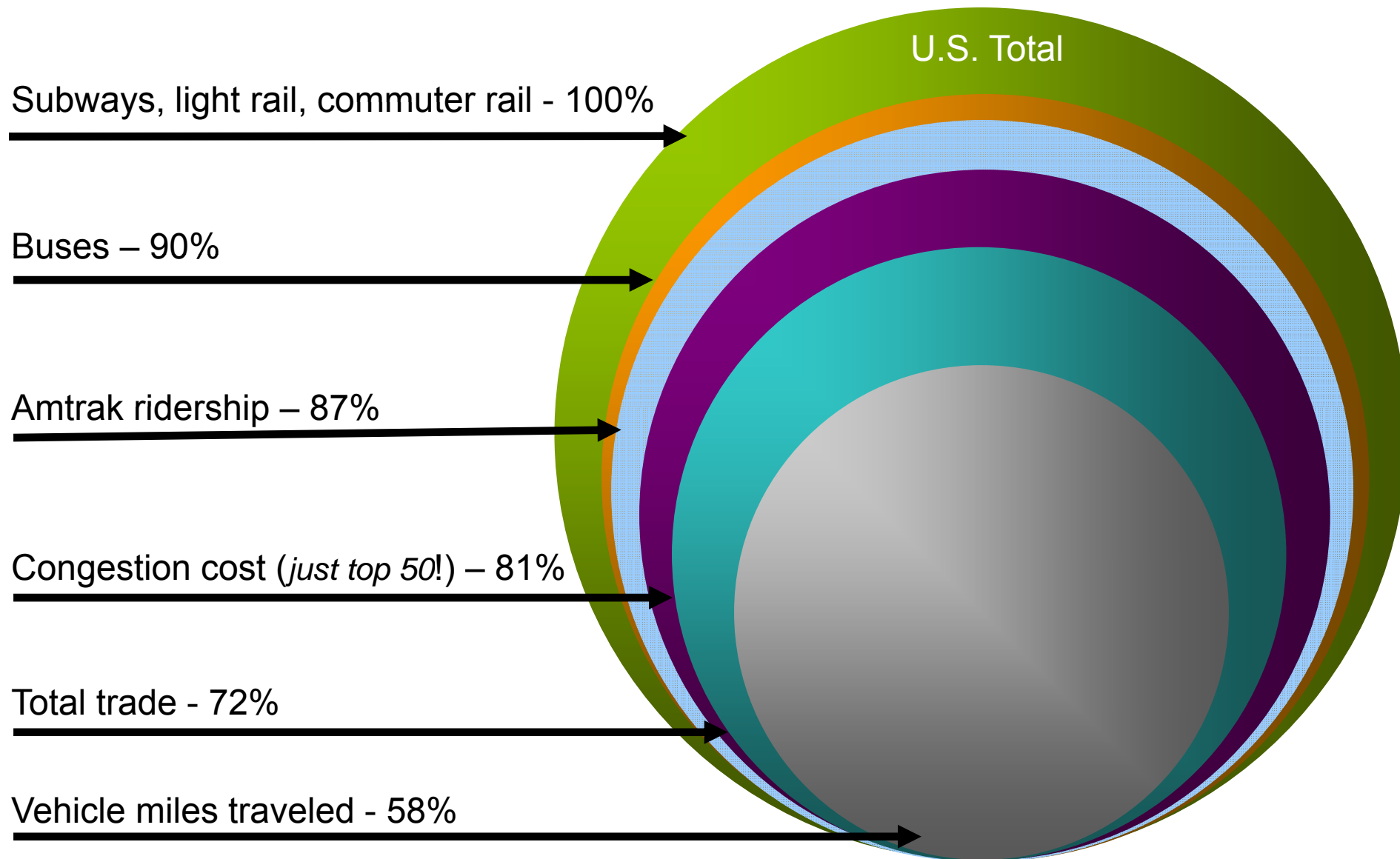
Culturally, the nation is changing its attitude towards cities and suburban living.



Metropolitan areas are the new functional units of our economy. The 100 largest contain the bulk of our nation's **economic** assets.

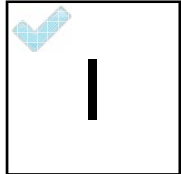


The 100 largest metros also contain the bulk of our nation's **transportation** assets.



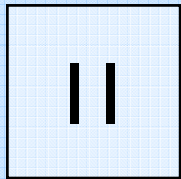


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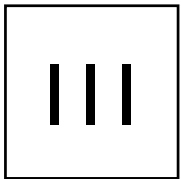
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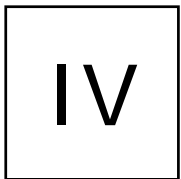
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There are a set of major policy problems



IV

A framework for a new transportation agenda

**The national transportation system is not performing for businesses or for people**

**A collective "infrastructure epiphany" has arisen about the need to reinvest in America**

Road and bridges are in poor condition  
Transit systems are aging  
New technologies are lacking



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**There is real question whether the U.S. has the right kind of infrastructure to position it to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**



Truck traffic from containers is increasing  
Freight rail trackage is declining  
Most Americans do not have transit available to them  
Inter-metro rail is woefully inadequate

**The national transportation system is not performing for businesses or for people**

## **America's major metros are still stuck in traffic**

Congestion is hyper-concentrated in the largest metros  
Landside access to ports (air and water) is jammed  
All this while vehicle travel is leveling off, or declining



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## **Climate change and energy/oil independence have emerged as major national problems**



Transportation accounts for  $\frac{1}{3}$  of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
The U.S. consumes more oil per capita than any other nation. We are still almost entirely dependent on petroleum-based fuels

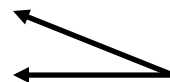
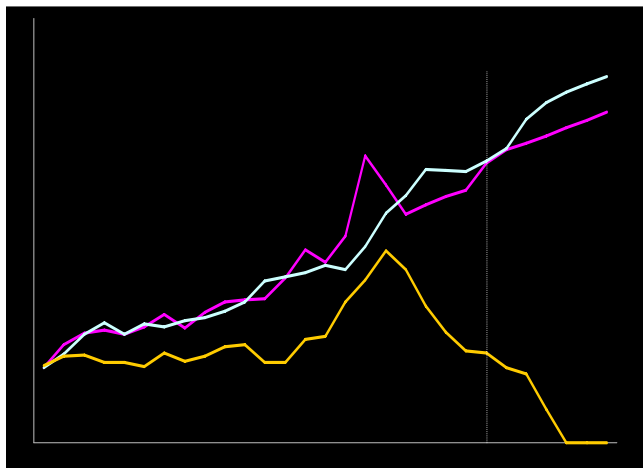
**The national transportation system is not performing for businesses or for people**

**Rising concern about the growing gap between wages and the cost of daily living for a large portion of the American workforce**

Transportation and housing are the largest shares of household budgets and the tradeoffs between the two have profound impacts on metropolitan growth patterns



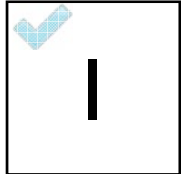
**Yet it is transportation finance that remains the dominant worry**



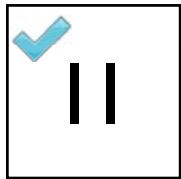
Federal government does not even have the revenues to cover its existing obligations  
States are unwilling (or unable!) to increase their gas tax



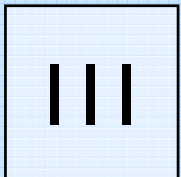
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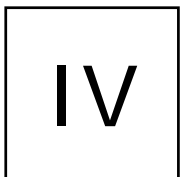
The context for the discussion about transportation



Nationally, major transportation challenges still exist



There are a set of major policy problems



A framework for a new transportation agenda

# **Current federal policies—or the lack thereof—exacerbate these challenges**

Federal transportation policies are either absent,  
outdated, or compartmentalized



# The federal government is **absent** when it should be present

## → **No national vision, purpose, or overall goals**

No oversight for how funds are spent

Thousands of earmarks do not result in a coherent program

## → **Not focused on outcomes**

Focus is on overly devolved flexibility and minimum funding

Yet the system is an unaccountable free-for-all

## → **Not attuned to metropolitan areas**

States remain squarely in the drivers seat

Funding is misaligned and biased against metro areas

The federal government takes an **outdated** approach to the challenges of today

→ **No emphasis on better—as opposed to more-spending**

Formulas disincentivize reducing transportation demand  
Federal data is astonishingly lacking

→ **Policies remained modally-siloed**

An unlevel playing field exists between the modes  
Inter-metro rail (Amtrak) suffers from a political and ideological divide

→ **National system is still not priced correctly**

Market mechanisms are underutilized  
Full social costs and environmental impacts are ignored

Federal housing, economic development, environmental and transportation policies are **disconnected** and work at cross-purposes

→ **Federal policies are rigidly stovepiped**

For example, the federal transit program does not reward projects that reorient land use

→ **Policies work at cross-purposes**

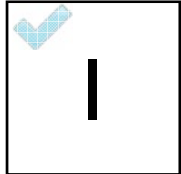
Transportation investments do not always support economic development or environmental goals

→ **Within transportation: rail, aviation, roads, ports are siloed**

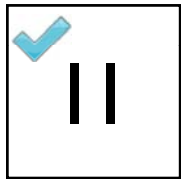
The U.S. remains the only industrialized country in the world that has not pursued an integrated approach to transportation policy



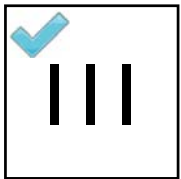
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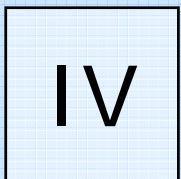
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What if we had a national transportation policy that supported metropolitan areas? The federal government should.....

## **LEAD**

Lead where it must in order to help the nation and its metropolitan areas exploit their strengths and adapt to changing realities

**Define and embrace a new vision**

## **EMPOWER**

Empower metros where it should in order to unleash innovative problem-solving tailored to variegated realities

**Support metropolitan innovation**

## **OPTIMIZE**

Optimize Washington's own performance and that of its partners and to maximize metropolitan prosperity

**Develop meaningful outcome goals**

## So what would this mean for the Intermountain West?

### **LEAD**

As a meagregion, the Intermountain West matters to the national economy. Improving intermetropolitan movement (freight and passengers).

### **EMPOWER**

Better use of congestion pricing, removing restrictions; modality-neutrality; but metro decisionmaking should be improved.

### **OPTIMIZE**

Rigorous analyses that capture the full slate of benefits and costs – including agglomeration effects, environmental, social.



visit metro:

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# The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is a potential barrier to reform

