



# FUTURE OF TRANSPORTATION CAUCUS

CREATING A VISION FOR EQUITY,  
ACCESS, AND SUSTAINABILITY

April 2, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Chairman, House Committee on  
Transportation and Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Ranking Member, House Committee on  
Transportation and Infrastructure  
2164 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

As members of the Future of Transportation Caucus, we view the upcoming surface transportation authorization as an unprecedented opportunity to re-invent our federal transportation policy to promote access, equity and sustainability. All Americans deserve a transportation system which safely and efficiently connects them to their destinations using the mode of their choice. Today's system, unfortunately, fails to meet that standard. Despite investing billions of dollars to improve our transportation infrastructure, congestion is increasing, our infrastructure remains in disrepair, and pollution is worsening the climate crisis, all while Americans continue to see their transportation options dwindle.

While the nation grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, policymakers must continue their work to develop and adapt our infrastructure policy. The current crisis is a grim reminder that surface transportation is critical in getting people safely to their jobs and services, enabling them to access healthcare, food and other basic necessities.

Rather than investing in the status quo, we support developing a new vision for transportation to create communities that are affordable, livable, and connected. We must prioritize maintenance, access to jobs and services, safety and ensure that all Americans have transportation choices. Our transportation funding decisions must be based on specific outcomes and include meaningful accountability towards those outcomes. It is time for reform, and we look forward to working together to provide our communities with the equitable and sustainable 21st century transportation systems they deserve.

**Today's roads, bridges and transit systems are in severe disrepair and building a 21st century transportation system must start with a dramatic shift in our policies to ensure we repair and maintain our existing infrastructure.** Federal transportation policy, however, continues to prioritize highway and roadway expansion over maintenance and repair. A 21st century federal policy must instead prioritize maintenance of roads, bridges, and transit systems, while investing in projects to better connect communities by developing new and expanded transit and passenger rail options and by making our streets safe for all users including bike users and pedestrians.

**A 21st century transportation system must prioritize safe, efficient, and convenient access to employment and services for all.** Looking ahead, we must focus on users' total transportation experience and make the necessary adjustments to more accurately measure the efficiency of our transportation systems. We know that vehicle speed is a poor proxy for access to jobs and increasing lane miles only exacerbates induced demand and thus congestion. Instead, we should ensure all transportation modes are taken into consideration when we invest in infrastructure or roadway enhancement projects to include pedestrian, bike, transit, and passenger rail options. Truly viable transportation alternatives require that streets are safe for all road users, not just those in vehicles.

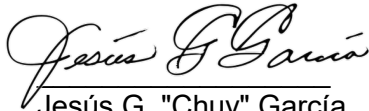
**A 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation policy must prioritize equity and strive to reconnect communities that have traditionally been cut off from transportation options.** Investments focused on equitable access can reconnect communities that have been cut off from jobs, education, health care, and other services by decades of urban planning designed to segregate working-class communities and communities of color. Key to closing disparities in access is the emphasis on equitable transit-oriented development to ensure development in or around transit corridors prioritizes affordability, accessibility, and reliability. Every community must share in benefits from improved transportation and our federal policies are integral to achieving those ends.

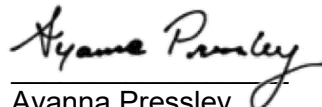
**Our next transportation system must be sustainable and address the challenges of climate change.** According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the transport sector is now the leading contributor to national greenhouse gas emissions. By providing safe and convenient alternatives to driving, we can enable people to take fewer and shorter car trips. This will reduce pollution and slow the growth in carbon emissions from the transport sector. Additionally, damage to infrastructure from the increased frequency of extreme weather events demand that we invest in infrastructure resilience and maintenance of our transportation network.

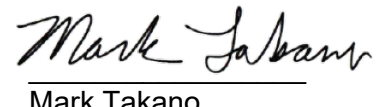
**The next transportation bill must include specific targets for access to jobs and services; improved maintenance and safety; and greenhouse gas emissions reduction.** By connecting infrastructure funds to measurable outcomes, we can and must realign outdated federal policy to build a 21st century transportation system that will meet our nation's current and future needs.

With the FAST Act expiring in September 2020, the next long-term surface transportation authorization represents an opportunity to change the status quo. We urge you to take this opportunity to realign outdated federal policy, and the over \$50 billion spent every year, to set the nation on a path to meet our current and future needs.

Sincerely,

  
Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress

  
Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress

  
Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

#### **Additional Signatories**

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.

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