

SUMMARY

As the nation moves further into the 21st century, our Interstate Highway System is facing a perfect storm.

Immediate investments and innovations are essential to renew and transform this vital national mobility network. Funding for the next two decades is facing a fast-closing window that coincides with parts of the System nearing or beyond the end of their design lives.

Traffic congestion is on the increase. Extreme weather events are taking their toll in some areas. And few, if any accommodations are underway for the rapid onset of automated, connected and electric vehicles.

Continued lack of vision and investment will unnecessarily cost Americans and the American economy in time, money and—in some cases—lives.



OUR INTERSTATES TODAY



49,000 miles
of roads



- The Interstate Highway System was pivotal in shaping and supporting the nation’s development for **50+ years** and continuing today.
- There are **49,000 miles** of roads within the Interstate Highway System.
- Traffic growth has increased **160%** on these roads (1980-2015).
- Americans now travel **800 billion miles per year** on an increasingly congested and aging Interstate Highway System.
- The nation’s interstates account for **20+% of VMT** (vehicle miles traveled) by passenger cars and **40% of VMT** by trucks.

A FOUNDATION FOR TOMORROW

Commissioned by Congress and the U.S. DOT, the Transportation Research Board’s *Future Interstate Report* offers 10 policy recommendations for re-envisioning, reinvesting in and rebuilding the Interstate Highway System to provide for 21st-century mobility. These big ideas are the result of significant third-party studies and collective thought leadership from leading subject matter experts.

**To learn more,
visit Interstate.TRB.org**

10 BIG IDEAS

FOR 21ST-CENTURY INTERSTATES



#1 **Create a federal program to renew and modernize Interstate highways.**

Congress should legislate an Interstate Highway System Renewal and Modernization Program (RAMP) to focus on next generation interstate mobility.



#2 **Develop criteria to meet demands for an extended Interstate System.**

Make smart choices about extending the System's scope, and remediating community and environmental disturbances.



#3 **Assess the condition of Interstate bridges and pavement foundations.**

Survey the System's foundational integrity in partnership with states to inform investment choices.



#4 **Raise the federal fuel tax to provide revenue for near-term Interstate investments.**

Establish a level commensurate with the federal share and adjust in response to inflation and fuel economy.



#5 **Allow states and metro areas to toll more Interstate highways.**

Provide a sustainable way to pay for System improvements, allocate capacity, and provide alternative mobility options.



#6 **Explore new funding mechanisms, including mileage-based use fees.**

Generate new revenue and compensate for declining fuel tax revenue from vehicle efficiency and alternative-fuel vehicles.



#7 **Develop modeling tools and databases to gauge the impact of Interstate investments.**

Inform the understanding of impacts on System conditions and traffic patterns locally, regionally, and nationally.



#8 **Plan for the transition to electric, automated and connected vehicles.**

Adopt basic intelligent transportation system technology to enable interoperability, enhance safety, and ensure cybersecurity.



#9 **Build resilience to extreme weather and climate change into long-term plans.**

Assess climate change vulnerabilities and create standards for cost-effective resilience enhancements.



#10 **Seek ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Interstate traffic.**

Make electric vehicle charging facilities more accessible to Interstate users and consider emissions impacts from System investments.

RENEWING OUR COMMITMENT

America's interstate highways must be preserved, rehabilitated and modernized to adapt to the country's changing demographic, economic, climatic and technological landscape. Success requires leadership, vision, and a reinvigorated national commitment to building and sustaining a modern highway system that connects the nation coast-to-coast.

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