

Highway Program Details

- Consolidates the Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation (Highway Bridge), Interstate Maintenance (IM), and NHS programs into one streamlined Critical Asset Investment (CAI) program. The CAI program establishes national priorities and goals of a state of good repair for the nation's highways.
- Maintains the Congestion Mitigation /Air Quality (CMAQ) Program unchanged as it applies to California.
- Maintains the Surface Transportation Program (STP), maintains the 10 percent set aside for Transportation Enhancement Activities, (TEA) but increases the suballocation to Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO's) to 80 percent from the current 62.5 percent. A number of reforms are included to increase the ability of metropolitan and local governments to access and benefit from both suballocated STP funding and Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds. This essentially seeks to replicate across the nation the process already in place in California to enhance metro area authority over STP funds.
- Creates a new formula-based core Freight Improvement Program (FIP) for freight-related projects. However, the bill is silent as to how such a program would be funded since a revenue title has not been completed for the bill
- Establishes a new metropolitan mobility program as a mode-neutral competitive program to assist large, congested metropolitan regions in reducing congestion. In order to qualify for these funds, metropolitan areas must develop mobility plans that articulate the region's comprehensive strategies for addressing surface transportation congestion and its impacts, including expanded highway and transit capacity, and a range of near-term congestion-relief strategies, such as improved transit operations, travel demand management and congestion pricing.

Transit Program Details

- One area of significant importance to the Bay Area is a major transit funding stream known as the "Fixed Guideway" formula program. The STAA bill seeks to simplify the Fixed Guideway program and to direct additional funding to geographic areas with significant rehabilitation requirements. However, because we do not have detailed numbers, we cannot assess how this may affect the Bay Area.
- The Discretionary Bus and Bus Facilities program is eliminated and folded into the core transit formula program.
- The Elderly and Disabled, JARC, New Freedom programs are consolidated into a single program called the 'Coordinated Access and Mobility Program.'
- The New Starts/Small Starts Program is streamlined, and long-sought after changes are included to project evaluation criteria so that cost-effectiveness is not elevated above all other criteria.

High-Speed Rail

The STAA bill follows up on the recently passed federal stimulus program, and is poised to provide a major push for high-speed rail in America. As expected, it provides funding for planning activities, including environmental assessments, feasibility studies, economic analyses, preliminary engineering and design, and preparation of financing plans and prospectuses, in high-speed rail corridors designated by the Secretary.

Metropolitan Planning

Below is a short list of proposals that affect the planning work done at the regional level:

- Increases the population threshold for Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) creation to 100,000, from the current level of 50,000;
- Requires participation by public transit officials in all MPOs;
- Requires proportional voting on MPO boards to reflect the population of local jurisdictions within the MPO's boundaries; and
- Requires "Blueprint" alternative scenario planning for MPOs with populations greater than one million. This includes, among other things, land-use patterns that support improved mobility and reduced SOV dependency, adequate supply of housing for all income levels, reduction in greenhouse emissions, limited impacts on valuable farmland, natural resources, and air quality.