



THE SIERRA CLUB'S CHALLENGE TO SPRAWL CAMPAIGN

Freedom to Travel, Freedom to Choose: Better Communities Start with More Transportation Choices

SPRAWL AND A LACK OF TRANSPORTATION CHOICES FORCE PEOPLE TO OWN AND DRIVE CARS IN ORDER TO REACH MOST DESTINATIONS. THE AVERAGE AMERICAN DRIVER SPENDS 443 HOURS PER YEAR – THE EQUIVALENT OF 55 EIGHT-HOUR WORKDAYS – BEHIND THE WHEEL. RESIDENTS OF SPRAWLING COMMUNITIES DRIVE THREE TO FOUR TIMES MORE THAN THOSE LIVING IN EFFICIENT, WELL-PLANNED AREAS, AND CAN WASTE UP TO THREE TIMES MORE ENERGY FROM DRIVING THAN BETTER-PLANNED, MORE EFFICIENT CITIES THAT OFFER MORE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES.



Lack of Transportation Choices Traps People in Their Cars and Pollutes the Environment

Bad transportation planning and investments that rely on highway construction to the neglect of other transportation choices traps people in their cars and pollutes the environment.

Over-reliance on highways destroys communities by:

- *polluting our air and water*
- *increasing congestion and gridlock*
- *wasting gas and energy*
- *eating up open space, farmland and habitat*
- *increasing commute times and distances*
- *lowering the local tax base*

- *shifting business away from downtown*
- *limiting people's choices*

“The current authorization bill, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, totals over \$217 billion dollars, but spends five times more on highways than public transportation.”





Providing Transportation Choice: A Way to Enhance Our Communities, Protect Our Health and Safety, and Clean Our Environment

Runaway, haphazard development – with its more roads, more traffic and more pollution – is not inevitable. One of the best ways to curb sprawl is through wise transportation planning and investments. By balancing funding between highways and public transportation choices, such as rail, buses, bike paths and sidewalks, we can:

- *protect open space, farmland and habitat*
- *reduce air and water pollution*
- *promote energy conservation and resource efficiency*
- *reduce traffic congestion and gridlock*
- *help downtown businesses thrive*
- *enhance the quality, distinctiveness and livability of our communities*

SOLUTIONS

In order to protect our communities and clean our air, water and environment, transportation policy should:

- *Set aside at least half of our transportation spending for clean public transportation*
- *Reduce the amount of money set aside for road and other car-only projects*
- *Promote and support planning at the regional and statewide level that combines transportation, land use, and environmental planning*
- *Fund innovative incentive-based programs for encouraging alternative transportation use, such as tax credits for using public transit, walking or biking*
- *Support public involvement in the transportation and land use planning process*



Congress Can Help Provide Transportation Choices and Protect the Environment

In 2003, Congress will reauthorize the federal transportation spending bill. This bill, authorized every six years, determines how federal transportation money can be spent. The current authorization bill, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, totals

over \$217 billion dollars, but spends five times more on highways than public transportation. By all estimations, the 2003 reauthorization will be even larger. This large amount of money and how it is spent will be instrumental in determining whether our nation focuses on smart growth, or whether we will continue to sprawl.

The Public Demands Transportation Choices

Spending money on public transportation is a good investment that responds to public demand. According to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), residents are increasingly turning to public transportation. In the last five years, public transportation ridership has increased by 21 percent. Clearly, the public wants a clean environment and more public transportation choices – it is up to federal, state and local governments to provide these options.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about the Sierra Club's support for safe, clean public transportation or about the Challenge to Sprawl Campaign, contact **Melody Flowers**, Associate Washington Representative, (202) 675-7915, melody.flowers@sierraclub.org; or **Brett Hulsey**, Senior Midwest Representative, (608) 257-4994, brett.hulsey@sierraclub.org.

You can take action to ensure transportation choices in your community:

- *Write a letter to your Senators and Representatives asking them to support increased funding for safe, clean public transit, such as light rail, clean buses, bike paths, sidewalks, and high speed rail, in the 2003 federal transportation reauthorization bill. Your Congresspersons' names and addresses can be found at www.senate.gov or www.house.gov.*

By better balancing transportation spending between roads and less-polluting public transportation, like rail transit and clean buses, we can reduce the number of miles people have to drive, provide Americans more transportation choices and better reflect America's priorities on a clean environment, good health, and enhanced quality of life.