

CREATING SAFE, SUSTAINABLE, MULTI-MODAL URBAN TRANSPORTATION



The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) is a coalition of America's largest cities—hubs of economic activity, home to the majority of Americans, and site of the nation's greatest transportation challenges. Cities, with their promise of diversity, inclusion, and opportunity for all, are the lifeblood of our country, our economy, and our democracy. NACTO's mission is to build cities as places for people, with safe, sustainable, accessible, and equitable transportation choices that connect people with opportunities, support a strong economy, and contribute to a vibrant quality of life.

The national transportation system makes our metropolitan economies possible, and we look to States, Congress, and the Administration to work with cities in formulating a legislative and regulatory environment that truly supports growth and prosperity for all Americans.

NACTO is committed to empowering cities to realize their goals for stronger, safer, fairer transportation and communities, and we look forward to working with others who share this commitment. NACTO supports infrastructure policies and transportation projects that align with our core values, which include safety, sustainability, equity in transportation choices, and accessibility for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. We believe that transportation infrastructure should serve the public good and that the public sector should ensure the wise use of taxpayer dollars in building roadways, bridges, and transit.

NACTO's core principles and priorities for city transportation in state and federal legislation and regulation are:

1. Promote safe transportation systems
2. Support sustainable funding and financing for transportation projects
3. Bring project decisions closer to the taxpayer, at the local level
4. Reduce the impact of transportation on climate change
5. Increase equitable transportation access for all people and all modes
6. Prepare for automated vehicle technology

PRINCIPLE 1: PROMOTE SAFE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Policies at the national level should prioritize safety for all modes, encourage urban street designs that are safe for people walking and bicycling, and promote an approach to urban transportation that aims to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on streets and highways.

Action: Adopt a national goal to eliminate fatalities on the nation's roadways

NACTO supports a future where no one is killed or seriously injured by statistically predictable, preventable motor vehicle crashes. At all levels, governments should work to reduce excessive speeding and reckless driving through better street design, comprehensive automated speed enforcement, and behavioral campaigns. NACTO commends USDOT for establishing a Road to Zero coalition to end roadway fatalities within the next 30 years, and FHWA for adopting a similar vision, and urges this group to focus on speed reduction as the key to reducing traffic fatalities and injuries, and to encourage cities and states to design streets for people walking, biking, and riding transit. States should be encouraged to adopt strong goals for traffic safety in their performance measures.

Action: Permit local control of city speed limits

States should permit cities to set their own speed limits, recognizing that default speed limits create predictable conditions for all users. Instead of requiring studies to create lower spot speed limits, city and state standards and practices should focus on the need for safety-first engineering and planning when speeds in excess of 25 mph are present, or 20 mph in some cities. State rules or laws that set speed limits at the 85th percentile speed should be repealed.

Action: Fully support safety programs for people walking, bicycling and other vulnerable road users

People walking and bicycling are disproportionately at risk of injury or death due to automobile-oriented street designs and policy frameworks, and bicycle and pedestrian injuries and fatalities in the United States are rising from an already unacceptably high level. To redress the fact that almost no Federal safety funding is allocated to walking and bicycling safety, NACTO calls on States and the federal government to prioritize performance measures that address bicycle and pedestrian safety, and to increase funding within existing programs such as the Transportation Alternatives Program and the Highway Safety Improvement Program for safety improvements such as traffic calming, signalized crosswalks and islands, complete street retrofits and active transportation infrastructure, and safety cameras to improve enforcement of speeding, reckless driving, and failure to yield. NACTO commends USDOT for advancing safety through the Mayor's Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets and urges the continuation of these programs under the new administration.

Action: Mandate anonymized access to critical safety data

Cities seek the best data to understand, manage, and maintain transportation networks. In particular, vehicle speed, travel time, and volume data is critical for data-driven efforts to improve safety. Understanding vehicle movement at the corridor level provides immense value, from informing speed limits to understanding where there are patterns of excessive speeds to evaluating the success of street redesign projects in meeting city safety goals.

Increasingly, an important source of real-time data about operations on city streets comes from technology companies, such as new mobility providers and cell phone companies. NACTO urges the federal

government to require technology companies to make available anonymized data about person movement, vehicle movement, and transportation demand, as it pertains to the public interest. NACTO also urges USDOT to partner with the FCC to develop a program where cell phone companies can provide anonymous access to vehicle data in the public interest of increasing traffic safety and evaluating city transportation projects.

Action: Permit automated traffic enforcement

States should allow the use of automated traffic enforcement to address the most dangerous driving behaviors, such as speeding and red-light running, and reduce the burden on law enforcement. Automated traffic enforcement, including cameras to enforce speed limits and red lights, is a crucial tool in preventing crashes that result in serious injuries and fatalities. In future legislation, NACTO urges the Federal government to permit the use of Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds for automated traffic enforcement.

Action: Adopt requirements for side guard protections on trucks

NACTO commends the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for advancing rules that will require rear impact guards and other safety features in single-unit trucks and tractor trailers. NACTO calls on NHTSA to adopt requirements for side impact guards and enhanced mirrors, in addition to rear impact guards and other safety strategies, on single unit trucks. Truck side guards are vehicle-based safety devices designed to keep pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists from being run over by a large truck's rear wheels in a side-impact collision. Requiring side impact guards is consistent with National Transportation Safety Board recommendations to NHTSA and improves safety for all users of the transportation system, particularly those who are walking and bicycling.

Action: Increase legal protection for vulnerable roadway users

At least eight states and a number of cities have passed Vulnerable Road User laws that deter dangerous driving behavior and hold dangerous drivers accountable, and provide legal protection to people who are injured or killed while walking or using a bicycle, wheelchair, or other non-motorized transportation. Without such laws, there are often no criminal charges or legal consequences for people operating motor vehicles who injure or kill vulnerable roadway users – even while the driver is breaking other traffic laws. NACTO urges the passage of Vulnerable Roadway User laws at every level around the country and nationally.

PRINCIPLE 2: SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE FUNDING AND FINANCING FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Wise fiscal stewardship of the federal transportation program is necessary to maintain precious public good will and the resources needed to support a strong transportation system. Current federal transportation funding is dominated by formula programs that are eligible for a defined set of project types and, in the case of highway funds, administered by the States. These funds have historically been supported by user fees (typically taxes assessed on users of the system, through fuel taxes and other recurring sources). Since the gas tax has not been raised in 24 years, funding has dwindled, and Congress has increasingly looked to one-time support from the General Fund and other sources. A more sustainable model should be found going forward to reduce the insecurity of funds and increase resources for needed maintenance and repair.

Action: Support sustainable, recurring funding sources for critical infrastructure projects

Funding for infrastructure investments should be based on recurring and ongoing sources to support not only initial project implementation but ongoing maintenance. The lifecycle costs of transportation projects have historically been underestimated and underfunded, resulting in the current state of disrepair on the nation's roadways and bridges. Funding for new projects and maintenance should be predicated on a clear understanding and commitment to future needs. Funding resources that meet these criteria include gas taxes, tire fees, vehicle registration fees, and other user fees.

Action: Fix it first

The U.S. has a significant backlog of basic maintenance and replacement needs on all parts of the transportation system. The Federal government should increase funding for infrastructure and support a significantly expanded and sustainable mode-neutral State of Good Repair program that targets resources where they are most needed, before structural failures require costly and disruptive shut-downs. In order to maintain the Highway Trust Fund's solvency, Congress must identify a reliable source of dedicated revenue that meets near-term transportation needs. This funding to repair existing infrastructure should be prioritized in any new infrastructure spending.

Action: Support Public-Private Partnerships that work for the public and private sector

Public Private Partnerships (P3s) offer an opportunity to improve project delivery and operations for public services through lower costs and a greater focus on the customer. NACTO supports P3s where risk and reward are paired on each side of the partnership, and where the public benefits from the project match the public's investment via tax credits or other mechanisms. This means avoiding P3s that simply off-load difficult public policy decisions, and embracing P3s that provide a lower total cost of ownership for the taxpayer. NACTO also opposes P3s that limit the ability of government to address future needs through contract terms that restrict future investments. Poorly formulated and executed P3s often lead to higher borrowing costs, and higher total costs over the lifetime of the project. Best practices in P3s align incentives with the private sector to speed project delivery, reduce costs (operating and capital), support multi-modal investments, and protect the public's long-term interest.

Action: Expand eligibility for tolling and congestion pricing on existing roadways

The reduction in funding available through traditional user fees such as gas taxes has drained the coffers of public agencies working to maintain existing roadways and bridges. With no gas tax increase since 1993, the Federal Highway Trust Fund is running on fumes. NACTO calls on Congress and the States to give localities the tools to raise funds for critical maintenance and replacement projects by permitting tolls and other pricing of existing facilities, such as congestion pricing.

Action: Fully fund a competitive, multi-modal TIGER program

Congress and the Administration should expand and make permanent the TIGER program to begin to meet the levels of interest in multi-modal projects around the country. TIGER, also known as National Infrastructure Investments, has been vastly oversubscribed since its inception in 2009. However, many high-quality projects have gone unfunded because the funding level has not increased since 2010. Through its highly competitive merit-based application process, TIGER funds innovative, multimodal, and highly beneficial projects in communities around the U.S., creating jobs and improving transportation networks. In seven rounds since 2009, the TIGER program has provided \$5.1 billion to 421 projects in all 50 states,

funding projects to improve and repair critical roads and bridges, relieve freight chokepoints, connect people with opportunities through public transit, and create safe infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Action: Expand and reform existing financing support programs (e.g., TIFIA and the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program, RRIF)

NACTO urges the federal government to encourage more private sector investment in transportation through mechanisms such as a national infrastructure bank and Build America Bonds, to complement the federal government's commitment to public investment in infrastructure. The Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program has been instrumental in bringing many visionary projects to fruition around the U.S., and should be expanded.

PRINCIPLE 3: IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION PROJECT SELECTION AND BRING PROJECT DECISIONS CLOSER TO THE TAXPAYER, AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Transportation projects should be selected based on local priorities, not faceless processes at the State and Federal level. Federal policies can promote this by giving cities the authority and flexibility to select and build the transportation projects that address their particular challenges. NACTO calls for the alignment of responsibility, experience, and funding at the city level to promote the efficient use of taxpayer dollars. State departments of transportation should support city initiatives to implement projects within the NACTO Urban Street Design Guide, and cities should have the flexibility to use federal funds in accordance with local objectives.

Action: Make direct aid agreements available for road and bridge projects in large cities

NACTO supports a direct-aid relationship between the Federal Highway Administration and large cities, a move that could significantly reduce red tape and speed project delivery. NACTO urges that such relationships be modeled on the successful direct recipient relationship that cities already have with the Federal Transit Administration. Many NACTO member agencies have the same or greater staff capacities and technical expertise as many state departments of transportation, yet are subject to arduous pass-through rules and regulations. These processes generally add little or no value to city projects, but invariably add months or years to project delivery.

Action: Invest in metropolitan areas

Metropolitan areas rely on States to pass through dedicated transportation funding from Federal and State-levied sources to support the sustainable growth of local economies. States should work closely with cities to select and prioritize projects that will work together with land use plans to reduce congestion, improve quality of life and reduce the environmental footprint of the transportation sector long-term.

Action: Make metropolitan planning performance based

Project selection under the metropolitan planning process should be performance based, incentivizing projects that improve multi-modal transportation options, enable access to transit, improve safety, manage congestion, aid in energy conservation and efficiency efforts, improve air quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Action: Review new roadway investments based on a rigorous cost-benefit evaluation

FHWA evaluation for new road projects should be significantly enhanced to include rigorous cost-benefit analysis that also accounts for lifecycle costs and the opportunity costs represented by deferred maintenance on other parts of the system. In addition, evaluation criteria should weigh all benefits comparably, including the project's ability to improve multi-modal transportation options and access to transit, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, provide congestion relief, access to transit, aid in energy conservation and efficiency efforts, and improved air quality. Projects should be required to coordinate transportation and land use planning using transit-oriented development strategies to increase affordable housing investment near transit and employment centers.

Action: Cut project delivery time by reducing duplicative reviews

Project reviews by multiple agencies create exponential delays in project delivery, often without changing the underlying project in any significant or positive way. State and Federal review processes should be evaluated and made concurrent, revised, or eliminated where they are redundant. Reviews based on critical environmental and labor protections should be streamlined, while maintaining their essential functions.

Action: Fund a national multimodal freight research program

Truck traffic in cities is an increasing concern due to the rise of online shopping and local deliveries. NACTO calls on the federal government to fully fund a national multimodal freight research program to study urban freight solutions that go beyond conventional piecemeal approaches. USDOT should lead a planning and research effort for a national freight system that supports economic development while also addressing and mitigating negative impacts of freight movement on neighborhoods and local communities, such as local air pollution and safety risks of trains and heavy truck traffic. Metropolitan areas and key ports should be a focus for the national freight system, as they represent some of the most complex and important links.

Action: Connect America's cities with world-class high-speed intercity passenger rail

A federal commitment to improving rail infrastructure is critical to encouraging a growing market for medium-distance travel in the U.S., while alleviating traffic at hub airports. NACTO urges the federal government to place high-speed intercity passenger rail on equal footing with other surface transportation programs by providing dedicated federal funding for intercity passenger rail.

PRINCIPLE 4: REDUCE THE IMPACT OF TRANSPORTATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The transportation sector is consistently the second largest contributor of the greenhouse gases causing anthropogenic climate change, and transportation recently surpassed the electricity sector as the greatest source of carbon dioxide emissions. Policies at the state and national level should promote reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from mobility by reducing car use, supporting low-carbon modes of transportation, and incentivizing walkable land use patterns.

Action: Include greenhouse gas emissions as a transportation performance measure

NACTO commends USDOT for its proposed rulemaking outlining national performance measures to assess greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Federal policy should require State DOTs and metropolitan planning organizations to measure greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, establish greenhouse gas reduction targets, and assess and report on progress toward those goals.

Action: Support integrated transportation and land use planning and construction

In most states, local government is the seat of land use control, and increased coordination between land use and transportation planning benefits the local community. The federal government should promote this coordination through planning and funding policies. States and MPOs should prioritize transportation projects that take all modes into account and support smart growth land use decisions such as complete streets initiatives, form-based codes and rigorous station area planning.

PRINCIPLE 5: INCREASE EQUITABLE TRANSPORTATION ACCESS FOR ALL PEOPLE AND ALL MODES

Transportation is a major factor in access to jobs, education, and other opportunities for people in low-income communities as well as for attracting employers to cities. Ensuring equitable investment in these communities strengthens and brings together entire cities, providing a strong foundation for future prosperity. Low-cost transportation modes, including walking, bicycling, and public transit, remain the most critical areas of investment to support access to opportunity for low-income communities and a high quality of life for residents to all neighborhoods through the 'green dividend' of reducing car reliance.

Action: Invest in public transit to meet the nation's future mobility needs

Transit use in the U.S. has increased 9.1% in the past decade, and the 2016 election saw transit funding ballot measures approved in cities and states around the country. The federal government should increase federal funding for public transit to fully serve all Americans, and should maintain the stability of future funding by maintaining the Mass Transit Account within the Highway Trust Fund. Transit is the lifeblood of city transportation, providing spatially-efficient mobility and freeing up street space for biking and walking, public space, freight delivery, emergency vehicles, and other critical transportation needs. Transit investments make roadway investments more valuable; both are needed to get people to work and school in cities across the country. In metropolitan areas, most expressways cannot be widened without negative impacts on businesses and residents, while transit investments can dramatically improve mobility while saving commuters money.

Action: Support social equity as a principle for prioritizing projects and programs

Historical inequities in investment patterns across the United States have contributed significantly to the lack of opportunities, lack of mobility, and the higher burden of traffic violence in low-income communities. Project and programming decisions should invigorate opportunities within communities, take into account historical degradation of communities through transportation decisions, and plan and build communities with those who live there. Further, investments in transportation should be evaluated as part of multi-sector investments in cities.

Action: Fully support safe and inviting pedestrian and bicycling facilities

States should provide substantial support to walking and bicycling facilities through their dedicated transportation funds to both remediate existing dangers and provide more opportunities for low-cost travel in metropolitan areas. New cycling facilities should be designed to be safe and inviting for people of all ages and abilities. While many metropolitan areas are seeing significant growth in walking, bicycling and transit, State and Federal funding to support these modes is lagging. Communities around the country are experiencing increased fatalities for these modes, which could be reversed through appropriate investment. In particular, additional State funding should be set aside for upgrades to meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act as part of standard repaving, resurfacing, and street reconstruction projects.

Action: Fully support modern city street design standards

States should endorse, use, and support cities in using the NACTO design guides to create safer, more inviting streets that encourage walking, biking, transit, and public space. NACTO applauds FHWA and the nine States that have endorsed the Urban Street Design Guide to date.

Action: Extend tax parity to all commuters whether driving, taking transit or cycling

NACTO commends Congress for permanently equalizing pre-tax benefits for driving and transit use. NACTO also urges the federal government to recognize bicycle sharing as a form of mass transit and include bicycle sharing membership costs as eligible expenses under qualified transit benefits.

PRINCIPLE 6: PREPARE FOR AUTOMATED VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY

Fully self-driving vehicles are an emerging technology that will have widespread impacts on safety, mobility, land use, and the built environment. This technology presents the opportunity to reduce collisions, optimize fleets, improve mobility, and close the divide between those who have access and mobility and those who don't. The technology also presents risks of increasing vehicle miles traveled, promoting longer car trips and urban sprawl, and further entrenching automobile-oriented design. Thoughtful city and federal policy should promote the use of self-driving vehicles as part of the sharing economy in a safe, multi-modal, urban transportation system.

Action: Require all self-driving technology be fully tested before commercial use in cities

State and Federal rules for self-driving vehicle technology should require closed-course testing for the challenges of multimodal urban contexts, including interactions between self-driving vehicles and crash dummies walking and bicycling. Where necessary for improving software and vehicles, companies can work closely together with cities to design on-street tests in designated areas, with the explicit permission and oversight of the city.

Action: Require independent, third-party certification of vehicles' ability to operate safely with full automation in multi-modal city contexts prior to sale or commercial use

Independent third parties should certify that vehicles that are sold to private individuals or used for commercial purposes can operate independently, without skilled operators, in all situations on uncontrolled-access city streets, including the presence of children playing, pedestrians, cyclists, parking vehicles, and cross-traffic, as well as weather conditions including rain, ice and snow. Vehicles that

intermittently require driver intervention have been shown to encourage unsafe driving behavior, with drivers reading more, texting more, and generally being inattentive. The presence of vulnerable roadway users such as children, pedestrians, people in wheelchairs, and cyclists in these environments make the use of experimental, partially automated vehicles unsuitable for operation by non-specialists. Certification processes should show that the technology for fully autonomous vehicles meets or exceeds the minimum skills of human drivers in city street environments.

Action: Implement robust data-sharing requirements for all automated vehicle technology

State and Federal agencies that are working to permit and support automated vehicle technology should include robust data-sharing as a foundational principle of their policies. Data is the foundation of 21st century transportation systems, and as new transportation technologies rapidly emerge they create data streams with vital information for transportation network management, proactive planning, and policymaking. These data created on city streets must be available to city governments in an accessible format in order to support sustainable, equitable, and affordable transportation.

Action: City transportation leaders should review new regulations and rules governing autonomous vehicles

While most regulations governing autonomous vehicles will be written by State agencies, city transportation leaders should be reviewing and approving such rules before implementation. The unique concerns and needs for operation of vehicles on city streets demand that States work closely with city transportation experts as they develop rules and regulations governing how these vehicles will interact with people on the street.

Action: Support local traffic laws in autonomous vehicle operations

New technology in autonomous vehicles could greatly improve safety by increasing compliance with local laws on speed, yielding and lane changes. However, existing partially-automated vehicles continue to speed, fail to yield to other vehicles, and conduct improper lane changes. Manufacturers should work together with transportation professionals at all levels to create autonomous vehicles that benefit city transportation safety and reduce the death toll on the nation's roadways.

Action: Assess costs and plan for future transportation infrastructure funding

Autonomous vehicles using visual cues such as traffic signals, markings and signs currently require higher definition and maintenance than currently supported by Federal and State policies. The costs of these higher standards should be assessed and compared to the disposition of funding from dedicated transportation funds. Furthermore, the potential of a major shift in use patterns for the roadway system should be accounted for in planning for future funding sources, including pricing of specific roadway use and dedication of revenues to supporting that infrastructure.



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