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President's Message

By: Chuck Klingenstein, AICP
Utah APA Chapter President

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*APA 2005 National Planning
Conference*

AICP News

Let me start by extending my sincerest thanks to Mike Coulam, George Shaw, Sandy City, and to all of the City's staff for an excellent conference! Once again, the bar has been raised in the quality of the conference and the information received. I have heard many times since the conference that it was the best ever. For me, it was great to see 153 of you! We do not have enough opportunities to see each other and therefore we need to grab them when they are available. Let's all use these conferences and programs as times to celebrate our profession, network with peers and friends, and enrich our knowledge and skills.

One of the panels that caught my interest discussed the need for collaboration amongst the various entities involved in planning. So let me use collaboration as a central message here.

It seemed to be the observation of the conference panelists, which included APA, ASLA, ULI, AIA and others that we need to march together – shoulder to shoulder in our collective efforts. All too often we are caught up in our micro worlds instead of thinking of the macro level. This seems true with one area of interest to me – the education and continuing education of professional and lay planners. We have many efforts in this State, but they are not occurring in any coordinated manner. Since there is no coordination between the respective groups sponsoring education programs, we have duplication of effort and redundancy of information. In a state where there are diminishing financial resources it behooves us to collaborate so that our customer – you – receive the broadest range of educational services in an efficient and cost effective manner delivering to you the best quality of product. Sounds obvious; yet we seem to have some challenges ahead in the realm of collaboration.

I will be going to Portland in a couple of weeks for APA National mid year meetings. These meetings do not promise to hold a lot of excitement from what I have seen so far. There is a revised budget, as recommended by the Development Plan & Budget Committee and by the AICP Executive Committee. This budget is only a slight mid-course correction to the two-year budget adopted in September 2003 by the APA Board and AICP Commission, with input from the constituent groups. Since the mid year meetings are being held latter than normal, we do not have any opportunity to comment. We were notified by email but I did not see any substantive changes and therefore I did not comment. As you know, the national APA budget has been a major focus of mine and I believe



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the two-year budget accurately reflected the development plan. In another year, I will have a better idea if the direction reflected in the development plan has moved the organization in a more appropriate direction.

Since I have another year and three quarters as your President (and that is the end of yours truly as President – time for new blood and ideas) I plan to be a strong advocate for more financial resources for the small and medium sized chapters. As you know, we have wanted to do more as a chapter providing services to you – the membership and customer. We, the Board, are maxed out under our current volunteer structure. So I believe two things need to happen.

One is that each of the Board Members with membership services, needs to have a full committee to assist in the provision of current services, whether that is newsletter, website, legislative, programs, conferences, etc. We need to spread the workload amongst more people so we do not wear people out. And when Board Members are ready to move on, they can have someone ready to step into their position – ready to do the job and commit to the monthly Board meetings.

The second thing that needs to happen is the commitment of more financial resources to the Chapters. I know that our national organization will turn over in their grave with this thought so I will not ask them for actual dollars. Instead I will ask for services that correlate with what Chapters actually do without additional cost. Right now, I think it is safe to say that if I were to ask any one of you what you are getting in actual services you would mention a nice website, magazine and perhaps the email newsletter, Interact. I believe that Paul Farmer is making a serious attempt at delivering more resources to you, the individual planner. But he may be missing another important method of delivering services to you – the Chapters. I have not had this discussion with Paul but you can be sure I plan on bending his ear as well as the Board's beginning with this upcoming meeting. By anecdotal evidence, I think it is safe for me to say that many of us are being priced out of attending the National Conference as well as purchasing the materials, periodicals and books developed by National. Now maybe our friends at the national level have realized this and perhaps they are entertaining the notion of regional conferences. I am putting pen to paper now suggesting that they recognize that "government closest to the people" is perhaps something they need to recognize as an important asset not being fully utilized. *It is time for more collaboration between our national organization and the chapters!*

I mention this because ULI has begun an interesting transformation during the past couple of months. After many years of a highly centralized organization, financial resources are beginning to be made more available to the District Council level. I am the Vice Chair of the Utah District Council and I know this to be true. Michael Horst, Senior Vice President, District Councils, for ULI has been someone who has been front and center of this effort. While it is in its infancy, ULI is recognizing that growth and the provision of services needs to occur at *two levels – the national and the local levels!* This recognition is being to pay off in the form of more national membership and more energized and relevant district councils! In fact, the national organization realized that many of the councils were doing a better job than they were.

Collaboration: To work together, especially in a joint intellectual effort. What a beautiful concept! Let's start doing it on the local level – I will lead the effort at the national level. Please contact the local level and volunteer some of your time. We all need to give back to the profession we have chosen and to those who are following. Lead by example.

**I LOVE GEOGRAPHY!
Taylorsville City Celebrates GIS Day**



Taylorsville City, November 17, 2004 - Location, Location, Location! Students at Vista Elementary in Taylorsville, Utah, learned how the old real estate adage applies to them. Wednesday, November 17, 2004, was GIS Day and the sixth graders of Miss Ostermiller's class celebrated along with thousands of events taking place across 76 countries.

GIS stands for Geographic Information Systems, which is the use of computer systems to compile geographic data into maps. GIS Day is part of Geography Awareness Week and seeks to highlight the role of GIS in everyday life.

Miss Ostermiller's class learned about geography and how GIS works then followed the journey of a cartoon character, GIS Gisa, as she used GIS to complete an important assignment.

The students then had to use their knowledge of their neighborhoods to pick out their home from aerial photograph maps prepared by Taylorsville City Planner, Michael Maloy. They learned about map making and reading and looked at patterns in their neighborhoods like how wide the sidewalks were and what had changed over the past few years. Some students noticed some trees had gotten bigger, some trees were gone, and they could even pick out who had a trampoline in their backyard!

GIS is a growing field and a valuable tool to city planners as well as resource managers, engineers, public works departments, demographic analysts, emergency responders, archaeologists, architects, and real estate professionals. GIS involves the integration of data from many sources so it requires teamwork and collaboration between many disciplines. GIS even affects the life of a six grader as the power company monitors the electric systems to ensure the lights at the school work, the school district could use GIS to assess where a new bus route or school should go, and the city planner uses GIS to plan where a new baseball field could go. For more information about GIS Day and celebrations held in Utah and around the world visit <http://www.gisday.com>.



Taylorsville City Planner Michael Maloy organized GIS Day events for Miss Judy Ostermiller's sixth grade class Vista Elementary School.

**Request for Applications
Planning Grants for Pilot Projects to Develop
Model County Resource Management Plans**

By
Wes Curtis, State Planning Coordinator

The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB) is pleased to announce the availability of grant money for the purpose of developing County Resource Management Plans based on the model provided by this office in the County Resource Management Plan Tool Kit. The grant money will be available to assist up to three pilot counties in developing resource management plans that can be used as models for other counties wishing to utilize this planning methodology. Because of the limited amount of money available, the grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to the grant proposals that are determined by GOPB to best meet the criteria outlined in the grant announcement. Local match can be either cash or in-kind.

As you consider submitting a grant proposal, there are some things I would like to emphasize that will help you prepare a quality application. First, this is a pilot program to develop planning models for other counties, so it is important that you fully understand the structure and design outlined in the CRMP Tool Kit which can be found on-line at www.planning.utah.gov/CRMP.htm

It will also be the County's responsibility to identify its "Plan Leader" early in the grant application process. It is our hope that your Plan Leader will take the lead in preparing your grant application. The Plan Leader can be either an outside consultant/contracting agency that will be paid with the grant monies, or he/she can be an in-house employee. In either case, the credentials and experience of your plan leader will be critical to the success of your grant application. Early involvement of your Plan Leader will ensure a quality product and a realistic cost for the project.

I would also advise you to be very selective in the elements that you choose to include in your plan. Choose planning elements that are priorities to your county and that are applicable to a number of other counties. And as a word of caution: "Don't bite off more than you can chew." Applications will be judged on the value and applicability of the planning elements, not on the total number. Please contact myself or Mike Hansen in my office with any questions you may have at (801) 538-1027. I look forward to receiving some great applications.



**A Summary of Items included
In the Proposed
LUDMA Amendments Bill
2005 Utah Legislature**

For several months a large group of representatives from the public and private sectors have been working to revamp the Municipal and County Land Use Development and Management Acts. Below is a summary of the issues to be addressed by the Bill. For further information or updates on the progress of this proposed legislation, you may contact Wilf Sommerkorn at (801) 451-3278, or Neil Lindberg at (801) 553-6416 or check the Utah Chapter APA website www.utah-apa.org or the Utah League of Cities and Towns website www.ulct.org

• **Land Use Application Process**

- Requires establishment of a land use application process
- Planning Commission to recommend process to legislative body
- Legislative body to adopt process
- Process to specify who handles uncontested applications (staff? planning commission?). Planning Commission is default if no process specified
- Notification procedure for applications to be specified
- If application is contested, process to specify how to handle (open public staff meeting? Planning Commission to handle?)
- Designate an appeal body for hearing appeals from decision in application process (board of adjustment? Hearing officer? Board of appeals? Legislative body?) Legislative body is default.
- Specify time after decision is made in which an appeal can be made to the appeals body
- Appeals body to follow quasi-judicial procedures
- Following decision by appeals body, appeal to district court must be made in 30 days

• **Standardized Notices**

- Public hearings require 10 days notice
- Public meetings require 24 hour notice
- Ways to provide notice specified (posting in public place, posting on web site, posting on affected property, mailed to nearby property owners, etc.)
- For applications for multi-family, commercial or industrial uses, notice to also be provided to “affected entities”
- Vacation, alteration or amendment of a street also requires publication in a newspaper for 4 consecutive weeks

• **Planning Commissions**

- prepare and recommend general plans and amendments to legislative body
- prepare and recommend land use regulations – zoning, subdivision ordinance – and amendments to legislative body

- recommend application process to legislative body (see above)
- specifically authorized to have alternate PC members

• **General Plans**

- to have 3 required elements – land use, transportation, moderate income housing
- Other elements optional (public facilities, redevelopment, historic preservation, environment, economic development, etc.)
- PC required to hold public hearing prior to adopting recommended plan or amendment
- Legislative body to notify “affected entities” of intent to adopt or amend general plan
- Moderate income housing plan to be readdressed every two years

• **Land Use Regulation – Zoning Ordinance**

- PC required to hold public hearing on any zoning ordinance adoptions and amendments, including zoning map
- Legislative body only required to hold public meeting for adoption
- Zoning of annexed areas to be designated by legislative body
- Conditional uses – must have standards in ordinance, and CU must be approved if effects can be reasonably mitigated in accordance with the adopted standards – not allowed to add other conditions that are not part of standards in ordinance.
- Exactions not defined, but standards for requiring them are specified – basically the Nolan and Dolan standards
- Vested rights specified – essentially, applicant has right to proceed under ordinances in place at time of application if application submitted is substantially complete, and there are no pending changes to the ordinances
- Nonconforming changed to distinguish between uses and structures
 - Allows structures to be rebuilt after calamity
 - Allows denial when abandoned, uninhabitable longer than 6 months after giving notice, or by voluntary demolition
 - Owners to prove validity, as required by local ordinance
- No changes for billboards, manufactured homes, amateur radio antennas, residential facilities for the elderly or the disabled

• **Land Use Regulations – Subdivisions**

- PC to prepare and recommend subdivision ordinance
- PC to hold public hearing on proposed ordinance or amendment
- Legislative body only required to hold public meeting for adoption
- Subdivision plats to require approval by culinary water and sanitary sewer authorities
- Approval can be withheld until proof provided of payment of pending taxes

- Surveyors to certify only the surveys, monuments, not validity of entire plat
- Subdivision plats require approval of owners of underground and utility facilities
- Metes and bounds descriptions not approved as subdivisions unless accompanied by approval documents for local government

• **Appeals Process**

- Appeal authority to be established (see above)
- Process more well-defined
- May have multiple appeal bodies to hear different kinds of appeals
- Variance process as before, to be heard by whomever the legislative body designates

• **Other Items**

- "Development agreements" add to list of things that can be done in Purpose section
- "Affected entities" as from last year's bill on Facilities of Regional Significance – question about whether to add UDOT to list
- Requirement of notice of "pre-development activity" changed to providing notice to affected entities of applications for multi-family, commercial and industrial uses.
- Board of Adjustment no longer required – can be kept and designated with authority as an appeals body, body to hear variances, whatever the legislative body would like
- "Special exceptions" no longer exist

APA Brown Bag Lunch Topics

Alex D. Beseris, Programs Chair

The Brown Bag lunch topics are back! Looking for opportunities to network with other planners? Do you want to hear what other planners are doing along the Wasatch Front? This is your opportunity to network, share ideas, learn, discuss and try a new restaurant.

Beginning on December 10th, we kick off our lunch topics with "Place Making" featuring John Janson, Assistant CED Director, West Valley City. This is a first in a series of "Place Making" topics. Many communities along the Wasatch Front have been developing great plans that create a "sense of place" that begin to create destinations within their community.

Help us in making these lunch topics a great success by your attendance and participation. You will be notified via email of this and other upcoming brown bag topics.

What is there to do in Torrey, Utah?

2005 Spring Conference Update

Want to have some fun in Torrey before or after the Utah Chapter's Spring Conference in May? The spring conference is May 5 & 6, 2005 and Torrey is a great place for fun with friends and family. Scout the area out early on April 10th by celebrating Easter at Capitol Reef National Park's Easter egg hunt, displays, and pioneer craft demonstrations.

May 21st and 22nd will be the Spring social and Giffor House celebration. Pioneer Craft Demonstration and Old Time Music. They will also have the Unveiling of the Interpretive Panel.

June 26th has Sawyer Brown Sunset Concert Series at the Red River Ranch. You can call 435-425-3739 for more information.

But since your going to be there on May 5th and 6th, you may want camp at Capitol Reef National Park rather than the motel. That is by reservation and you will need to contact them at 435-425-3791 or <http://www.nps.gov/care/index.htm>. Camping sites are open year round.

FAMILY CIRCUS

BY BIL KEANE



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"Your village is nice, Mommy, but those lots are zoned for Christmas presents."

For more information on private campgrounds in and around Torrey call 1-800-858-7951 or <http://www.capitolreef.org/>.

Boulder Mountain Recreation area is not that far from Torrey. For the fisherman or fisherwoman, you may want to visit Otter Creek Reservoir on SR 62.

The adventurer in you will enjoy the scenic byway of SR-12 where you can go to Boulder and visit the Anasazi Indian Village State Park. Capitol Reef Country has some of the most amazing drives in the world, including our new ALL AMERICAN ROAD Utah Highway 12! Whether you are traveling by car, motor bike or bus, there is a day trip for you-all located within a very short distance of the communities in Wayne County.

And if you're into the real adventure, go to the Box-Death Hollow Wilderness Area for a hike.

This area of Southern Utah has diversity like no other area in the state - red rock formations and canyons, pristine meadows, alpine forests, as well as lush green valleys. After your visit you too will regard beautiful Wayne County, Utah and Capitol Reef National Park as a Land of Solitude and Contrast.

Entrada Institute/Friends of Capitol Reef: 435-425-3265, PO Box 217, 185 West Main, Torrey, UT 84775, A non-profit arts and educational center that furthers public understanding and appreciation of the natural, historical, cultural and scientific heritage of the Colorado Plateau province lying west of the Green & Colorado Rivers.

Capitol Reef Country is a biking heaven!! With a wide range of fat tire trails at every ability, enjoy our outdoors! Travel lightly on the land! In Capitol Reef National Park, bicycles must stay on designated roads at all times. Bicycles may not travel off road, in washes, on closed roads, on hiking trails, or backcountry routes. For overnight trips, you must camp in one of the three designated park campgrounds or on adjacent BLM or USFS lands. Water is difficult to find on all of the routes listed below, so plan accordingly. Check at a Visitor Center about availability before starting your trip.

BOULDER MOUNTAIN, part of the DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST, has over 100 lakes several - offering some of the finest fishing in Utah. There are over 192 miles of trails on BOULDER MOUNTAIN, and views from the rim are among the most breathtaking in Utah!

THOUSAND LAKE MOUNTAIN and HIGHWAY 72 feature panoramic mountain vistas and views into UPPER CATHEDRAL VALLEY. This highway intersects with the CATHEDRAL VALLEY SCENIC BACKWAY.

The backroads of the rugged and remote HENRY MOUNTAINS are ideal for a summer's outing in search of America's only herd of free-roaming buffalo! The summit of

MT. ELLEN offers spectacular views of central Utah. Visit the Utah Bureau of Land Management's web site for additional information on this unique area: UTAH BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

FISHLAKE SCENIC BYWAY, SR25, carries you through the meadows and mountains of the FISHLAKE NATIONAL FOREST to the FISH LAKE - JOHNSON VALLEY area that has 3,000 acres of lakes and reservoirs. Several species of trout and splake can be caught year round. Wildlife sightings of elk, deer and small game are common. There is also a large population of waterfowl as well as Golden and Bald Eagles.

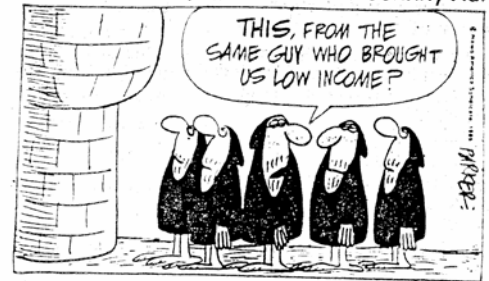
HORSESHOE CANYON, in CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK, presents the "Great Gallery" - a 200-foot long rock art panel considered one of the finest examples of prehistoric art in the world.

The GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE NATIONAL MONUMENT is a vast area of sandstone canyons, plateaus, unique rock formations and cliffs in southern Utah. The monument extends eastward from Bryce Canyon National Park to Capitol Reef National Park and the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. It borders the Dixie National Forest on the north and extends southward to the Arizona state line. Scenic Byway 12 winds through the northern portion and backways branching from Highway 12 provide access to trails and features in the monument.

Wizard of Id



By Brant Parker & Johnny Hart



Traffic: Why It's Getting Worse, What Government Can Do

by Anthony Downs

Reprinted from the September/October 2004 issue of
Government West Magazine

Introduction

Rising traffic congestion is an inescapable condition in large and growing metropolitan areas across the world, from Los Angeles to Tokyo, from Cairo to Sao Paulo. Peak-hour traffic congestion is an inherent result of the way modern societies operate. It stems from the widespread desires of people to pursue certain goals that inevitably overload existing roads and transit systems every day. But everyone hates traffic congestion, and it keeps getting worse, in spite of attempted remedies. Commuters are often frustrated by policymakers' inability to do anything about the problem, which poses a significant public policy challenge. Although governments may never be able to eliminate road congestion, there are several ways cities and states can move to curb it?

The Real Problem

Traffic congestion is not primarily a problem, but rather the solution to our basic mobility problem, which is that too many people want to move at the same times each day. Why? Because efficient operation of both the economy and school systems requires that people work, go to school, and even run errands during about the same hours so they can interact with each other. That basic requirement cannot be altered without crippling our economy and society. The same problem exists in every major metropolitan area in the world.

In the United States, the vast majority of people seeking to move during rush hours use private automotive vehicles, for two reasons. One is that most Americans reside in low-density areas that public transit cannot efficiently serve. The second is that privately owned vehicles are more comfortable, faster, more private, more convenient in trip timing, and more flexible for doing multiple tasks on one trip than almost any form of public transit. As household incomes rise around the world, more and more people shift from slower, less expensive modes of movement to privately owned cars and trucks.

With 87.9 percent of America's daily commuters using private vehicles, and millions wanting to move at the same times of day, America's basic problem is that its road system does not have the capacity to handle peak-hour loads without forcing many people to wait in line for that limited road space. Waiting in line is the definition of congestion, and the same condition is found in all growing major metropolitan regions. In fact, traffic congestion is

worse in most other countries because American roads are so much better.

Coping With the Mobility Problem

There are four ways any region can try to cope with the mobility challenge. But three of them are politically impractical or physically and financially impossible in the United States.

Charging Peak-Hour Tolls. Governments can charge people money to enter all the lanes on major commuting roads during peak hours. If tolls were set high enough and collected electronically with "smart cards," the number of vehicles on each major road during peak hours could be reduced enough so that vehicles could move at high speeds. That would allow more people to travel per lane per hour than under current, heavily congested conditions. Transportation economists have long been proponents of this tactic, but most Americans reject this solution politically for two reasons. Tolls would favor wealthier or subsidized drivers and harm poor ones, so most Americans would resent them, partly because they believe they would be at a disadvantage.

The second drawback is that people think these tolls would be just another tax, forcing them to pay for something they have already paid for through gasoline taxes. For both these reasons, few politicians in our democracy—and so far, anywhere else in the world—advocate this tactic. Limited road-pricing schemes that have been adopted in Singapore, Norway, and London only affect congestion in crowded downtowns, which is not the kind of congestion on major arteries that most Americans experience.

Greatly Expanding Road Capacity. The second approach would be to build enough road capacity to handle all drivers who want to travel in peak hours at the same time without delays. But this "cure" is totally impractical and prohibitively expensive. Governments would have to widen all major commuting roads by demolishing millions of buildings, cutting down trees, and turning most of every metropolitan region into a giant concrete slab. Those roads would then be grossly underutilized during non-peak hours. There are many occasions when adding more road capacity is a good idea, but no large region can afford to build enough to completely eliminate peak-hour congestion.

Greatly Expanding Public Transit Capacity. The third approach would be to expand public transit capacity enough to shift so many people from cars to transit that there would be no more excess demand for roads during peak hours. But in the United States in 2000, only 4.7 percent of all commuters traveled by public transit. (Outside of New York City, only 3.5 percent use transit and 89.3 percent use private vehicles.) A major reason is that most transit commuting is concentrated in a few large, densely settled regions with extensive fixed-rail transit systems. The nine U.S. metropolitan areas with the most daily transit commuters, when taken together, account for 61 percent of

all U.S. transit commuting, though they contain only 17 percent of the total population. Within those regions, transit commuters are 17 percent of all commuters, but elsewhere, transit carries only 2.4 percent of all commuters, and less than one percent in many low-density regions.

Even if America's existing transit capacity were tripled and fully utilized, morning peak-hour transit travel would rise to 11.0 percent of all morning trips. But that would reduce all morning private vehicle trips by only 8.0 percent—certainly progress, but hardly enough to end congestion—and tripling public transit capacity would be extremely costly. There are many good reasons to expand the nation's public transit systems to aid mobility, but doing so will not notably reduce either existing or future peak-hour traffic congestion.

Living with Congestion. This is the sole viable option. The only feasible way to accommodate excess demand for roads during peak periods is to have people wait in line. That means traffic congestion, which is an absolutely essential mechanism for American regions—and most other metropolitan regions throughout the world—to cope with excess demands for road space during peak hours each day.

Although congestion can seem intolerable, the alternatives would be even worse. Peak-hour congestion is the balancing mechanism that makes it possible for Americans to pursue other goals they value, including working or sending their children to school at the same time as their peers, living in low-density settlements, and having a wide choice of places to live and work.

The Principle of Triple Convergence

The least understood aspect of peak-hour traffic congestion is the principle of triple convergence, which I discussed in the original version of *Stuck in Traffic* (Brookings/Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 1992). This phenomenon occurs because traffic flows in any region's overall transportation networks form almost automatically self-adjusting relationships among different routes, times, and modes. For example, a major commuting expressway might be so heavily congested each morning that traffic crawls for at least thirty minutes. If that expressway's capacity were doubled overnight, the next day's traffic would flow rapidly because the same number of drivers would have twice as much road space. But soon word would spread that this particular highway was no longer congested. Drivers who had once used that road before and after the peak hour to avoid congestion would shift back into the peak period. Other drivers who had been using alternative routes would shift onto this more convenient expressway. Even some commuters who had been using the subway or trains would start driving on this road during peak periods. Within a short time, this triple convergence onto the expanded road during peak hours would make the road as congested as it was before its expansion.

Experience shows that if a road is part of a larger transportation network within a region, peak-hour congestion cannot be eliminated for long on a congested road by expanding that road's capacity.

The triple convergence principle does not mean that expanding a congested road's capacity has no benefits. After expansion, the road can carry more vehicles per hour than before; no matter how congested it is, so more people can travel on it during those more desirable periods. Also, the periods of maximum congestion may be shorter, and congestion on alternative routes may be lower. Those are all benefits, but that road will still experience some period of maximum congestion daily.

Triple Convergence and Other Proposals

Triple convergence affects the practicality of other suggested remedies to traffic congestion. An example is staggered work hours. In theory, if a certain number of workers are able to commute during less crowded parts of the day, that will free up space on formerly congested roads. But once traffic moves faster on those roads during peak hours, that will attract other drivers from other routes, other times, and other modes where conditions have not changed to shift onto the improved roads. Soon the removal of the staggered-working-hour drivers will be fully offset by convergence.

The same thing will happen if more workers become telecommuters and work at home, or if public transit capacity is expanded on off-road routes that parallel a congested expressway. This is why building light rail systems or even new subways rarely reduce peak-hour traffic congestion. In Portland, where the light rail system doubled in size in the 1990s, and in Dallas, where a new light rail system opened, congestion did not decline for long after these systems were up and running. Only road pricing or higher gasoline taxes are exempt from the principle of triple convergence.

How Population Growth Can Swamp Transportation Capacity

A ground transportation system's equilibria can also be affected by big changes in the region's population or economic activity. If a region's population is growing rapidly, as in Southern California or Florida, any expansions of major expressway capacity may soon be swamped by more vehicles generated by the added population. This result is strengthened because America's vehicle population has been increasing even faster than its human population. From 1980 to 2000, 1.2 more automotive vehicles were added to the vehicle population of the United States for every 1.0 person added to the human population (though this ratio declined to 1 to 1 in the 1990s). The nation's human population is expected to grow by around 60 million by 2020—possibly adding another 60 million vehicles to our national stock. That is why prospects for reducing peak-hour traffic congestion in the future are dim indeed.

Shifts in economic activity also affect regional congestion. During the internet and telecommunications boom of the late 1990s, congestion in the San Francisco Bay Area intensified immensely. After the economic "bubble" burst in 2000, congestion fell markedly without any major change in population. Thus, severe congestion can be a sign of strong regional prosperity, just as reduced congestion can signal an economic downturn.

The most obvious reason traffic congestion has increased everywhere is population growth. In a wealthy nation, more people means more vehicles. But total vehicle mileage traveled has grown much faster than population. From 1980 to 2000, the total population of the United States rose 24 percent, but total vehicle miles traveled grew 80 percent because of more intensive use of each vehicle. The number of vehicles per 1,000 persons rose 14 percent and the number of miles driven per vehicle rose 24 percent. Even without any population gain in those two decades, miles driven would have risen 47 percent.

One reason people drove their vehicles farther is that a combination of declining real gas prices (corrected for inflation) and more miles per gallon caused the real cost of each mile driven to fall 54 percent from 1980 to 2000. That helped raise the fraction of U.S. households owning cars from 86 percent in 1983 to 92 percent in 1995.

Furthermore, American road building lagged far behind increases in vehicle travel. Urban lane-miles rose by 37 percent versus an 80 percent increase in miles traveled. As a result, the amount of daily traffic that was congested in the 75 areas analyzed in studies by the Texas Transportation Institute went from 16 percent in 1982 to 34 percent in 2001.

Another factor in road congestion is accidents and incidents, which some experts believe cause half of all traffic congestion. From 1980 to 2000, the absolute number of accidents each year has remained amazingly constant, and the annual number of traffic deaths in the United States fell 18 percent, in spite of the great rise in vehicle miles traveled. So accidents could only have caused more congestion because roads were more crowded, and each accident may now cause longer back-ups than before. Incidents are non-accident causes of delay, such as stalled cars, road repairs, overturned vehicles, and bad weather. No one knows how many incidents occur, but it is a much greater number than accidents. And the number of incidents probably rises along with total driving. So that could have added to greater congestion and will in the future.

Low-Density Settlements

Another crucial factor contributing to traffic congestion is the desire of most Americans to live in low-density settlements. In 1999, the National Association of Homebuilders asked 2,000 randomly-selected households whether they would rather buy a \$150,000 townhouse in an urban setting that

was close to public transportation, work, and shopping or a larger, detached single-family home in an outlying suburban area, where distances to work, public transportation, and shopping were longer. Eighty-three percent of respondents chose the larger, farther-out suburban home. At the same time, new workplaces have been spreading out in low-density areas in most metropolitan regions.

Past studies, including one published in 1977 by Boris S. Pushkarev and Jeffery M. Zupan, have shown that public transit works best where gross residential densities are above 4,200 persons per square mile; relatively dense housing is clustered close to transit stations or stops; and large numbers of jobs are concentrated in relatively compact business districts.

But in 2000, at least two thirds of all residents of U.S. urbanized areas lived in settlements with densities of fewer than 4,000 persons per square mile. Those densities are too low for public transit to be effective. Hence their residents are compelled to rely on private vehicles for almost all of their travel, including trips during peak hours.

Recognizing this situation, many opponents of "sprawl" call for strong urban growth boundaries to constrain future growth into more compact, higher-density patterns, including greater reinvestment and increased densities in existing neighborhoods. But most residents of those neighborhoods vehemently oppose raising densities, and most American regions already have densities far too low to support much public transit. So this strategy would not reduce future traffic congestion much.

Possible Improvements

While it's practically impossible to eliminate congestion, there are several ways to slow its future rate of increase: Create High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes. Peak-hour road pricing would not be politically feasible if policymakers put tolls on all major commuter lanes, but HOT lanes can increase traveler choices by adding new toll lanes to existing expressways, or converting underused high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to HOT lanes, and leaving present conventional lanes without tolls. True, HOT lanes do not eliminate congestion. But they allow anyone who needs to move fast on any given day to do so, without forcing all low-income drivers off those same roads during peak periods. In some regions, whole networks of HOT lanes could both add to overall capacity and make high-speed choices always available to thousands of people in a hurry.

Respond more rapidly to traffic-blocking accidents and incidents. Removing accidents and incidents from major roads faster by using roving service vehicles run by government-run Traffic Management Centers equipped with television and electronic surveillance of road conditions is an excellent tactic for reducing congestion delays. Build more roads in growing areas. Opponents of building more roads claim that we cannot build our way out of

congestion because more highway capacity will simply attract more travelers. Due to triple convergence, that criticism is true for established roads that are already overcrowded. But the large projected growth of the U.S. population surely means that we will need a lot more road and lane mileage in peripheral areas. Install ramp-metering. This means letting vehicles enter expressways only gradually. It has improved freeway speed during peak hours in both Seattle and the Twin Cities, and could be much more widely used.

Use Intelligent Transportation System devices to speed traffic flows. These devices include electronic coordination of signal lights on local streets, large variable signs informing drivers of traffic conditions ahead, one-way street patterns, Global Positioning System equipment in cars and trucks, and radio broadcasts of current road conditions. These technologies exist now and can be effective on local streets and arteries and informative on expressways. Create more HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lanes. HOV lanes have proven successful in many areas such as Houston. More regions could use HOV lanes effectively if there were more lanes built for that purpose, rather than trying to convert existing ones. Merely converting existing lanes would reduce overall road capacity.

Adopt "parking cash-out" programs. Demonstration programs have shown that if firms offer to pay persons now receiving free employee parking a stipend for shifting to carpooling or transit, significant percentages will do so. That could reduce the number of cars on the road. However, this tactic does not prevent the offsetting consequences of triple convergence.

Restrict very low-density peripheral development. Urban growth boundaries that severely constrain all far-out suburban development will not reduce future congestion much, especially in fast-growing regions. And such boundaries may drive up peripheral housing prices. But requiring at least moderate residential densities—say, 3,500 persons per square mile (4.38 units per net acre)—in new growth areas could greatly reduce peripheral driving, compared to permitting very low densities there, which tend to push growth out ever farther. In 2000, thirty-six urbanized areas had fringe area densities of 3,500 or more. Those thirty-six urbanized areas contained 18.2 percent of all persons living in all 476 U.S. urbanized areas.

Cluster high-density housing around transit stops. Such Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) would permit more residents to commute by walking to transit, thereby decreasing the number of private vehicles on the roads. However, the potential of this tactic is limited. In order to shift a significant percentage of auto commuters to transit, the number of such "transit circles" within each region would have to be very large, the density within each circle would have to be much greater than the average central city density in America's fifty largest urbanized areas, and the percentage of workers living in the TODs who commuted by transit would have to greatly exceed the 10.5

percent average for central cities in 2000. Even so, developing many of these high-density clusters might make public transit service more feasible to many more parts of large regions.

Give regional transportation authorities more power and resources. Congress has created Metropolitan Planning Organizations to coordinate ground transportation planning over all modes in each region. If these were given more technical assistance and power, more rational systems could be created. Without much more regionally focused planning over land uses as well as transportation, few anti-congestion tactics will work effectively.

Raise gasoline taxes. Raising gas taxes would notably slow the rate of increase of all automotive travel, not just peak-hour commuting. But Congress has refused to consider it because it is politically unpopular and fought by industry lobbyists. Despite Americans' vocal complaints about congestion, they do not want to pay much to combat it.

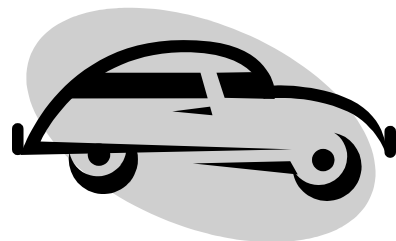
Conclusion

Peak-hour traffic congestion in almost all large and growing metropolitan regions around the world is here to stay. In fact, it is almost certain to get worse during at least the next few decades, mainly because of rising populations and wealth. This will be true no matter what public and private policies are adopted to combat congestion. But this outcome should not be regarded as a mark of social failure or misguided policies. In fact, traffic congestion often results from economic prosperity and other types of success.

Although traffic congestion is inevitable, there are ways to slow the rate at which it intensifies. Several tactics could do that effectively, especially if used in concert, but nothing can eliminate peak-hour traffic congestion from large metropolitan regions here and around the world. Only serious economic recessions—which are hardly desirable—can even forestall an increase.

For the time being, the only relief for traffic-plagued commuters is a comfortable, air-conditioned vehicle with a well-equipped stereo system, a hands-free telephone, and a daily commute with someone they like. Congestion has become part of commuters' daily leisure time, and it promises to stay that way.

Anthony Downs is a senior fellow in Economic Studies at the Brookings Institution.



AICP NEWS

New AICP Exam Changes

As you know, 2004 brought about several changes because of the move to a computer-based AICP exam. Among other things, applicants now have greater flexibility in arranging to take the exam; it is now offered twice per year (May and November). A recent edition of APA's Interact introduced a new application process for the May 2005 exam, which combines the application and registration into one step (eliminating the two-step process previously in place). The AICP Commission also approved the delivery of instantaneous results reporting beginning with the November 2004 AICP Exam. For the first time, candidates taking the AICP Exam will learn whether they passed or failed immediately, instead of having to wait several weeks!

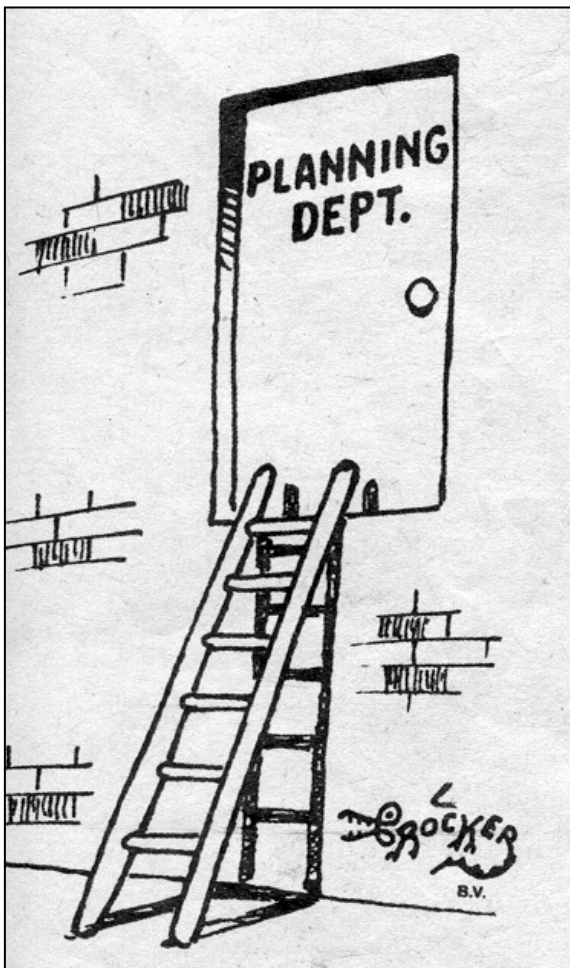
Revised AICP Code of Ethics

As many of you know, AICP has been working on major revisions to our professional code of ethics. At the recent AICP Commission meeting, the commission directed staff to incorporate some changes to the latest draft. Those revisions will be posted on the APA Web site, and the Commission is planning to act on the revised Code at the next National Planning Conference (March 19 - 23, 2005 in San Francisco). The AICP Commission has asked that you only submit comments if you have substantive changes to recommend.

CPDP Online

The Continuing Professional Development Program (CPDP) is a voluntary (but strongly encouraged) continuing education program for professional planners who are already AICP. Since September 2004, AICP members have been able to track their Continuing Professional Development Program (CPDP) hours by logging onto the APA website and, by using a pull down menu, adding hours to their online CPDP Log. Indianapolis' recent 2004 multi-state regional conference sessions are fully listed on the website. If you have attended programs over the last 3 years that are not listed on the website, let me know so that as your professional development officer, I may "bless" the program, and have AICP staff add them to the listings. You can access the site at: www.planning.org/cpdp/http://www.planning.org/cpdp/. If you have any comments or suggestions, please send them to

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Mark Your Calendars!
American Planning Association's (APA) National Planning Conference, to be held at Moscone West from March 19-23, 2005

San Francisco is a special city. A gateway to the Pacific, the city is also the heart of region so diverse as to almost defy description. Long an innovator in urban design, housing, and environmental planning, the Bay Area is the unofficial capital of the creative class. As varied as the opportunities have been, the region has also faced challenges. The 2005 National Planning Conference will explore the region through sessions and mobile workshops, giving you insight into the remarkable achievements and the ongoing challenges.

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