



Gerald L. Baliles, Director

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Contacts:

Kristy Schantz 202-758-3918

kkschantz@virginia.edu

Kim Curtis 434-243-2985

kcurtis@virginia.edu

President Obama Gets Briefing On Miller Center Transportation Report

Washington, D.C. – Former Transportation Secretaries Norman Mineta and Samuel Skinner briefed President Barack Obama on a report done by the Miller Center of Public Affairs. The report, “Well Within Reach: America’s New Transportation Agenda,” outlines 10 recommendations to fix the nation’s overburdened transportation system, which is so central to U.S. economic prosperity.

The report can be read online at

http://web1.millercenter.org/conferences/report/conf_2009_transportation.pdf.

Mineta and Skinner met with the president as well as Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, current Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, past transportation secretaries, and governors and mayors from across the country. After the meeting, the president addressed the media and held up a copy of the report.

Obama said, “Sam and Norm have been leading a bipartisan group of more than 80 experts who just last week released a call to action demanding a fundamental overhaul of how America approaches funding and building our infrastructure, and today, my Treasury Department and my Council of Economic Advisers have released our own study. These reports confirm what any American can already tell you: our infrastructure is woefully inefficient and it is outdated.”

The report is based on the David R. Goode National Transportation Policy Conference, which was held at the Miller Center and attended by more than 80 experts representing a wide array of transportation interests. They included current and former Transportation Department officials, national and state policymakers, community planners, as well as representatives from trucking, rail, aviation and business associations.

The conference was conceived by Gov. Gerald L. Baliles, director of the Miller Center. Mineta and Skinner co-chaired the conference.

The report outlines 10 recommendations:

1. **Stop the bleeding** - Congress must address the immediate crisis in transportation funding.
2. **Beyond the gas tax** – Future funding mechanisms should not depend primarily on fossil-fuel consumption, which the government is actively seeking to discourage through a number of other policies, to keep up with transportation investment needs.
3. **Jobs for the future, not just for today** – Future stimulus spending should be directed to those transportation projects that will deliver the greatest returns in terms of future U.S. competitiveness, economic growth, and jobs.
4. **Pass the power, please** – Clarify federal decision-making power and enhance the decision-making power of states, localities, and metropolitan-planning organizations.
5. **Adopt a capital budget** – The federal government should adopt accounting methods that recognize expenditures on transportation infrastructure as investments and take into account future returns on those investments.
6. **Connect the dots** – Adopt an integrated approach to transportation planning that includes freight and goods movement and stresses intermodal connectivity.
7. **Getting Americans home in time for dinner** – Find more effective ways of reducing urban congestion.
8. **It's all about leveraging** – Encourage public-private partnerships while also improving oversight of such partnerships.
9. **Deliver transportation investments on time** – Reform project planning, review, and permitting processes to speed actual implementation.
10. **Build a foundation for informed policy** – Better and more timely data are essential to measure progress toward defined goals and objectives and to improve the performance of the nation's transportation systems.

Founded in 1975, the Miller Center of Public Affairs is a leading nonpartisan public policy institution that aims to fulfill Jefferson's public service mission by serving as a national meeting place for engaged citizens, scholars, students, media representatives, and government officials to research, reflect, and report on issues of national importance to the governance of the United States, with special attention to the central role and history of the presidency.