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## **Five Fmr. Transportation Secs., Rep. John Mica Take Part in Miller Center Transportation Summit**

Washington, D.C.—Five former U.S. transportation secretaries and the chairman of the House Transportation Committee were among the participants in a transportation summit convened by the University of Virginia’s Miller Center in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 29 and 30. The conference examined the link between transportation and economic growth and how best to make the case for infrastructure repair to the American public.

In one panel, former transportation secretaries who served under every president from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush engaged in a lively discussion about some of the urgent transportation problems facing the country. Among the issues discussed were the federal gas tax, which was last increased in 1993, and congressional earmarks, some of which are diverting funds to pet projects. The secretaries agreed about the need for action, but they also expressed differing views on some issues, such as whether the country should move forward with high-speed passenger rail projects.

The former secretaries taking part in the event included: James Burnley, Samuel Skinner, Rodney Slater, Norman Mineta, and Mary Peters.

The secretaries also agreed that policy makers need to do a better job communicating the need for infrastructure repair to the public.

“Everything we eat, everything we wear, everything we do, somehow it got to us on wheels,” said Norman Mineta, who served as transportation secretary under George W. Bush. “Everyone takes [transportation] for granted except when it’s denied them.”

Samuel Skinner, former transportation secretary to George H.W. Bush, said there is too much focus on transportation projects that take too long to complete and run over budget. He said we need to “toot our horn” on effective projects that have made people’s lives easier.

House Transportation Chairman John Mica (R-FL) also spoke at the summit and provided insights into the current state of transportation legislation on Capitol Hill,

including the news that the House will delay consideration of a major surface transportation bill until January 2012. Mica also emphasized his commitment to maintain highway transit funding and spoke about his bipartisan efforts to move crucial transportation legislation forward.

The summit took place in the Miller Center's Washington office.

Based on key summit findings, the Miller Center will release a report on how to communicate the importance of an optimally-functioning transportation system to the American public.

Last year, the Miller Center, working with Mineta and Skinner, released a report outlining 10 recommendations to fix the nation's overburdened transportation system. The report is available at <http://millercenter.org/policy/transportation>.

The report is based on the David R. Goode National Transportation Policy Conference, which was held at the Miller Center in 2009 and attended by more than 80 experts representing a wide array of transportation interests. Last year, Mineta and Skinner briefed President Obama, who praised the report in a Rose Garden press conference.

Video of the summit is available at [millercenter.org](http://millercenter.org).

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