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New UVa Miller Center Report Concludes President Must Lead the Way on Transportation Reform Includes Input from Six Former U.S. Transportation Secretaries

Working with six former U.S. transportation secretaries and other experts, the University of Virginia's Miller Center has released a report which concludes that strong presidential leadership is necessary to achieve transportation policy reform and offers seven ideas for bold action.

"A Blueprint for Presidential Leadership" examines the historical role of the president in transportation policy and outlines how the president can develop and advance a comprehensive plan today. The report can be found at http://web1.millercenter.org/conferences/report/conf_2013_transportation.pdf.

"As we have seen throughout history, major advances in transportation policy rarely occur without the president playing a lead role," said Gov. Gerald L. Baliles, director and CEO of the Miller Center.

"It is hard to imagine the Interstate Highway System, the U.S. Department of Transportation, or the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act without the leadership of Presidents Eisenhower, Johnson, and George H.W. Bush. In contrast, administrations that placed less emphasis on transportation policy coincided with times of inertia or even regression."

The report is drawn from the deliberations of the David R. Goode National Transportation Policy Conference, which brought together leading thinkers in transportation policy from academia and the public and private sectors earlier this year to develop a bipartisan way forward. Participants included transportation secretaries who served under every president from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush, including James Burnley, Samuel Skinner, Andrew Card, Rodney Slater, Norman Mineta, and Mary Peters.

The report offers the president seven ideas for changing the trajectory in transportation policy:

- **Change the Narrative** - The nation's transportation needs must be recast in a new, compelling narrative in order to attract the public's attention. The president's message must include a positive, forward-looking tone; a well-defined but flexible campaign plan keyed to political rhythms; and a concerted effort to link local transportation investments with national goals like jobs and economic growth.
- **Get Creative on Funding** - Americans have enjoyed an ever-increasing freedom in personal mobility, but the current funding mechanisms are insufficient for the transportation needs of today and tomorrow. In this current era of fiscal constraint, the president must "think outside the box" and devise creative, new options to secure steady and reliable revenue streams.
- **Leverage New Technology** - Over the next decade, a series of groundbreaking technological advances are expected to dramatically reshape society. The president's transportation vision must harness the power of cloud computing, advanced energy extraction, the Internet of Things, and other emerging technologies and leverage these breakthroughs to create a smarter and better-connected infrastructure.
- **Seize Bipartisan Opportunity** - Although consensus is difficult to reach on many aspects of transportation policy, there are several ideas that enjoy near-universal support from both branches of government and both parties. The president should work with Congress to quickly enact popular, attainable proposals, such as restructuring the air traffic control system and crafting a national freight plan.
- **Disentangle the System** - As transportation systems and the policies governing them increase in complexity, the number of invested parties and players also expands. The president must work to streamline America's transportation governance structure in order to minimize duplicative efforts and remove unnecessary red tape on worthwhile projects.
- **Engage the Private Sector** - Private investment in infrastructure holds significant potential for budget relief, enhanced project efficiency, and the injection of much-needed capital. With proper safeguards in place, the president should take the lead in securing an easier path for public-private partnerships to play a larger role in infrastructure management and funding.
- **Lead the Way, Mr. President** - No president has enacted significant transportation legislation without inserting himself into the policy process. Personal and sustained presidential attention, including engagement with congressional leaders, will elevate transportation policy in the national consciousness and increase the odds of progress.

More information, including video of the conference, is available at <http://millercenter.org/conferences/2013/transportation>.

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