

New From The Heritage Foundation

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Highways

## Innovative Solutions to America's Transportation Needs

Edited by Wendell Cox, Alan Pisarski, and Ronald Utt

### Scope of Book



*21<sup>st</sup> Century Highways* views the worsening road congestion as one of the chief deficiencies of the existing highway programs and argues that diminished mobility is contributing to a loss of economic vitality. Having acknowledged the problem, ordinary citizens and policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels must now decide what to do about these troublesome trends. Do we get rid of the federal program, substantially reform it, or simply let it run its course and seek other mechanisms and institutions to fill the void caused by an increasingly distracted federal program that still commands extraordinary resources?

A common theme in the book's chapters is that our highway system needs considerably more resources than it has available to it, but that the federal highway program, as it now exists, may not offer the best mechanism to match those additional resources with our most pressing transportation needs.

Instead, the authors propose a number of alternative approaches that rely on funding sources other than the state and federal fuel taxes the system now relies on, and on greater degrees of decentralization that allow more discretion and flexibility to state and local governments. Importantly, many of the authors note the private sector's growing involvement in providing both leadership and financial resources in the development of new road capacity. Whether working independently or in partnership with state and local governments, recent successes, planned projects, and developing innovations suggest the emergence of important new options with which to finance, build, and operate our roads.

## Excerpts

*There is general agreement that this nation has substantial unmet highway infrastructure needs. The question is how federal policy can evolve to meet those needs that are clearly of national importance. — John Fischer, Chapter One*

*The automobile is the most convenient and flexible transportation that human kind has yet invented, giving people a degree of social and economic opportunity and autonomy unprecedented in human history. — Joel Schwartz, Chapter Two*

*The philosophical stance with respect to performance goals seems to be catching fire.... This reflects the legislature's frustration at not seeing progress against congestion by the usual means. — Alan Pisarski and Ronald Utt, Chapter Three*

*The opportunity exists to move the highway system from the domain of government to the domain of the private sector to handle this crucial infrastructure as we have always handled our other network utilities. — Robert Poole and Ken Orski, Chapter Four*

*[D]espite government's unremitting faith in more government, communities don't work the way planners pretend they do, but instead rely on the collective will and day-to-day decisions of the many individuals who live in them. People vote with their dollars, with their ballots, and with their feet. — Peter Gordon, Chapter Eight*

## Contents

Authors and subjects include John Fischer on the history of the federal highway program, Joel Schwartz on the costs and benefits of automobiles, Alan Pisarski and Ron Utt on performance-based policies, Bob Poole and Ken Orski on toll roads, Ron Utt and Shirley Ybarra on public-private partnerships, Wendell Cox on transit, Peter Gordon on regional planning, and Ron Utt on giving more responsibility to the states.

## How to Order

**\$6.00 per copy plus shipping.** The book can be ordered from The Heritage Foundation Bookstore Web site by clicking on <https://secure.heritage.org/bookstore/ProductDetail.cfm?id=46>.