A BETTER WAY, BUT ONLY IF YOU HAVE A CAR:
MAKING THE CASE FOR INCREASED FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC TRANSIT

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This past summer, House Republicans released several policy papers under the rubric, "A Better Way". Their tax plan,[1] which includes tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy, failed to make any mention of transportation investment and the challenges faced by the Highway Trust Fund, which will require $116 billion of new investment by 2020 just to maintain baseline spending levels.[2] The House Republican Leadership has consistently thwarted attempts – even by Members of their own party – to enable Congress to even debate ways to ensure the availability of sustainable, dedicated user fees to restore the Highway Trust Fund. As a result, we face more years of inadequate investment in our highways, bridges, and public transit systems.

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers,[3] if we continue status quo funding from 2016 to 2025, each American household will lose $3,400 each year in disposable income due to poor infrastructure. If the gap between what we spend and what we need to address infrastructure deficiencies is not addressed by 2025, the economy is expected to lose almost $4 trillion in Gross Domestic Product, costing the economy 2.5 million jobs. Underinvesting in our Nation's infrastructure not only hurts our economy, it hurts working families.

Under the "A Better Way" umbrella, House Republicans released a paper entitled "Poverty, Opportunity, and Upward Mobility", which lays out the majority's plan to reduce poverty. Despite the considerable evidence and acknowledgement by Republicans that access to jobs is a hurdle faced by many low-income Americans, the Republican plan fails to provide ways to address this problem:

> Finding a job is not the only challenge facing welfare recipients. For many, child care is often a concern, particularly for those with unusual or inconsistent work schedules. Other concerns include transportation, stable housing, or additional help buying groceries. We must work with our community partners to address each of these hurdles in order to help our frontline workforce retain employment and move up the career ladder.[4]

The phrase "work with our community partners to address each of these hurdles" is code for passing the problem along to someone else. Twenty years ago, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, a major revamp of the welfare system, designed to shift the Nation's welfare system into one that requires work in exchange for time-limited assistance. Since the 1970s, studies have shown that transportation costs make up the second highest share of household expenditures.[5] Another study found that "the typical job is

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[1] A Better Way – A Pro-Growth Tax Code for All Americans, June 24, 2016. House Republican Tax Reform Task Force.

[2] Letter to the Honorable Jim Inhofe, Chairman, Committee on Environment and Public Works, United States Senate, Congressional Budget Office, September 9, 2016.

[3] Failure to Act: Closing the Infrastructure Investment Gap for America's Economic Future, Prepared for the American Society of Civil Engineers by Economic Development Research Group, Inc., 2016.

[4] A Better Way - Poverty, Opportunity, and Upward Mobility, June 7, 2016. House Republican Poverty, Opportunity, & Upward Mobility Task Force.

[5] Estimating Transportation Costs by Characteristics of Neighborhood and Household. Haas. Journal of the Transportation Research Board. Volume 2077.

accessible to only about 27 percent of its metropolitan workforce by transit in 90 minutes or less."[6] This creates a chicken or egg paradox for low-income workers, many of whom need a vehicle to get to a job, but cannot afford a vehicle without a job. Not surprisingly, since the 1996 welfare reform law, a greater share of the poor and the carless rely on transit to access employment.[7] Getting low-income people to jobs is a core mission of public transit agencies and a factor they must consider in planning routes and services. However, the House Republican Leadership opposes robust investment in public transportation, which strongly suggests that "work with our community partners" means passing the funding problem to State and local governments.

This report reviews changes to Federal transit policy that have subtly undermined transit agencies and low-income riders trying to get to their jobs. Transit agencies depend on Federal investment, and the Republican majority continues to fail to recognize that these expenditures are long-term investments in the Nation's economic growth. Through proposals such as devolving all transit funding to cash-strapped States and localities, limiting Federal contributions for new transit projects in urban areas, or forcing transit agencies to choose between maintaining existing systems or meeting new demands, Federal transit funding is under attack. This attack means less affluent people have a harder time getting to jobs and, therefore, cannot just simply pull themselves up by their bootstraps as the majority's rhetoric suggests they do.

The attack on transit may seem innocuous to some, but it is caustic to workers struggling to get to their low-wage jobs. Every fare increase hurts those living paycheck to paycheck. Every cut in late night service hurts those who work the late shift cleaning offices or washing dishes. When the Republican majority walks away from public transit, these workers strain to pay for increased fares. When aging buses or trains frequently break down, the resulting delays mean low-wage workers lose wages and possibly their job for being late.

As Federal resources diminish, some transit agencies lacking dedicated revenue sources have been unable to bridge the gap. Recent accidents and significant problems in service reliability have plagued New Jersey Transit and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. These agencies are struggling. They represent what could happen nationwide if the Republican majority continues its attack on transit.

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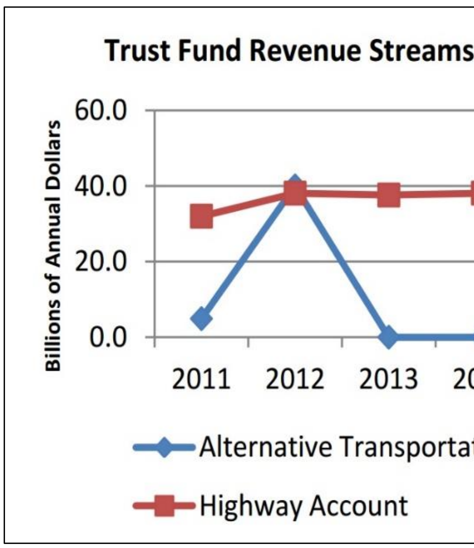
[6] Where the Jobs Are: Employer Access to Labor by Transit. Adie Tomer. Brookings Institute. July 2012.
[7] Travel Behavior of the Poor Post Welfare Reform. Evelyn Blumenberg. UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. TRB 2014 Annual Meeting.

Section 1 - The Attack on Transit

Devolution

In 2012, despite a vigorous attempt, House Republicans failed to pass their radical surface transportation reauthorization bill (H.R. 7), which would have gutted transit by delinking Federal transit funding from the Highway Trust Fund. They sought to force transit investment to compete with other discretionary priorities, while protecting most Federal investment in roads. The Republican devolution proposal would have resulted in a return to the pre-Reagan era of ad-hoc, inefficient Federal investment in transit. This bill would have crippled public transit systems around the country and hurt millions of people who depend on public transportation to reach their workplaces and vital services each day. It would have also had significant impacts on road congestion if transit service was curtailed or failed to be reliable due to lack of funding. H.R. 7 was narrowly approved by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure by a vote of 29 to 24 with all Democrats and one Republican opposing the measure. Fortunately, the bill was later pulled from consideration by the House of Representatives because it lacked the necessary votes to pass.



Source: American Public Transportation Association.

Despite their inability to enact this radical plan, many Republicans are still pushing to undermine transit. In 2015, during House consideration of H.R. 22, which became the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) (P.L. 114-94), Rep. DeSantis (R-Fl.) offered an amendment to devolve transportation investment and leave the States to pick up the trillion-dollar tab, including all investment in transit systems. Although the amendment failed, roughly one-half (118) of House Republicans supported it.

The devolutionists within the Republican party have been unable to wipe out Federal transit funding, but they have successfully tilted the playing field toward highways. Local and state governments use a planning process to decide where to invest their limited local, State, and Federal transportation dollars. Given that our highways, bridges, and transit systems all suffer from a growing transportation investment backlog, these local decisions must stretch every dollar.

Reduced Federal Cost Share for New Transit Investment

Local and State transportation improvement plans are required to be fiscally prudent, meaning they have to identify the source of funds for each project. The funding is typically a mix of

Federal, State, and local sources. The amount of non-Federal match needed for a highway project is typically 20 percent, while the Federal Government picks up 80 percent of the total project cost. This is true for highway formula funds and TIGER discretionary grants. In some cases, such as Interstate Highways, the Federal cost share rises to 90 percent and the non-Federal cost share drops to 10 percent.[8] However, major new public transit investments do not receive the same level of Federal assistance. In fact, Congress has statutorily capped the Federal share under the Capital Investment Grants program for New Starts transit projects, typically the larger and more urban transit projects, at 60 percent.[9]

From the perspective of local decision-makers, highway improvements require only a 20 percent local cost share, but New Starts transit investment requires a 40 percent or greater local cost share. As a result, the playing field is tilted – putting a greater financial burden on major metropolitan areas that need to expand transit options to relieve congestion.

This tilted playing field is not new. Beginning in the FY 2002 Appropriations Act, through report language, the Republican majority first suggested a 60 percent cap on

Cost Share Effects: Hudson River Train Tunnel

There are 174,000 commuters and Amtrak passengers who travel from New Jersey to Manhattan through two 100-year-old tunnels on the Hudson River in a day. The tunnels are at full capacity and their deteriorated condition has led to repeated delays that can cause havoc for commuters and Amtrak's schedule. Superstorm Sandy further deteriorated the tunnels making their rehabilitation ever more urgent.

New Jersey Transit and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey conducted years of studies and planning for two new tunnels to provide improved transit service and greater reliability, critical to the nation's largest urban area. This project, known as Access to the Region's Core (ARC), was projected to cost $8.7 billion and funded by the Federal New Starts program, other Federal funds, the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, and the Port Authority. The project sponsors requested 34.5 percent of the total project cost be funded by the New Starts program, and an overall Federal share of 51.1 percent with other Federal funding included.

In 2010, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie cancelled the ARC project claiming excessive cost overruns and excessive cost share for New Jersey. He shortly thereafter redirected $4 billion in ARC funding to New Jersey's transportation trust fund, with most of these dollars earmarked for highway projects.

Today, a new environmental review to replace the decrepit Hudson rail tunnels has just begun and any potential groundbreaking remains years away.

Sources:
United States Government Accountability Office. Potential Impacts and Cost Estimates for the Cancelled Hudson River Tunnel Project. March 2012.
New York Times. Report Disputes Christie's Basis for Halting Tunnel. Kate Zernik, April 10, 2012.

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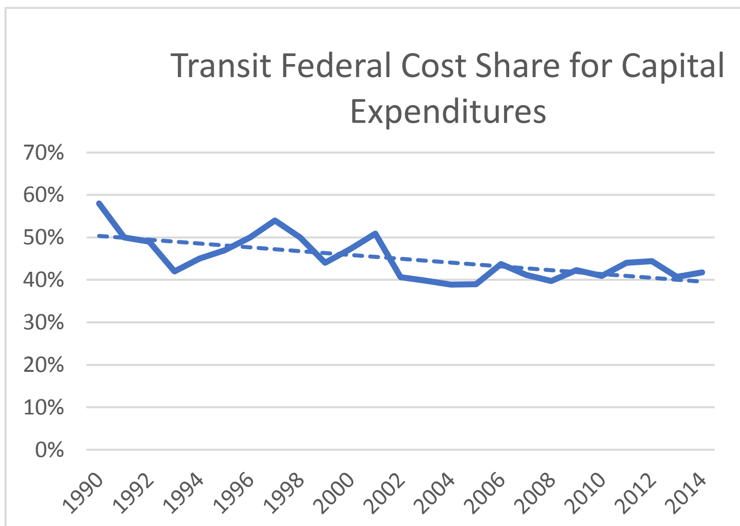
[8] 23 U.S.C. §120. See also Federal Highway Administration. FAST Act Fact Sheet. Available at http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/factsheets/federalsharefs.cfm.
[9] Federal Transit Administration. FAST Act Fact Sheet on fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants. available at https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/5309_Capital_Investment_Grant_Fact_Sheet.pdf

the New Starts Federal cost share. In FY 2012, the cap was statutorily imposed on an annual basis, and extended in subsequent years.[10] The FAST Act made this cap permanent.

Current law permits New Start projects to use other Federal funds[11] to comprise up to 80 percent of the total project cost. The playing field is still tilted because shifting funds from other accounts has an opportunity cost for transit agencies and local governments. For instance, shifting transit formula funds (e.g., Urban Area Formula Grants) to make up the Federal share shortfall for a New Starts project results in less funding for maintenance, repair or replacement of rolling stock and stations. This tradeoff adds to the system's state-of-good-repair burden (see next section). Similarly, shifting highway formula funds (e.g., Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds) to the New Start project results in less funding for structurally deficient bridge and tunnel repair, environmental mitigation, pedestrian and bicycle projects, and safe routes to school projects.

The tilted playing field against new transit investment comes in other forms too. Since at least the Reagan Administration, there has been an effort to incentivize "overmatch" of new Federal transit projects.[12] Projects with a greater local match than legally required are given a higher score in the approval process by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Under current guidelines, New Starts projects that seek less than 50 percent Federal share receive a higher local financial commitment rating, which is an important element in whether the Administration recommends funding for a project.

These New Starts cap and overmatch policies have serious impacts. For the last 25 years, the average annual Federal share of investment in transit has been shrinking and the trend continues. In 2014, of all transit capital investments only 41.7 percent were Federal dollars, and this data includes the 80 percent Federal, 20 percent local cost share under Urban Area Formula funds. Alternatively, Federal-aid highways Federal match has hovered just above 80 percent on a project-by-project basis.[13] State and local transportation officials make tough decisions with limited funding.



Data: U.S. DOT Conditions and Performance Report 1999-2013

[10] FY 2012 Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act. P.L. 112-55. November 18, 2011.
[11] These funds typically come from Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307), Growing and High Density State Formulas (Section 5340), Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (Section 133) and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement Program (Section 49).
[12] Impact of the Federal overmatch initiative on local transit decision making. Michael D. Meyer. Georgia Institute of Technology. 1990. Available at https://smartech.gatech.edu/handle/1853/35036.
[13] T&I Committee Democratic Staff calculation based on data from the Federal-aid Project Obligations and Expenditures Report. http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/cfo/1503creport.cfm.

Projects that can receive 80 percent Federal support have a significant advantage over projects with only 40 percent Federal support.

These policies are typically justified by the argument that greater local matches allow the Federal Government to fund more projects across the country. While that is true and a positive benefit, such a rationale has not led to calls for lower caps or overmatch policies on highway funding. There has not been any challenge to the general rule of an 80 percent highway project match, nor any attempt to incentivize local overmatch. Current highway and bridge funding needs are also much higher than available funding, but there is no call to reduce the Federal cost share for highway projects to spread limited dollars further.

Cost Share Effects: The Baltimore Red Line

The Red Line is a proposed $2.9 billion light rail line that connects downtown Baltimore to some of the poorest sections of the city and major employers. Maryland Governor Hogan cancelled the Baltimore Red Line project (while also cutting the state contribution to another proposed light rail line, the Purple Line, by 76 percent) and instead diverted $2 billion to state roads.

Maryland typically receives 80 percent of the costs from the Federal Government for these highway projects, while the Red Line project was only seeking 30 percent of its costs from the New Starts program. For example, U.S. 219 in Garret County, Maryland, received $90 million from the Red line project cancelation. When asked about this project, Maryland Transportation Secretary Pete Rahn said U.S. 219 moved up the list because Federal development funds for the Appalachian region will pay for almost the entire project. The Federal Appalachian Development Highway Program allows up to 100 percent Federal share. Federal match levels can directly affect funding choices.

Sources:
Hogan says no to Red Line, yes to Purple. Baltimore Sun. June 25, 2015. http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-md-hogan-transportation-20150624-story.html
Hogan shifts money to roads, but not everyone's a winner. Baltimore Sun. July 18, 2015. http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-hogan-highways-20150718-

Another disparity in the playing field is the requirement that every Capital Investment Grant project[14] be evaluated and rated according to project justification criteria including mobility, environmental benefits, congestion relief, economic development, land use, cost-effectiveness, and local financial commitment. There is no comparable Federal review process for highway projects. State DOTs are simply reimbursed for any eligible highway expense no matter how inefficient it might be.

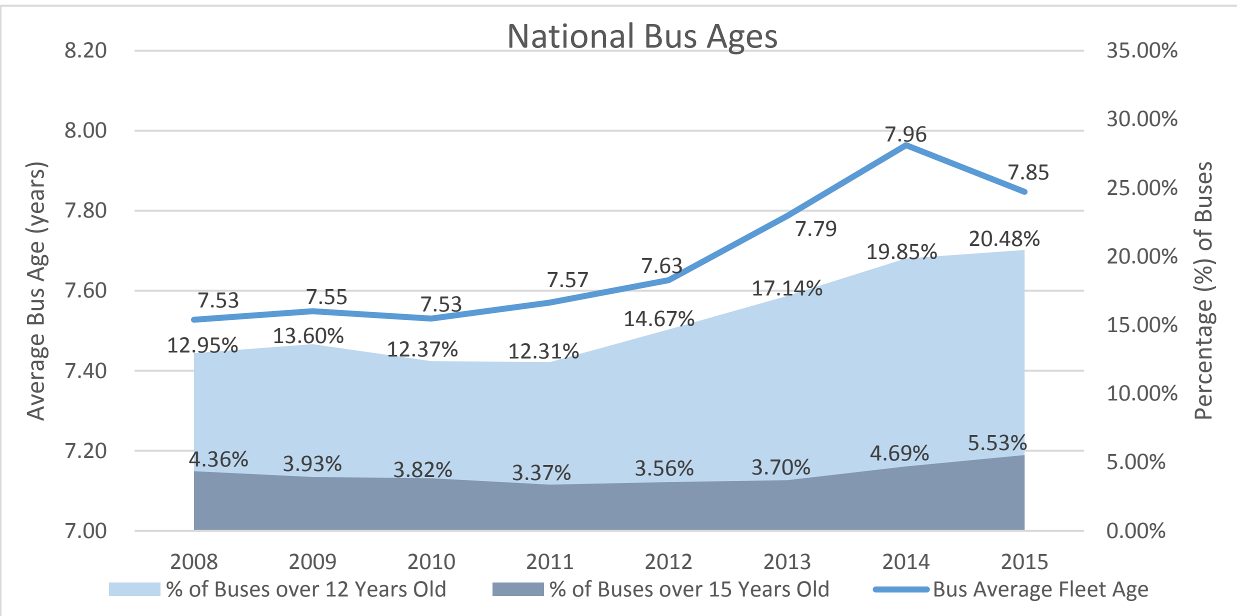
[14] This includes all New Starts, Small Starts, and Core Capacity projects.

Section 2 – The Transit Funding Backlog

Cannibalization leads to a Donnybrook

The squeeze on transit funding has created an atmosphere of cannibalization within transit agencies. Transit agencies are balancing the need to keep their current bus and train systems safely operating with the demand to expand service to meet population growth. Due to a lack of adequate investment in transit, MAP-21 (P.L. 112-141), the 2012 highway and transit reauthorization act, shifted $540 million a year from bus procurement to cover other growing transit needs.[15]

The impact of this shift is clear. Transit agencies are holding on to older buses despite the higher associated maintenance costs. Reviewing bus age data in the National Transit Database reveals that, since MAP-21, the number of buses that exceed the age for replacement (i.e., 12 years old) has increased almost 40 percent. This increase in bus fleet age occurred despite bus grants funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).[16] Absent ARRA funds, the increase in the number of old buses would have been much greater.



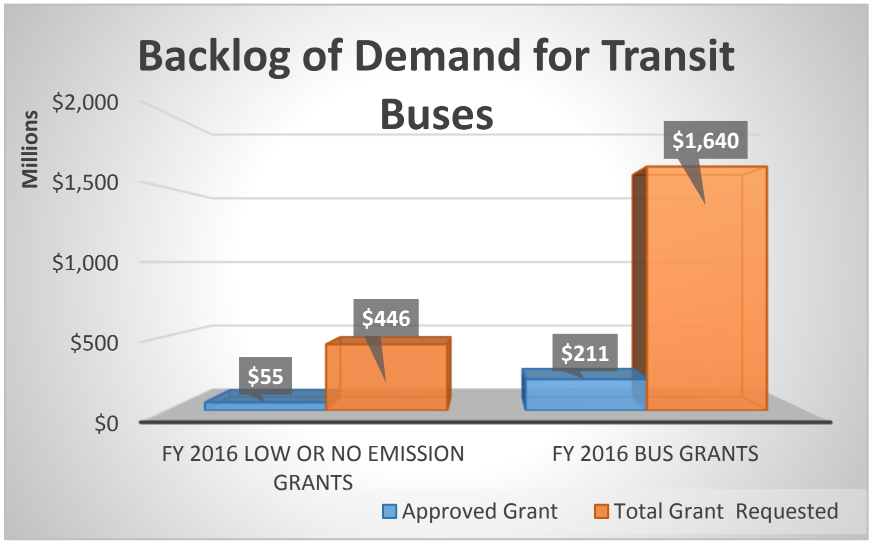
Data: National Transit Database

The subsequent donnybrook during House consideration of H.R. 22, which became the FAST Act, prompted smaller transit agencies that rely on buses to successfully fight for more bus funds by shifting Federal dollars away from the High Density State formula, which primarily benefits

[15] Transit groups push for more bus funding in highway bill. The Hill. June 20, 2015. Available at http://thehill.com/policy/transportation/248498-transit-groups-push-for-more-bus-funding-in-highway-bill.
[16] Federal Transit Administration. ARRA Statistical Summary. Table 4A.

cities with historical rail systems.[17] Transit agencies by mode are now clashing amongst themselves because the Republican majority refuses to provide meaningful increased Federal investment in public transit.

The FAST Act increased bus funding, but it still remains well below the pre-MAP-21 levels. As a result of the FAST Act, the FY 2016 Bus and Bus Facilities discretionary grant program provided $211 million to 61 bus projects, but that is dwarfed by the bus backlog. The FTA received 284 applications from 47 States totaling $1.64 billion in need. The FAST Act also provided $55 million for low or no-emission buses in FY 2016, which FTA awarded to 20 transit agencies. Again, demand dwarfed the available funds. FTA received applications for 101 projects requesting a total of $446 million.



State of Good Repair

In 2013, FTA estimated that more than 40 percent of buses and 25 percent of rail transit assets were in marginal or poor condition.[18] The *National State of Good Repair Assessment* identified an estimated $86 billion backlog in transit deferred maintenance and replacement needs, a backlog that continues to grow $2.5 billion every year.[19] Much of that backlog is found within the Nation's older rail transit systems.

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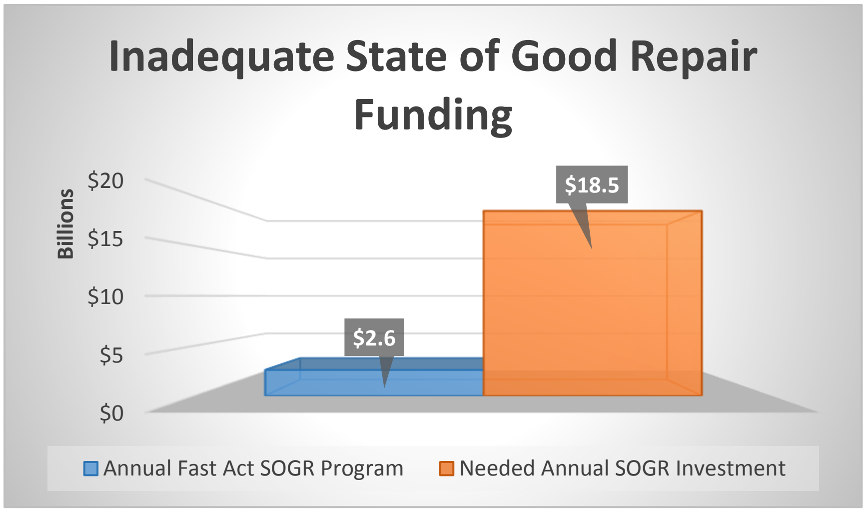
[17] U.S. House Transportation Bill's Herrera Beutler Amendment Would Rob Transit-Dense Northeast. Available at http://blog.tstc.org/2015/11/13/us-house-transportation-bills-herrera-beutler-amendment-would-rob-transit-dense-northeast/

[18] https://www.transit.dot.gov/TAM.

[19] Statement of Carolyn Flowers, Acting Administrator, Federal Transit Administration. Before the U.S. House of Representatives. Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Highways & Transit. Improving the Safety and Reliability of the Washington Metro. May 24, 2016.

The backlog is massive and growing despite enactment of the FAST Act in 2015. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) estimates that the average annual level of investment required to eliminate the existing system preservation backlog by 2030 is roughly $18.5 billion from all levels of government. In comparison, the FAST Act provides only $2.6 billion per year for the State of Good Repair program. Even accounting for all other transit dollars, there remains a $2 billion per year gap for State of Good Repair needs.[20] The FAST Act investment levels for transit allow us to limp along and only slow the trend of falling further behind.



Effects of the State of Good Repair Backlog

The lack of state of good repair is not a future problem for transit riders. There are daily reminders for riders, such as bus and rail car equipment malfunctions, track and switch defects, tunnel repairs, and longer commutes. Below are current examples of critical projects with substantial price tags that are long past due and preventing transit agencies from serving the demand for more service.

Washington DC: The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) SafeTrack program is a $60 million rehabilitation effort (above and beyond the annual $60 million track rehabilitation program) to accelerate track work to address critical safety recommendations and rehabilitate the Metrorail system to improve reliability. Safe Track accelerates three years' worth of work into approximately one year by using 15 "Safety Surges" – long duration track outages for major projects in the most distressed parts of the system.[21] WMATA is also currently spending $1.7 billion on 748 new train cars to replace the system's original trains and expand service to the growing suburbs.

New York City: The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) serving New York City will close the 100-year-old Canarsie tunnel for an $800 million rehabilitation in 2019, effectively shutting down the L train for 18 months. The L train is one of New York City's most crowded subway lines, with 400,000 passenger trips each weekday.[22] The rehabilitation includes repairing damage from Superstorm Sandy[23] to tracks, signals, switches, power cables, signal cables, communication cables,

[20] U.S. Department of Transportation. 2013 Conditions and Performance Report.
[21] WMATA Safe Track Fact Sheet: http://wmata.com/rail/safetrack.cfm?
[22] New York Times. L Train Will Shut Down From Manhattan to Brooklyn in '19 for 18 Months. Emma Fitzsimmons. July 25, 2016.
[23] The Disaster Relief Appropriations Act (Pub. L. 113–2) provided $10.9 billion for FTA's Emergency Relief Program for recovery, relief and resilience efforts in areas affected by Hurricane Sandy.

and lighting repairs, reinforcement to the structural integrity of the tunnel, and three new electric substations to provide more power to operate additional trains during rush hours.[24]

Chicago: The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) is currently seeking a Core Capacity grant to help fund the $2 billion Red and Purple Line modernization. The infrastructure supporting these lines is almost 100 years old with high maintenance costs and the need for frequent repairs that disrupt service and slow travel. At the same time, rush hour ridership has jumped 40 percent in five years. The rehabilitation will include a new bypass to eliminate a congested rail intersection, rebuild four stations, and replace several 100-year-old bridges and viaducts.[25]

San Francisco: Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) estimates it will cost at least $9.6 billion over the coming 10 years to rebuild a core system that is now 44 years old. This expenditure is in addition to the $2.1 billion for 750 new rail cars needed to replace the system's original rail cars. BART seeks to replace rails, upgrade power systems to meet growing demand, and waterproof tunnels that are below sea level. BART also needs to realign tunnels impacted by seismic fault lines and modernize its original 1972 automatic train control system.[26]

Meeting New Demand and Connecting People to Jobs

Job growth is expanding and much of this growth is not in downtown areas served by transit. A recent Brookings report found that the shift of jobs to suburbia is a growing challenge for transit agencies. The report found that "the typical city job is accessible to 38.2 percent of metropolitan working age residents, whereas for suburban jobs the figure is only 17.3 percent of residents."[27] Job expansion in suburbs requires more transit options. The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that $7.1 billion in annual expansion investments will be required to maintain transit performance at 2010 levels.[28] In comparison, the FAST Act authorizes only $2.3 billion per year for Capital Investment Grants, which fund New Starts, Small Starts, and Core Capacity projects.

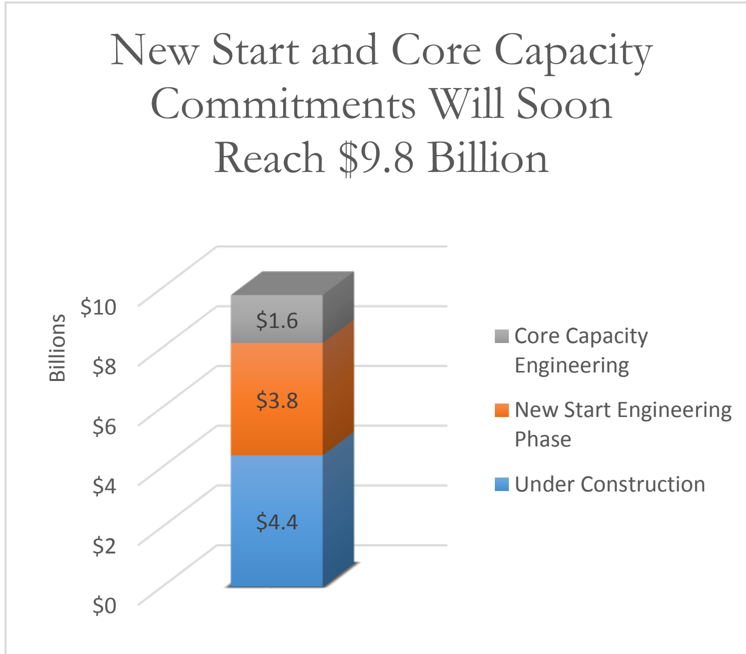
Despite higher local cost-share requirements, the demand for Capital Investment Grants is massive. From FY 2013 to FY 2017, the number of Capital Investment Grant applications has grown 70 percent. To accommodate this demand with inadequate funding, payments to project sponsors have been pushed into the future, which means the $2.3 billion per year for Capital Investment Grants is mostly committed to existing projects for the next several years.

Current New Start projects, which are under construction, have binding Federal commitments totaling $4.4 billion in FY 2017 and future years.[29] In addition, there are four more New Start projects that have entered the final engineering phase. Once each of these projects signs a Full Funding Grant Agreement, another $3.75 billion will be committed. In addition, FTA has two Core Capacity projects that are also in the engineering phase, and could soon commit another $1.6

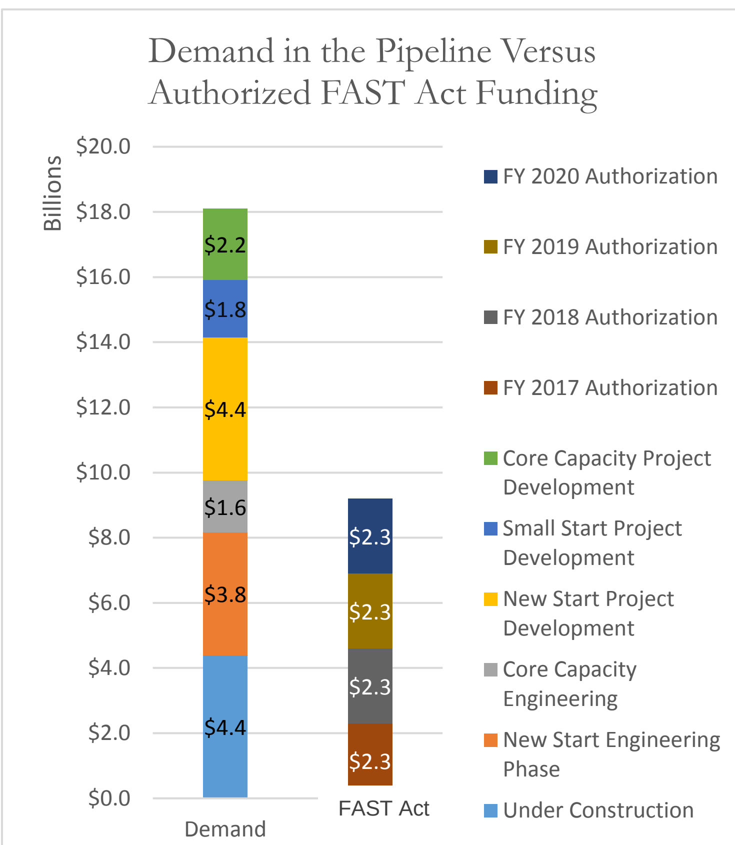
[24] MTA Press Release. July 25, 2016. http://www.mta.info/press-release/nyc-transit/l-line%E2%80%99s-canarsie-tunnel-close-2019-18-months-undergo-massive
[25] CTA Factsheet : http://www.transitchicago.com/rpmproject/
[26] BART Factsheet: https://www.bart.gov/sites/default/files/better-bart/BetterBART_Brochure_0.pdf
[27] Where the Jobs Are: Employer Access to Labor by Transit. Adie Tomer. Brookings Institute. July 2012.
[28] U.S. Department of Transportation. 2013 Conditions and Performance Report.
[29] Federal Transit Administration. Capital Investment Grants Payout Schedules in FFGAs.

billion. Combined, these transit projects will require $9.8 billion of Federal dollars, all from the $2.3 billion annual Capital Investment Grants program.[30]

Further down the pipeline is another $8.3 billion, which is early in the approval process (the project development category) for New Start, Small Start, and Core Capacity grants. Many of these projects will need funding in the next few years. The constant stream of projects in the pipeline means every new approval further constrains future spending and pushes the backlog further into the future.



Combining the $9.8 billion in upcoming Federal commitments with the $8.3 billion in projects further down in the pipline demonstrates a demand for Federal investments at a minimum of $18.1 billion. The FAST Act authorized $2.3 billion a year though FY 2020. Fours years of that funding remain, providing $9.2 billion. Even with a higher local and State cost share, the demand for public transit is growing, as is the demand for Federal investment.



[30] Federal Transit Administration. Capital Investment Grants data as of October 1, 2016.

Conclusion

Decades of attacks on and inadequate investment in public transit by the Republican majority is taking a toll on public transit systems across the Nation. The $86 billion backlog is forcing major cities across the Nation to dig deep into the pockets of local taxpayers just to keep the lights on. Severe cuts to bus funding have hurt smaller transit agencies, forcing them to rely on older buses that break down more often and cost more to maintain. Any increase in capacity to serve growing demand now needs massive local dollars.

House Republicans are correct that there is "A Better Way". Instead of rolling back Federal investment in transit systems, Congress should be investing heavily to meet the demand for more transit options, provide funding to improve the speed and frequency of transit service, and provide the necessary investment to eliminate the state-of-good-repair backlog. This "Better Way" requires Congress to stop playing Chicken Little and find a sustainable, dedicated revenue source for the Highway Trust Fund. The failure to find the necessary revenue and invest in transit harms low-income Americans striving to pull themselves out of poverty, undermining the very goal House Republicans claim to support. This in turn harms the economic engine of metropolitan America. There is "A Better Way". Congress must be bold and fund the growing needs of public transit.