



Connecticut officials are considering widening I-95 across the entire state – a project that would cost at least \$11 billion and do little to resolve congestion.



The 405 in Los Angeles was congested before it was widened; afterward, rush-hour trips took longer.

# Highway Boondoggles

Transportation Needs Are Changing. We Can't Afford Wasteful Highways.

## Limited Funds, Changing Needs

America is in a long-term transportation funding crisis. Gas tax revenues are shrinking, with the Congressional Budget Office projecting that federal highway spending will exceed gas revenues in every year through 2025, with the gap getting wider over time. The latest federal FAST Act transportation bill transfers an additional \$70 billion from the country's general funds to the Highway Trust Fund – the latest in a series of taxpayer bailouts.

At the same time, America's roads, bridges and transit systems are aging and increasingly in need of expensive repair, while changes in demographics and consumer preferences are creating new transportation demands. According to an Urban Land Institute study in 2015, more than half of Americans – and nearly two-thirds of Millennials, the country's largest generation – want to live "in a place where they do not need to use a car very often."

## Highway Expansion Doesn't Fix Congestion

Expensive highway expansion projects are often justified based on the need to address future congestion. But decades of experience show that **widening a highway often fails to reduce congestion:**

- Texas spent \$2.8 billion to expand Houston's Katy Freeway, making it the widest in the world, with 26 lanes. The result: commutes got longer. By 2014 morning commuters were spending 30 percent more time in their cars, and afternoon commuters 55 percent longer.
- California spent \$1 billion to widen I-405 in Los Angeles – one of the nation's busiest highways. Five months after the widened road reopened in 2014, rush-hour trips took longer than they had while construction was still ongoing.

## Boondoggles We Can't Afford

**Boondoggle highway projects absorb scarce resources** that can be better used for other needs. State governments should cancel or downsize wasteful highway projects and use the funds to fix potholes and bridges and invest in 21st century transportation solutions, including public transportation.

State and federal taxpayers should demand transparency, accountability and performance in transportation spending and insist that questionable highway projects are re-evaluated based on the latest data and knowledge of America's transportation needs.

## Highway Boondoggles Can Be Stopped

Several state and local governments have taken steps to **reevaluate, reshape or eliminate boondoggle highway projects.**

- The Illiana Expressway, a \$1.3 billion to \$2.8 billion tollway to stretch from I-55 in Illinois to I-65 in Indiana, was canceled after a federal judge rejected the highway's environmental analysis as faulty and state officials questioned the road's expense.
- The Trinity Parkway in Dallas, a \$1.5 billion proposal to build a six-lane, nine-mile tolled highway along the river in the middle of the city, was downsized to four lanes after criticism from the community.
- A proposal to widen I-94 in Milwaukee has been denied funding by state lawmakers in the wake of community opposition to the project and questions about the accuracy of state officials' traffic forecasts.

## Twelve Boondoggles, Costing \$24 Billion, Are Examples

These projects, some originally proposed decades ago, are either intended to address problems that do not exist or have serious negative impacts on surrounding communities that undercut their value. They are but a sampling of many questionable highway projects nationwide that could cost taxpayers tens of billions of dollars to build, and many more billions over the course of upcoming decades to maintain.

State	Boondoggle Project	Cost
CT	I-95 widening	\$11.2 billion
FL	Tampa Bay Express Lanes	\$3.3 billion
TX	State Hwy 45 Southwest	\$109 million
CA	San Gabriel Valley Route 710 Tunnel	\$3.2 - \$5.6 billion
CO	1-70 East widening	\$58 million
NC	I-77 Express Lanes	\$647 million
WA	Puget Sound Gateway	\$2.8 - \$3.1 billion
TX	State Hwy 249 extension	\$337 - \$389 million
IA	U.S. 20 widening	\$286 million
NM	Paseo del Volcan extension	\$96 million
OH	Portsmouth bypass	\$429 million
PA	Mon-Fayette Expressway extension	\$1.7 billion