



# | HIGHWAY BOONDOGGLES 6

Big Projects. Bigger Price Tags. Limited Benefits.

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# I CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....   | 1  |
| INTRODUCTION .....   | 4  |
| THE PROBLEM WITH HIGHWAY BOONDOGGLES .....                         | 5  |
| HIGHWAY EXPANSIONS ARE EXPENSIVE AND SADDLE STATES WITH DEBT ..... | 5  |
| HIGHWAY EXPANSION DOESN'T SOLVE CONGESTION .....                   | 7  |
| HIGHWAY EXPANSION DAMAGES THE ENVIRONMENT AND OUR COMMUNITIES..... | 8  |
| 2020 HIGHWAY BOONDOGGLES .....                                     | 10 |
| CINCINNATI EASTERN BYPASS, OHIO.....                               | 11 |
| LOOP 1604 EXPANSION, TEXAS.....                                    | 12 |
| I-57 INTERCHANGE, ILLINOIS.....                                    | 13 |
| BIRMINGHAM NORTHERN BELTLINE, ALABAMA .....                        | 14 |
| I-526 EXTENSION, SOUTH CAROLINA.....                               | 15 |
| M-CORES, FLORIDA.....  | 16 |
| SOUTHEAST CONNECTOR, TEXAS.....                                    | 18 |
| CONCLUSION .....   | 23 |
| APPENDIX A: STATUS OF PREVIOUSLY COVERED BOONDOGGLE PROJECTS.....  | 24 |
| APPENDIX B: STATE ROAD EXPANSION COSTS .....                       | 26 |
| APPENDIX C: STATE DEBT AND ROADS IN POOR CONDITION .....           | 27 |
| NOTES .....  | 28 |



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## AMERICA'S AGING ROADS AND BRIDGES

are in increasingly dire need of repair. Tens of thousands of people die on the roads each year and more are sickened or die from air pollution caused by vehicles. Tens of millions of Americans lack access to quality public transit or safe places to walk or bike, leaving them fully dependent on cars or – for those who cannot afford a car or are physically unable to drive – entirely shut off from critical services and opportunities.

America was already faced with the need to make critical transportation investments. And then COVID-19 hit, upending travel patterns and undercutting the traditional sources of government transportation revenue.

Now is no time to fritter away scarce public resources on wasteful boondoggle projects.

Yet across the country, state and local governments continue to move forward with tens of billions of dollars' worth of new and expanded highways that do little to address real transportation challenges, while diverting scarce funding from much-needed infrastructure repairs and key, future-oriented transportation priorities. **Highway Boondoggles 6 finds seven new budget-eating highway projects slated to cost a total of \$26 billion that will harm communities and the environment, while likely failing to achieve meaningful transportation goals.**

## Highway expansions are expensive and saddle states with debt.

- In 2014, the latest year for which data is available, federal, state and local governments spent \$26 billion on highway expansion projects – sucking money away from road repair, transit and other local needs.
- From 2008 to 2018, the highway debt of state transportation agencies more than doubled from \$111 billion to \$228 billion.<sup>1</sup>
- New roadways are expensive to maintain and represent a lasting financial burden on the American people. The average new lane-mile costs \$24,000 per year to keep in a state of good repair.<sup>2</sup>

## Highway expansion doesn't solve congestion.

- Expanding a highway sets off a chain reaction of societal decisions that ultimately lead to the highway becoming congested again – often in only a short time. Since 1980, the nation has added more than 870,000 lane-miles of highway – paving more than 1,652 square miles, an area larger than the state of Rhode Island – and yet pre-COVID congestion was worse than it was in the early 1980s.<sup>3</sup>

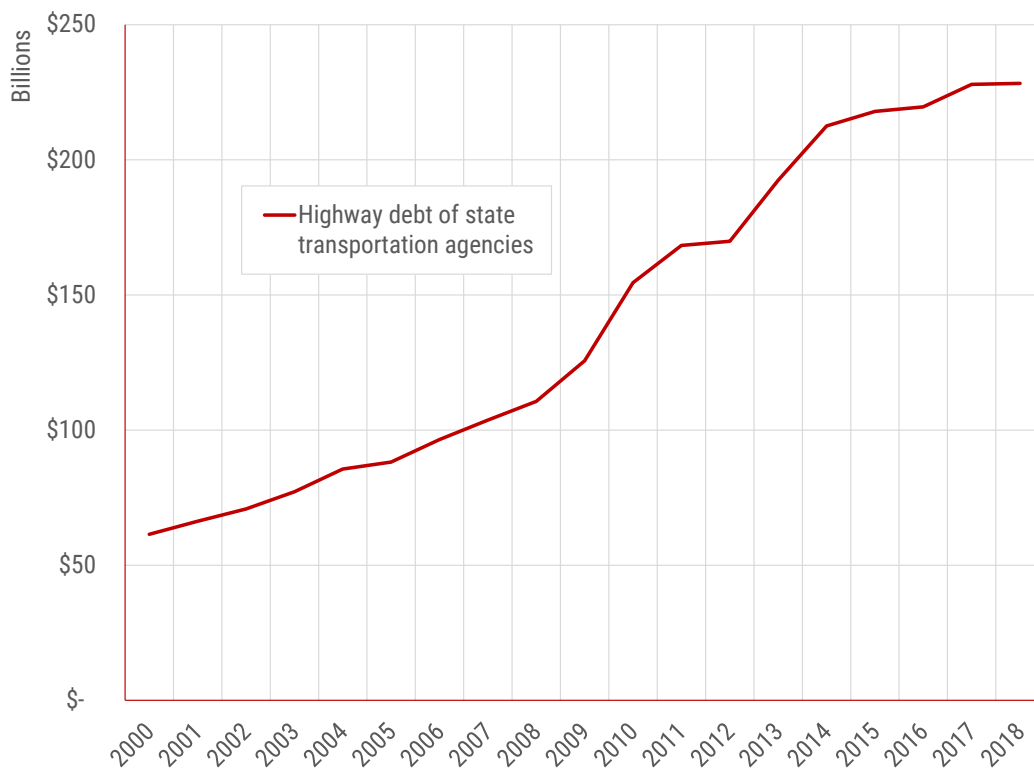
## Highway expansion damages the environment and our communities.

- Highway expansion fuels additional driving that contributes to climate change. Transportation is the nation's number one source of global warming pollution.<sup>4</sup>
- Pollution from transportation causes tens of thousands of deaths in the U.S. each year and makes Americans more vulnerable to diseases like COVID-19.<sup>5</sup>
- Highway expansion can also cause irreparable harm to communities – forcing the relocation of homes and businesses, widening “dead zones” alongside highways, severing street connections for pedestrians and cars, and reducing the city's base of taxable property.

States continue to spend billions of dollars on new or expanded highways that fail to address real problems with our transportation system and will create new problems for our communities and the environment. Questionable projects poised to absorb billions of scarce transportation dollars include:

- **Cincinnati Eastern Bypass; Ohio; \$7.3 billion:** Ohio's plan to build a 75-mile bypass around the eastern side of Cincinnati would cause sprawling development and overwhelm the Ohio Department of Transportation's construction budget.
- **Loop 1604 Expansion; Texas; \$1.36 billion:** A major expansion to a 23-mile section of Loop 1604 in San Antonio would threaten the Edwards Aquifer, which supplies drinking water to millions of people in the region.

FIGURE ES-1. THE HIGHWAY DEBT OF STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES HAS DOUBLED SINCE 2008 (NOMINAL)<sup>6</sup>



- **I-57 Interchange; Illinois; \$205.5 million:** Dubbed the “Exit to Nowhere,” the proposed interchange would connect drivers to a non-existent and heavily criticized proposed third airport outside of Chicago.
- **Birmingham Northern Beltline; Alabama; \$5.3 billion:** The Alabama Department of Transportation is pushing a project reliant on intermittent and insufficient federal funding, which could take 40 years to complete.
- **I-526/Mark Clark Extension; South Carolina; \$725 million:** The project, which will cost Charleston County more than it has spent on any single project in its history, would save commuters just seconds of travel time.
- **M-CORES; Florida; \$10+ billion:** Florida’s 330-mile, three-highway construction project, which is already straining the state budget, would destroy critical open spaces and threaten the survival of the endangered Florida panther.
- **Southeast Connector; Texas; \$1.6 billion:** The expansion of three highways in the Fort Worth area by up to six lanes in each direction would induce sprawl and damage local communities, but is still moving forward even as the city’s transit system struggles to provide basic service.

In addition, the Allston Multimodal Project in Boston is a \$1 billion project that, in its current form, is inconsistent with the city and state’s commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage a shift away from driving. There is no escaping the need for major investment in transportation

infrastructure in this section of Boston – yet without changes, the project could make it more costly and difficult for Massachusetts meet the transportation challenges of the 21st century.

**Federal, state and local governments should stop or downsize unnecessary or low-priority highway projects.** Specifically, policymakers should:

- **Invest in transportation solutions that reduce the need for costly and disruptive highway expansion projects.** Investments in public transportation, changes in land-use policy, road pricing measures, and technological measures that help drivers avoid peak-time traffic, for example, can often address congestion more cheaply and effectively than highway expansion.
- **Adopt fix-it-first policies** that reorient transportation funding away from newer and wider highways and toward repair of existing roads, bridges and transit systems.
- **Use the latest transportation data and require full cost-benefit comparisons, including future maintenance needs,** to evaluate all proposed new and expanded highways. This includes projects proposed as public-private partnerships.
- **Give priority funding to transportation projects that reduce growth in vehicle-miles traveled,** to account for the public health, environmental and climate benefits resulting from reduced driving.
- **Invest in research and data collection** to better track and react to ongoing shifts in how people travel.

# | Introduction

COVID-19 HAS RESHAPED EVERY CORNER of American life – including transportation.

Americans drove 17 percent fewer miles in the first half of 2020 than they did the year before, and loss of transit ridership was even greater in many places, as businesses and schools shut down and more Americans worked from home.<sup>7</sup> In many American cities, “rush hour” disappeared – and with American workers and employers now seeing the benefits of working from home, it may be years before commuting returns to pre-COVID levels.

Reduced gas tax and transit fare revenues deepened the already gaping budgetary hole many transportation agencies face: state transportation officials anticipate a 30 percent decline in transportation revenue in 2020 and 2021.<sup>8</sup> Redirecting money from general state budgets to transportation may not be a viable solution, as the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities predicted that states would face \$555 billion in cumulative deficits over fiscal years 2020-2022.<sup>9</sup>

The documented role of air pollution in worsening COVID-19 reinforces the urgency and importance of cleaning up our transportation system. A study found that areas with increased local air pollution have experienced disproportionate numbers of deaths.<sup>10</sup> As a Harvard researcher told the American Lung Association, continued high levels of pollution mean that “Americans are more vulnerable to COVID-19, and are more likely to end up in the hospital or die.”<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, COVID-19 reinforced the critical role that public transportation plays in serving the needs of essential workers in cities large and small. Yet the stunning drop in fare revenue has left transit systems

needing tens of billions of dollars just to survive or provide basic service.<sup>12</sup>

Fewer people on the roads. Less money for transportation. Growing needs for clean and sustainable transportation and for system repair. And a desperate need for continued transit operations to serve people who rely on it, including essential workers.

How have many state and local agencies proposed to respond to these dramatic shifts? By building more roads.

Even amidst the global pandemic, transportation agencies have continued to build and plan for a series of massive, costly highway expansion projects – spending tens of billions of dollars on new concrete even as other transportation needs grow more dire.

Many of these highway expansion projects didn’t make sense even before COVID-19. Our five previous *Highway Boondoggles* reports have illustrated the immense amount of money spent on highway projects of dubious value. But the COVID-19 pandemic – and the deep, lasting changes it is likely to make on American life – provides even more reason to take a step back and evaluate the wisdom of highway expansion.

The seven projects highlighted in this report are indicative of a broken transportation funding and policy system – one that continues to pump out highway projects that are wasteful and damaging while failing to make critical, high priority investments in infrastructure repair and sustainable forms of transportation. The costs of that failed approach were already steep, even before the pandemic. Now, with the nation facing new challenges and strains, they have become far too much to bear.



# The problem with highway boondoggles

**EVERY YEAR, THE UNITED STATES SPENDS** billions of dollars expanding our existing highway network. These new highways typically impose financial, social and environmental costs, while their claimed benefits, such as reduced congestion, often fail to materialize.

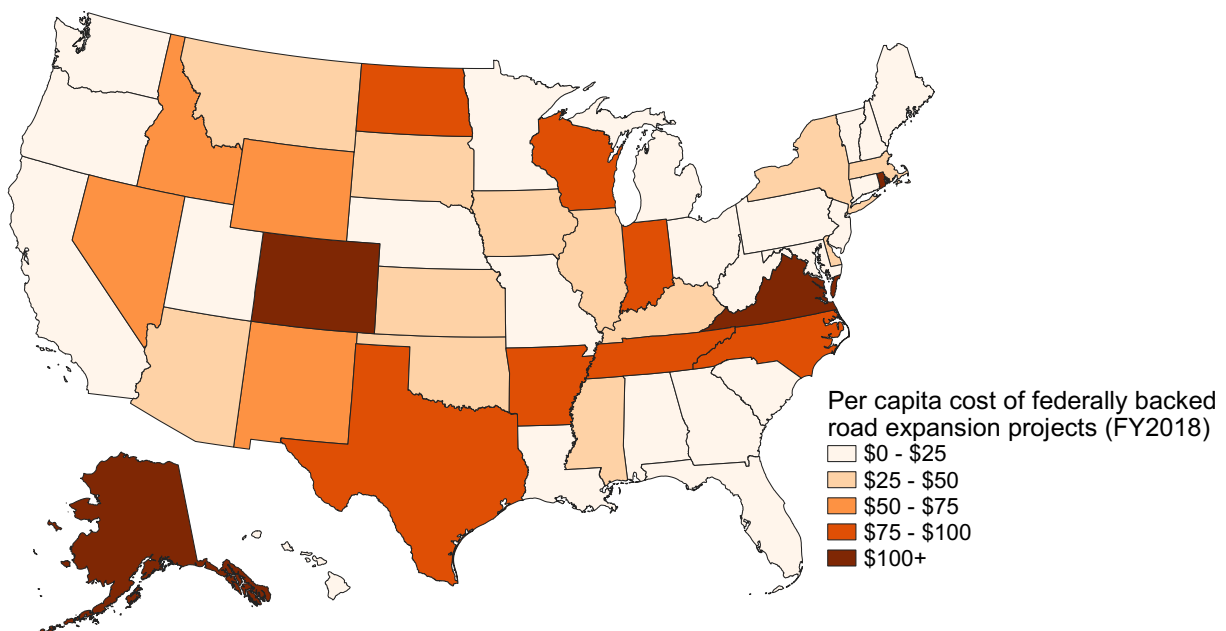
## Highway expansions are expensive and saddle states with debt

Highway expansion costs the United States tens of billions of dollars each year. In 2014, the last year for which data is available, federal, state and local governments spent \$26 billion expanding the highway system – including new roads, new bridges and widening of existing highways.<sup>13</sup> Those expansion projects absorbed one out of every four capital dollars spent on highways in 2014, the rest of which went to repairs and maintenance.

For fiscal year 2018, the American Road and Transportation Builders Association published data on road projects that received federal funding, aggregated by state. This data reveals that in 2018, there were more than 1,000 federally backed road expansion projects (either added capacity on existing roads, or new roads) in the United States, costing a total of more than \$13 billion including state contributions.<sup>14</sup> In four states – Rhode Island, Colorado, Virginia and Alaska – state and federal spending on these projects was more than \$100 per capita.<sup>15</sup> (See Figure 1 and Appendix B.)

Even as road expansion costs continue to amount to billions of dollars each year, the traditional sources of funding for highway programs – gas taxes and other so-called “user fees” – are increasingly failing to keep up. Fuel and vehicle taxes brought in less

FIGURE 1. PER CAPITA COSTS OF FEDERALLY BACKED CAPACITY EXPANSION PROJECTS IN FY2018, BY STATE<sup>16</sup>



revenue in 2018 than in 2000 when adjusted for inflation, the result of slower growth in driving, more fuel-efficient cars, and the unwillingness of the federal government and many states to increase gasoline taxes.<sup>17</sup> Yet highway spending has continued to increase.<sup>18</sup> The result has been increased borrowing for highway expenses and a growing dependence on revenue from general funds supplied by taxpayers, regardless of how much or how little they drive.

Continued highway expansion amid stagnating gas tax revenues mean that limited funding is available for other transportation needs – including needs that are increasingly urgent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- **Road repairs** – As many of the roads and bridges the nation built in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century near the end of their useful lives, governments are struggling to meet day-to-day infrastructure maintenance needs and often defer necessary repairs. This has led to an almost \$800 billion backlog of highway and bridge repair and rehabilitation.<sup>19</sup> As streets, roads and bridges continue to age, the cost and urgency of maintenance and repairs can only be expected to grow. And Americans agree – according to a 2020 YouGov poll, fully 79 percent of Americans believe that we should be fixing roads before we build new ones.<sup>20</sup>
- **Transit repair and expansion** – Similarly, the nation faces a nearly \$100 billion repair and rehabilitation backlog for its public transportation systems.<sup>21</sup> Americans also are increasingly demanding expanded access to public transportation. According to a 2020 YouGov poll, Americans favor government action to reduce the number of cars on the road, and support increasing the share of funding for public transportation.<sup>22</sup> Voters across the country ap-

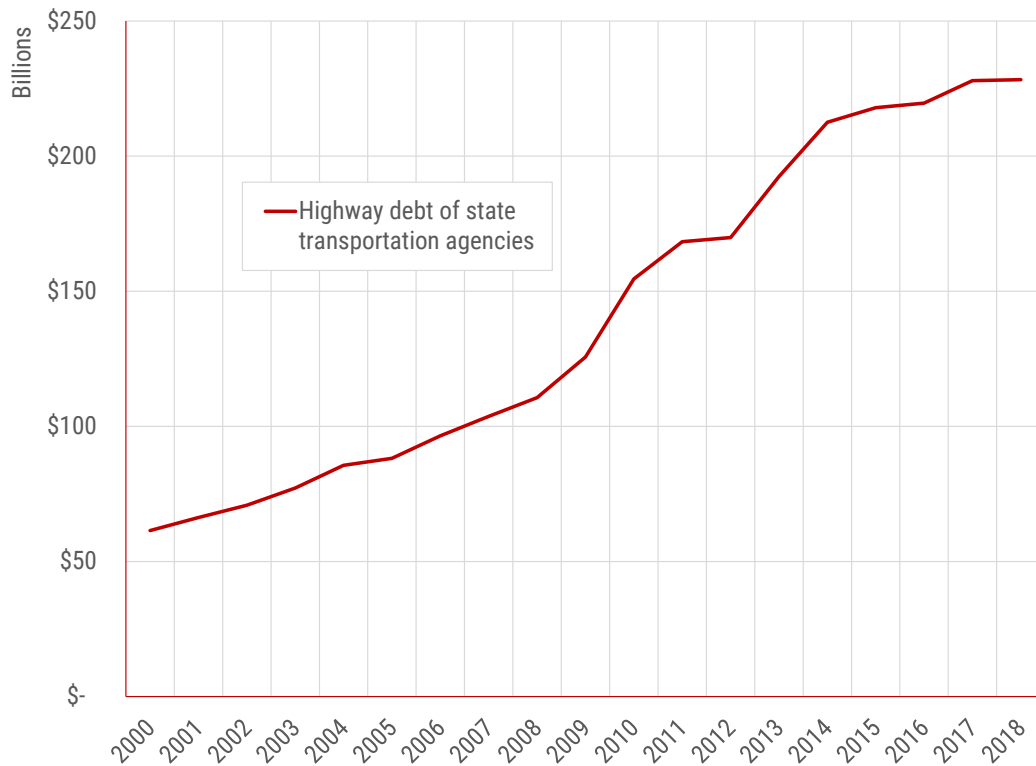
proved \$170 billion in new investment in transit on local ballots in November 2016, and \$9 billion more in 2018.<sup>23</sup>

- **Continued transit operation** – COVID-19 reinforced the critical role that public transportation plays in serving the needs of essential workers in cities large and small. Yet the precipitous drop in ridership and fare revenue caused by the pandemic has left transit systems needing tens of billions of dollars just to survive or provide basic service.<sup>24</sup>
- **Local needs** – Local governments also clamor for funding to expand bike lanes, improve conditions for pedestrians, fix potholes, and engage in “complete streets” transformations and other improvements to local streetscapes. Often, these improvements cost just a tiny fraction of the cost of a major highway project but deliver significant improvements in quality of life and expand the mobility options available to local residents, which can be especially important as residents seek safe ways to travel during COVID-19.

Costly highway expansions also saddle states with debt. High spending for road expansions and other projects, combined with stagnant revenue from gas taxes and other sources, has led to ballooning state highway debt. From 2008 to 2018, the highway debt of state transportation agencies more than doubled from \$111 billion to \$228 billion.<sup>25</sup> As a result, the cost to retire old debt has become increasingly steep. In 2018, \$15.89 billion, or 6.6 percent, of all highway spending was spent just to retire old debt, compared to \$5.1 billion or 4.2 percent in 2000.<sup>26</sup>

Highways built using public-private partnerships (PPPs), in which private companies build roads, often in exchange for the right to raise and collect toll revenue,

FIGURE 2. THE HIGHWAY DEBT OF STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES HAS DOUBLED SINCE 2008 (NOMINAL)<sup>31</sup>



are sometimes presented to the public as a way to build new highways without public costs.<sup>27</sup> Yet while some privatized toll roads do cover their own costs, PPP projects can require new spending when they must be propped up or rescued in cases where tolls do not generate enough revenue to pay off investors or cover costs, as has been the case with state Highway 130 and the Camino Colombia toll road in Texas.<sup>28</sup> Some toll roads have also reported revenue shortfalls resulting from COVID-19 impacts on travel.<sup>29</sup>

The new roadway created by highway expansions is also expensive to maintain and creates a lasting financial burden. The average lane-mile of road costs \$24,000 per year to keep in a state of good repair.<sup>30</sup>

### Highway expansion doesn't solve congestion

Building a new highway or widening an existing one is often billed as a way to reduce traffic congestion. Nearly a century of highway construction in the United States, however, suggests that it does not work. Since 1980, the nation has added more than 870,000 lane-miles of highway – paving more than 1,652 square miles, an area larger than the state of Rhode Island – yet congestion prior to the COVID pandemic was worse than it was in the early 1980s.<sup>32</sup>

For decades, transportation researchers have understood why building and widening highways does not eliminate congestion.<sup>33</sup> Expanding a highway sets off a chain reaction of societal decisions that

ultimately lead to the highway becoming congested again – often in only a short time. Businesses may choose to move or establish new locations on the outskirts of the city to take advantage of the new highway. People may choose to move farther away in pursuit of cheaper housing. Commuters who had left early for work to avoid traffic might travel at rush hour once again. People who had taken transit might get back into their cars. This “induced travel” (sometimes referred to as “induced demand”) takes up additional space on highways, ultimately resulting in the return of congestion. This phenomenon is so predictable that it has been called the “Fundamental Law of Road Congestion.”<sup>34</sup>

### **Highway expansion damages the environment and our communities**

Highway expansion fuels additional driving that contributes to global warming. Americans drive more per capita – and produce more carbon pollution from transportation per capita – than any other major industrialized nation.<sup>35</sup> In 2018, transportation was the nation’s number one source of the carbon pollution that is the leading cause of climate change.<sup>36</sup>

By encouraging more people to take to the roads, highway expansion makes it more difficult for the nation to meet its clean air and greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. To achieve the dramatic reductions in carbon pollution needed to prevent the worst impacts of global warming, the United States and the world must promote

low-carbon forms of transportation wherever possible. Highway expansion does just the opposite.

Highway expansion can also cause irreparable harm to communities by forcing the relocation of homes and businesses, widening “dead zones” alongside highways where street life is unpleasant or impossible, severing street connections for pedestrians and cars, reducing the city’s base of taxable property, creating noise and disruption that degrade quality of life, and facilitating the emission of pollutants that cause tens of thousands of American deaths each year and make people more vulnerable to diseases including COVID-19.<sup>37</sup>

According to former U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, roughly 1 million Americans were displaced by highway construction during the first 20 years of the Interstate Highway System.<sup>38</sup> Many of those who were not displaced found their community life disrupted. A 2006 study found that U.S. cities would have added 8 percent to their population between 1950 and 1990 if urban freeways had not been built, compared to the 17 percent decline that occurred amidst the urban highway boom.<sup>39</sup>

Such displacement and disruption continue, including through many projects in this report. In Ohio, for example, the proposed Cincinnati Eastern Bypass could impact three churches, 4,195 acres of farmland, 712 homes, and three cemeteries.<sup>40</sup> (See page 11.)

## NOT ALL BOONDOGGLES ARE BIG

The vast majority of road building projects are not multibillion-dollar projects like those covered in this and previous *Highway Boondoggles* reports, but rather smaller projects for roads running through and connecting communities. From 2008 to 2018, the U.S. added 310,000 lane-miles of new roadway, of which 267,000 lane-miles were not freeways or interstates but smaller arterial, collector, and local roads.<sup>41</sup>

Smaller road capacity expansion projects can cause many of the same problems as the biggest highway boondoggles, albeit on a smaller scale: They damage communities and the environment, drain public finances, and fail to improve the transportation system or relieve congestion.

Because smaller roads are often tightly integrated into neighborhoods, even “small” boondoggle projects can create enormous community disruption. In Toledo, Ohio, for example, a proposed widening of an arterial road from four to five lanes was to require the demolition of 12 homes before it was stopped by opposition from a local citizens group.<sup>42</sup>

Unlike major highways, smaller roads are often used not just by people driving, but by people traveling on bike or on

foot. Road widening projects can make roads more dangerous for these users by increasing vehicle speeds and making roads more difficult to cross. Bigger, faster roads may have contributed to increases in pedestrian deaths in recent years. A study assessed pedestrian fatality trends from 1977 to 2016 and found that the share of pedestrian fatalities that occurred on wide roads with four or more lanes increased from 41 percent in the 1970s to 58 percent in the 2010s.<sup>43</sup>

Yet despite their costs and impacts, smaller road projects are less likely to receive the same level of scrutiny applied to larger, more expensive projects. In the case of federally funded roads, projects with a smaller size and scope are less likely to require detailed environmental impact statements that assess both environmental and community impacts.<sup>44</sup> In many cases, capacity expansion projects are based on outdated transportation metrics that prioritize vehicle speed without thoughtfully evaluating the need for more roadway, and often project impacts are not assessed following completion. A 2017 study assessed a Los Angeles policy requiring road widenings following new residential development, and found that often no traffic data was collected to assess project impact.<sup>45</sup>



# | 2020 Highway Boondoggles

*Boondoggle (n): Work or activity that is wasteful or pointless but gives the appearance of having value.*

– GOOGLE DICTIONARY<sup>64</sup>

**AMERICA'S CONTINUED CONSTRUCTION** of ever-wider highways costs tens of billions of dollars each year – money that is diverted from more pressing needs, such as highway repair, transit repair and expansion, and local street improvements. These highway expansion projects often fail to reduce congestion, the job they are frequently intended to perform. They also create new infrastructure with high maintenance costs, and many are funded with reckless borrowing that creates a debt burden for future generations.

In this report, we identify seven highway “boondoggles” slated to cost \$26 billion – projects with large price tags that are unnecessary and/or threaten to damage the communities, environments and historical resources around them.

Some of these projects were originally proposed decades ago, at a time when concepts such as induced travel and the impact of driving on the global climate were less well known. Others represent more recent trends, such as highway projects that are bundled with other more desirable changes like improved walking and transit infrastructure designed to overcome political objections.

In this report, we address four types of projects:

- Projects that add new lanes to existing roads.
- Highway expansions that are unnecessarily tacked onto needed highway reconstruction and repair projects. Many highways are currently reaching the end of their useful lives and require major reconstruction, or were built in a way that no longer meets safety standards. In many cases, however, highway agencies have added expansion onto these reconstruction projects, making them more expensive and disruptive than they could be.
- Highway reconstruction projects that are out of step with state policy goals. America's 20<sup>th</sup> century highway-building spree saw the construction of many roads that should never have been built. Some cities have begun to remove destructive freeways that cut through city centers or reimagine them for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, yet others are planning to spend billions to rebuild them essentially as they were before – perpetuating their impacts on communities and the environment and making it more difficult to reach air quality, equity or climate goals. Spending public resources to create problems that then require the expenditure of more public resources to fix is the epitome of waste, and as a result, wasteful and counterproductive reconstruction projects will be included beginning with this edition of *Highway Boondoggles*.
- New highways or relocations of existing highways.

While not every state or region is included in the list of misguided highway projects below, nearly every state has one or more highway expansion projects whose wisdom is questionable, particularly at a time of deep budget pressure created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The projects highlighted in this report are not necessarily the worst highway boondoggles in the nation, but they are representative of the costs of proceeding with destructive projects that do not have compelling transportation rationales.

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## **Cincinnati Eastern Bypass, Ohio**

**Estimated cost: \$7.3 billion**

Ohio and Kentucky transportation officials are considering a new four-lane bypass around the eastern side of Cincinnati that would cause sprawling development and damaging community impacts, while overwhelming Ohio's state transportation budget. The proposed Cincinnati Eastern Bypass (CEB) would entail approximately 75 miles of new freeway.<sup>47</sup>

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) estimates the project will cost as much as \$7.3 billion, including the costs of mitigating environmental and community impacts.<sup>48</sup> This is more than three times the department's annual construction program budget, which averages \$2 billion, and according to ODOT, the project would hinder ODOT's "ability to fund the rest of our program" even if built more cheaply.<sup>49</sup> In large part because of these cost impacts, ODOT has concluded that "no further expenditures of funding and staff time be put toward the CEB."<sup>50</sup> Yet some state politicians are still working to move the project forward.<sup>51</sup>

If built, the highway is likely to increase pollution and sprawl, and to draw economic activity away from downtown Cincinnati. A 2000 study of similar highway bypass proj-

ects found that all such surveyed projects led to "increases in sprawled, low density commercial and residential development entailing high environmental and infrastructure costs."<sup>52</sup> In the case of a bypass around Richmond, Virginia, the study concluded that "relocations of retailing, local industries, offices, and residents facilitated by the outer belt have weakened the city's downtown business district. ... Without the bypass, local planners agree there would have likely been more redevelopment at high densities in the downtown area."<sup>53</sup>

The project would also lead to more driving and more pollution. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet found that the project is likely to increase the number of vehicles traveling in the area by thousands of trips per day.<sup>54</sup>

These impacts would be at odds with goals set by the city of Cincinnati. Cincinnati's Green City Plan aims to improve "sustainability, equity, and resilience" and includes the goal of "population density and transit-oriented development."<sup>55</sup> The plan also includes goals to "decrease the consumption of fossil fuels, including gas, diesel, and natural gas, by 20%."<sup>56</sup>

Finally, the project would damage the environment and the communities along its proposed route. ODOT has concluded that the new highway will have "significant impacts to property and environmental resources."<sup>57</sup> The project would affect three churches, 4,195 acres of farmland, 712 homes, and three cemeteries, which a map analysis reveals would likely include Plainview Cemetery in Goshen and Greenmound Cemetery in New Richmond.<sup>58</sup> Building the highway would also require four new river crossings over the Licking River, the Ohio River, the East Fork Little Miami River, and the Little Miami River.<sup>59</sup> These new crossings could also put those rivers at risk of runoff pollution and construction damage.<sup>60</sup>

## Loop 1604 Expansion, Texas

Estimated cost: \$1.36 billion



*The Loop 1604/I-10 interchange would be five levels high.<sup>61</sup> Credit: Texas Department of Transportation via Youtube<sup>62</sup>*

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is currently reviewing plans for a major expansion to a 23-mile section of Loop 1604, a suburban highway loop that encircles San Antonio. The project, which would expand Loop 1604 between state Highway 16 and Interstate 35 north of the city, includes four to six additional lanes along the entire length of roadway, new frontage roads and a five-level interchange with Interstate 10.<sup>63</sup> This \$1.36 billion expansion, while likely failing to solve local congestion problems, would threaten one of the region's primary sources of drinking water.<sup>64</sup>

Expanding Loop 1604 is unlikely to alleviate congestion, the project's stated primary purpose.<sup>65</sup> As a 2019 San Antonio Express-News article noted, "scores of urban planners have lamented similar suburban

highway loops in Houston, Austin and Dallas" as "no amount of widening Loop 1604 could keep up with the explosive growth of vehicle traffic."<sup>66</sup> San Antonio can look to a recent local example of the phenomenon of induced travel, in which additional capacity causes more driving and congestion. Despite a project to widen the northern section of Loop 410, which was completed in 2010, that section of the loop is still among the most congested highways in Texas.<sup>67</sup>

Even as the Loop 1604 project will likely fail to achieve its transportation goals, it will pose a pollution threat to the Edwards Aquifer, an important source of drinking water for the region. The Edwards Aquifer is an underground body of fresh water stored in interconnected caves and porous limestone that serves as the primary water source for



residents of San Antonio and much of the surrounding area.<sup>68</sup> The Loop 1604 expansion would add 198 acres of impervious surface to the aquifer's recharge zone, which is the primary area in which rainfall and streams enter and refill the aquifer.<sup>69</sup>

The risks of developing the recharge zone have been known for decades. For example, a 1999 study found that "increasing residential and commercial development on the recharge zone increases the potential for runoff containing toxic substances, oil spills, or leakage of hazardous materials to contaminate the regional drinking water supply."<sup>70</sup> In 2010, the organization Aquifer Guardians in Urban Areas filed a motion to block an interchange project in this section of Loop 1604 on the grounds that it threatened the aquifer. One affidavit supporting the motion noted that past research found the aquifer suffered from pollution similar to that originating from "roadway construction, operation, or indirect effects", and that the aquifer "is most susceptible to contamination by pollutants that originate on the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone, where the proposed roadway project would be sited."<sup>71</sup> The project's Draft Environmental Assessment, released in August 2020, also notes that during construction the project "may indirectly affect underlying groundwater quality ... through the erosion of disturbed soils and spills of construction related materials," and that during regular use "the additional impervious cover would accumulate pollutants which may infiltrate to the underlying groundwater if the runoff is not treated."<sup>72</sup>

## I-57 Interchange, Illinois

Estimated cost: \$206 million



*The proposed interchange would be built in farmland near Peotone in Will County, Illinois. Credit: Ken Lund via Flickr (CC BY-SA 2.0)*

Illinois officials have budgeted \$206 million for a new interchange on I-57 that would take drivers onto a road through undeveloped farmland 44 miles south of Chicago in Will County, Illinois. The project has been deemed "The Exit to Nowhere" by the Illinois Policy Center, as the destination of the proposed interchange is an unbuilt airport which itself is an object of controversy. The project also represents a large unnecessary cost at a time when key local transportation priorities are in desperate need of funding, and will require paving over rural areas of farmland and floodplains.

Illinois' most recent multi-year highway plan allocates \$205.5 million for this interchange between I-57 and Eagle Lake Road.<sup>73</sup> This money comes from the governor's \$45 billion infrastructure plan and is partially funded by a recent doubling of the state's gasoline tax.<sup>74</sup> But there are much more important transportation needs in the state.

As Howard Learner of the Chicago-based Environmental Law and Policy Center told Crain's Chicago Business, "Illinois has a huge backlog of vital transit, rail, highway and bridge projects that improve community mobility," and in 2020, Chicago-area transit systems are facing almost \$1 billion in revenue losses resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>75</sup>

The project would connect travelers to the proposed South Suburban Airport (SSA) in rural agricultural Will County — an airport that does not exist, may never exist and is unnecessary according to many observers.<sup>76</sup> So far, more than \$100 million has been spent on land acquisition and studies for the airport, though neither process is complete and construction has not been started.<sup>77</sup> The airport was originally proposed as a passenger airport, but when no commercial airlines showed interest its proponents shifted to propose a cargo airport instead.<sup>78</sup> But it has yet to see commitments from either airlines or shipping companies like Amazon and UPS, which already rely on nearby airports including O'Hare and Rockford.<sup>79</sup> In the FAA's review of the forecast use of the SSA, they stated that the only category with high projected use is general aviation — i.e. private planes — but the general aviation demand is already being met by an existing private airfield.<sup>80</sup>

The airport, and likely the interchange, would also be environmentally destructive. The South Suburban Airport would be built over farmland, more than 1,000 acres of floodplains and nearly 200 acres of wetlands.<sup>81</sup> Judy Ogalla, who farms soy, corn and wheat land that is part of the proposed airport site and serves as a Republican member of the Will County Board, told the Chicago Tribune, "we have great soil. It doesn't have any sense to pave over that when we have an airport in Gary."<sup>82</sup>

## **Birmingham Northern Beltline, Alabama**

**Estimated cost: \$5.3 billion**



*Construction on the Birmingham Northern Beltline was forced to pause after initial funding ran out. Credit: Alabama Department of Transportation*

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is pushing forward with the \$5.3 billion Birmingham Northern Beltline (BNB), a 52-mile, 6-lane expressway connecting I-59 northeast and southwest of Birmingham.<sup>83</sup> The project is almost entirely reliant on intermittent and insufficient federal funding, scheduled to take at least 40 years to complete, and, if built, will threaten damage to two watersheds that are important sources of drinking water for Birmingham.

The BNB project relies on intermittent federal funding, raising the specter of a highway project that is not only expensive and environmentally damaging, but is also never finished. The BNB is funded solely by the federal Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS), which pays for roadways throughout Appalachia.<sup>84</sup> To date, Alabama policymakers have declined



to provide state funding for the project, which suggests that the project is not a high priority for state transportation needs.<sup>85</sup> Between 2014 and 2016, ALDOT completed a 1.3-mile grade and drain project as the first phase of the BNB, using all of the funding available at the time, and then paused work when federal funding for the ADHS was not renewed.<sup>86</sup> ADHS recently received funding again, but allocated just \$30 million to the BNB, a tiny fraction of the multibillion dollar project cost.<sup>87</sup> In 2014 the estimated completion year of the project was 2054, not accounting for the most recent four-year pause, nor for any future stoppages in funding.<sup>88</sup>

If it is built, the BNB's construction, operation and the development it spurs would degrade Birmingham's water quality, forests and wetlands. According to the Southern Environmental Law Center and the Black Warrior Riverkeepers, the BNB would "cross and permanently alter Black Warrior and Cahaba river tributaries in 90 places and wetlands in 35 places" and will "destroy 3,078 football fields' worth of forest."<sup>89</sup> The Cahaba and Black Warrior watersheds are two of the major sources of drinking water for residents of Birmingham, and construction or development in the watersheds increases the risks of damage to streams, chemical or gasoline spills and stormwater runoff pollution.<sup>90</sup> The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB), which receives funding from local governments to provide planning and economic development services for central Alabama, notes that the "level of potential environmental impacts may be significant."<sup>91</sup>

The BNB's project website claims the project will spur economic development and will address "future traffic growth," but analyses of the project have questioned whether the project would actually bring such benefits.<sup>92</sup> One study from the Ochs Center for Metro-

politan Studies determined that the project's economic impacts had been "overstated," in part because "if the [BNB] corridor gains jobs (or employers) at the expense of other locations within Jefferson County, those jobs are not net new jobs for the county or the region."<sup>93</sup> And the RPCGB estimates that the BNB would accomplish little in terms of congestion relief for other roadways, only taking between 1 and 3 percent of the vehicles that currently travel on I-59 and I-20 through downtown Birmingham.<sup>94</sup>

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## **I-526 Extension, South Carolina**

**Estimated cost: \$725 million**

Charleston County in South Carolina is moving forward with an eight-mile, \$725 million extension to I-526 across Johns and James Islands that would, as the Charleston Post and Courier wrote in a 2019 editorial about the project, "create negative environmental and community impacts while providing minimal traffic relief in the immediate term and little or no improvement over the long term."<sup>95</sup> The so-called Mark Clark extension, which will cost Charleston County more than it has spent on any single project in its history, would be a four-lane parkway from near Citadel Mall in West Ashley to the James Island connector at Folly Road.<sup>96</sup>

The I-526 extension would have minimal impact on travel times. According to a 2016 environmental project re-evaluation, the project would save drivers mere seconds of travel time. Trips to the West Ashley area of the region would be reduced by an average of just 42 seconds, while current travel times are more than 20 minutes.<sup>97</sup> No trips assessed for the project's Recommended Preferred Alternative would reduce travelers' trip times by more than 9 percent on average.<sup>98</sup>

The project would, however, have significant negative impacts on the communities it is meant to serve. In the same 2016 re-evaluation, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and Charleston County wrote that their preferred alternative option for the extension would cut through four communities and pass alongside 13 communities, forcing relocations of 15 residences, four businesses, and one community facility.<sup>99</sup> South Carolinians living along the route are worried about these impacts, with the Post and Courier writing that residents of Johns Island argue it will bring “more residential development” and “urban sprawl” to a place that has already seen “quiet woodlands ... replaced by rooftops.”<sup>100</sup>

Finally, the new roadway would damage the wetlands and floodplains of Johns and James Islands. The islands are coastal, and the communities living on them value their natural resources highly and want to protect them.<sup>101</sup> But the SCDOT and Charleston County evaluation of the preferred route found that the construction of the road will require filling in 26 acres of wetland, shading 43 acres and impacting 346 acres of floodplain.<sup>102</sup> The roadway would also impact three parks and wildlife refuges: the James Island County Park, the West Ashley Greenway, and the Fenwick Hall Historic District.<sup>103</sup>

## **M-CORES, Florida**

**Estimated cost: \$10+ billion**



*Florida's M-CORES highway project would threaten the habitat and the survival of the endangered Florida Panther. Credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

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On May 17, 2019, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed legislation kickstarting what would be one of the most expensive, damaging and wasteful highway-building sprees in the country. The bill provided funding and set in motion plans for building three separate highways, totaling approximately 330 miles, that are already draining the state budget and could destroy large swaths of natural areas and threaten the survival of the endangered Florida panther.

According to the legislation behind the highways – called M-CORES, or Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance – the project’s first two goals are to facilitate hurricane evacuation and address congestion.<sup>104</sup> The project’s ability to achieve either has been questioned by outside analysis, including a series of reports released in September 2020 by Cornell Consulting. The organization found that

previous hurricane evacuations have not been hampered by a shortage of roadway, but rather by fuel shortages and last-minute sharing of emergency plans.<sup>105</sup> Cornell Consulting found that the highways would fail to reduce congestion because of the well-known phenomenon of induced travel, noting that in Pensacola, Florida, “highways expanded three times faster than the population grew and still resulted in a 233 percent increase in congestion.”<sup>106</sup>

Although exact costs are not available, the highways would, by any account, be enormously expensive. Cornell Consulting estimated the cost of the project at \$10.3 billion, and an analysis by environmental groups Sierra Club and 1000 Friends of Florida (1000 Friends) applied the cost-per-mile of a similar road to estimate that the project costs could total upwards of \$26 billion.<sup>107</sup> While the roads would eventually collect driver tolls to pay back construction bonds, an early analysis by Florida TaxWatch estimated that, in order to cover costs, per-mile toll revenue for one of the highways would have to be as much as 60 percent higher than the average state turnpike system road.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, Cornell Consulting’s analysis found that even “under the best-case scenarios in which simulated project costs were 25% below similar projects” and “usage and growth were far higher than expected,” the highways would not be economically feasible.

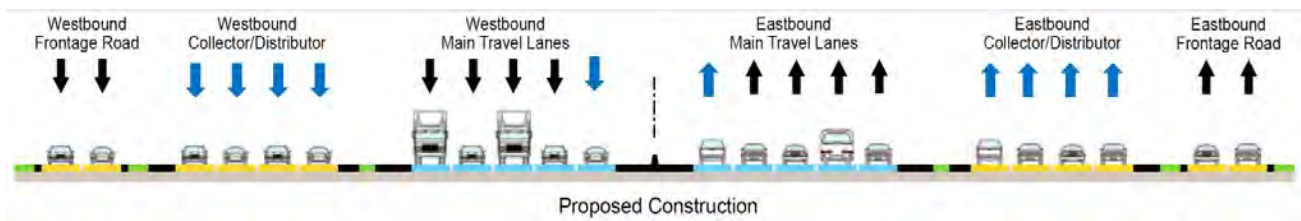
The roads are being paid for in part through a bill provision that will eventually divert more than \$100 million in general state funding each year towards M-CORES.<sup>109</sup> This diverted revenue is already straining the state budget. In 2020, a coalition of 80 organizations and businesses called on Governor Ron DeSantis to shift M-CORES funds to more pressing needs.<sup>110</sup> Yet despite \$1 billion in budget cuts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020-21 budget still includes \$90 million for M-CORES.<sup>111</sup>

The roads will, according to 1000 Friends, impact “vast tracts of some of Florida’s last remaining undeveloped lands,” including springsheds, wetlands and wildlife corridors.<sup>112</sup> The Southwest-Central Florida Connector section of the project could even threaten the Florida panther with extinction, according to emails from a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request made by the South Florida Wildlands Association. The Florida panther is endangered, with only 120 to 130 animals left in the wild.<sup>113</sup> In an email sent on March 1, 2019, biologist John Wrublik wrote that the project could “jeopardize the species,” as it would “directly result in the loss of a significant amount of habitat,” indirectly destroy habitat by “inducing new residential and commercial development,” and would also “significantly increase the potential for vehicle-related injuries and mortalities of panthers and other wildlife species.”<sup>114</sup> From 2017 through 2019, 73 Florida panthers were killed by vehicles.<sup>115</sup>

Despite their enormous costs and destructive impacts, the highways are being rushed toward construction with insufficient study or planning. The previously mentioned Sierra Club and 1000 Friends analysis found that the “M-CORES legislation allows millions of dollars to be spent without the typical preliminary corridor planning analysis to determine the need for the system from a transportation perspective or the financial feasibility of the roads.”<sup>116</sup> Because the highways are subject to special rules for planning and permitting, another 1000 Friends analysis found that some steps in the planning process will be “conducted simultaneously instead of sequentially.”<sup>117</sup> And the Naples Daily News has reported that some members of the project’s planning task force are “still confused” about the process and need for the highways, and have called for the process to be put on hold.<sup>118</sup>

## Southeast Connector, Texas

Estimated cost: \$1.6 billion



*The proposed construction of I-20 from I-820 to US-287 would add an additional five lanes in each direction. Credit: Texas Department of Transportation*

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is moving ahead with a \$2 billion expansion of three highways in Fort Worth that would induce sprawl and damage communities, even as the local transit system scrambles for funding to provide adequate service.<sup>119</sup> Referred to as the Southeast Connector, the project involves expansion of 16 miles of I-820, I-20 and I-287 on the east side of Fort Worth, adding up to six lanes in each direction in some places, as well as interchange renovations.<sup>120</sup>

A TxDOT analysis of the Southeast Connector suggests it will lead to sprawling development, including the development of 126 acres along all three highways, which are in outlying Fort Worth.<sup>121</sup> These impacts would run counter to city efforts to reduce sprawl. In its economic development strategic plan, the city of Fort Worth set out the goal of “rapidly increasing the density” of the city, and is continuing to buy land outside the city to prevent sprawl and preserve land.<sup>122</sup> The Dallas Morning News has described the area’s sprawling development as causing longer commutes, degraded air quality, strained water supplies and poorly maintained infrastructure.<sup>123</sup> A 2014 report by Smart Growth America ranked Fort Worth among the most sprawling cities in the country.<sup>124</sup>

The \$1.6 billion project would also use valuable resources even as basic transit needs in Fort Worth go unmet.<sup>125</sup> In 2020, Jeff Davis, board chairman of the Trinity Metro system, told the Fort Worth Star Telegram that the current system is “bare bones” and that “we don’t have the funds to meet the needs” of current demand.<sup>126</sup> Fort Worth has too few bus routes, inadequate passenger rail service and receives too little funding to expand with the growth of the city.<sup>127</sup> Service on some routes is too infrequent and ends too early to be useful.<sup>128</sup>

In a plan designed to address these shortcomings, the transit authority and the city laid out goals to develop high-capacity transit services, increase the length and frequency of current services, add new routes and make the whole system more accessible and easier to use.<sup>129</sup> But although the transit authority requested \$10 million from the 2021 budget in order to make short-term improvements and additional funding to begin longer-term work, the budget ultimately approved allocated just \$1.5 million for transit work.<sup>130</sup> Transit in Fort Worth is primarily funded by trip fares, local sales tax and federal grants, while the Southeast Connector is funded by a mix of state and federal dollars.<sup>131</sup>

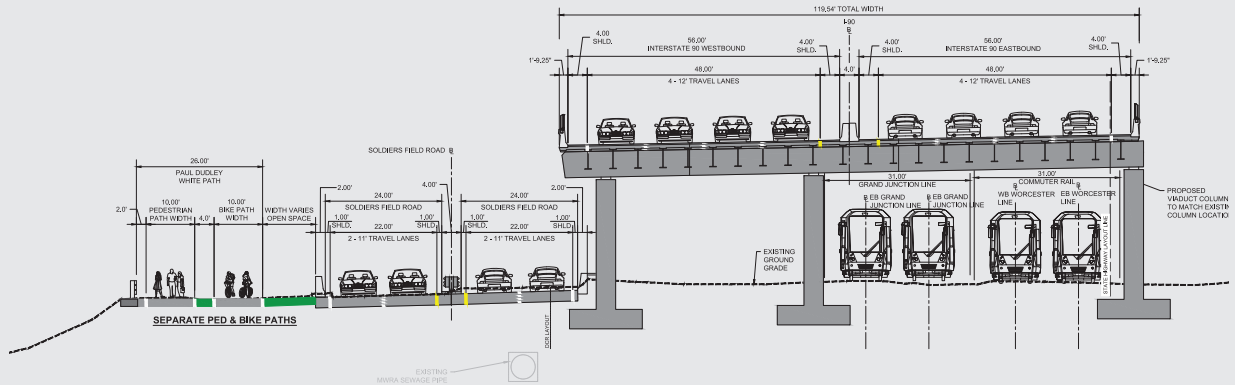


Finally, local residents worry about impacts of the construction and larger roads on the community. The TxDOT Community Impacts Assessment states that the construction of the Southeast Connector, which is expected to last five years, will require displacing 23 families from their homes, eight of which are not anticipated to be able to find other housing in the neighborhood.<sup>132</sup> Residents are worried that the already uncomfortably loud noise from the highway will get even louder, while

TxDOT does not plan to put sound barriers in place to protect them.<sup>133</sup> Other residents worry about the 15 acres of trees in danger of removal, since those trees separate them from the highway aurally and visually.<sup>134</sup> Some residents are also concerned that the project will create a whole new “traffic nightmare,” as reported by NBC Dallas-Fort Worth, because the removal of two on-ramps will create a new traffic bottleneck at the connection of I-820 with Brentwood Stair Road.<sup>135</sup>



## IN BOSTON, A CHOICE BETWEEN TWO TRANSPORTATION FUTURES



Plans for the \$1 billion Allston Multimodal Project would rebuild 12 lanes of traffic along the Charles River in Boston, reinforcing the region's reliance on personal vehicles. Some of the designs under consideration, including the alternative pictured, include a new raised viaduct that would continue to divide the Allston neighborhood and hinder future efforts to improve transit and river access. Credit: Massachusetts Department of Transportation.<sup>136</sup>

Around 90 acres of Boston's Allston neighborhood will soon be transformed by the massive Allston Multimodal Project, which will bring some long overdue changes along the Charles River. The project will entail tearing down a crumbling highway viaduct nearing the end of its life, giving new life to an out-of-use commercial railyard, adding a new commuter rail station and providing nicer river paths for walking and biking.<sup>137</sup> Sitting just across the river from Cambridge and a few minutes by train from downtown Boston, the site provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to imagine and build an urban neighborhood and transportation network that can support Massachusetts' ambitious goals to cut carbon pollution and promote sustainability.

One section of the existing site is a narrow corridor in which four train tracks, eight lanes of Interstate 90 and four lanes of the adjacent Soldiers Field Road run just feet from the river. The corridor is known as "the throat," and in addition to the rail and roads, it also contains a well-used eight-foot

bike and pedestrian path just feet from busy traffic. Because of the very constrained area between the river and the Boston University campus, there is extreme competition for space between transit, active transportation, parkland and highway. Yet the state of Massachusetts is currently planning to rebuild all existing lanes of traffic, reinforcing the region's reliance on personal vehicles and reducing the project's potential to deliver expanded access to clean and sustainable transportation.

Both the state of Massachusetts and the city of Boston have established goals for reducing carbon pollution and encouraging a shift away from reliance on personal vehicles that adds to congestion and reduces quality of life. Boston's current climate plan calls for cutting carbon emissions 50 percent by 2030, and the state of Massachusetts set a net zero greenhouse gas emissions limit for 2050.<sup>138</sup> Boston and Massachusetts have both set goals to shift transportation away from driving – Boston's goal is to reduce the number of

commuters who drive alone to work by 50 percent by 2030, and in 2012 Massachusetts set a goal to triple the share of people who walk, bike or take transit by 2030.<sup>139</sup>

In its current form, the Allston project will do relatively little to achieve those goals. Instead it will:

- Maintain current vehicle capacity. The current construction plan will likely reduce capacity of the I-90 highway by at least two lanes for much of the eight to ten years of construction.<sup>140</sup> Yet when construction is finished, the project will restore all 12 lanes of roadway along the river, in effect adding traffic capacity back to the city at the same time Boston is reaching its 2030 mode shift deadline.<sup>141</sup>
- Prioritize driving over other forms of travel. MassDOT has suggested it may reduce rail capacity for some portion of the construction period, which could worsen the already-difficult commutes for both the adjacent neighborhoods and the commuters who travel via the corridor.<sup>142</sup> Early versions of the project would have delayed the opening of the accompanying West Station commuter rail station for a decade after the highway was reconstructed.<sup>143</sup> But MassDOT moved this investment to an earlier phase of the project following public pressure.<sup>144</sup>
- Potentially limit future river access and expanded transit. As of October 2020, state officials were deciding between either building the new roads at ground level, or once again building a raised road viaduct – an option that would perpetuate many of the site’s existing problems.<sup>145</sup> With a new viaduct, the project would continue to divide the Allston community and limit

access to the Charles River’s bike and pedestrian path, just as the current road does. As a local coalition of environmental, business and transportation advocacy groups wrote in a letter to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, a new viaduct would reinforce “the legacy of inequitable highway policies that tore communities apart decades ago.”<sup>146</sup> A viaduct could also hinder the state’s ability to eventually build future passenger rail connections from West Station, including to Kendall Square in Cambridge, the heart of the region’s biotech industry.<sup>147</sup>

The rebuilding of I-90 and other transportation infrastructure in Allston could improve life for pedestrians and bicyclists by replacing Soldiers Field Road with a surface street safe for crossing by foot and bike. It could help more people travel to the city without sitting in traffic by prioritizing construction of the new West Station, ensuring reliable transit service during construction and making possible more transit connections in the future. And it could finally allow local residents to safely enjoy access to the Charles River by substantially expanding open space. Yet in its current form, which is still being shaped as of this writing, whether the project will be able to fulfill even a fraction of this potential is an open question.

Unlike some other projects in this report, there is no escaping the need for major investment in transportation infrastructure in this section of Boston. The question is whether the commonwealth will invest in a bold, transformative plan that will help it meet its transportation and climate goals, or rebuild the auto-intensive infrastructure of generations ago, making it more costly and difficult to meet the transportation challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## WISCONSIN REVIVES A CANCELLED HIGHWAY EXPANSION

One of the projects included in the first edition of *Highway Boondoggles*, released in 2014, was the proposed expansion of Interstate 94 in Milwaukee. The project made little sense: I-94 had stagnant traffic levels, the project would damage the surrounding community and it came with a price tag of \$800 million even as the local Milwaukee County Transit System was curtailing service and coping with a slashed budget.

Four years later, in 2018, then-Governor Scott Walker pulled the plug on the project and asked the federal government to rescind its approval for the project. According to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Walker said, “There are some groups out there that want to spend billions and billions and billions of dollars on more, bigger, wider interchanges across the state. I actually think we should be fixing and maintaining our infrastructure. I

don’t know that we need bigger and better and broader right now when we have a changing transportation system.”<sup>148</sup>

Today, the project that seemed dead may be coming back to life, as in July 2020, Governor Tony Evers reversed Walker’s position and asked the federal government to once again approve the project.<sup>149</sup> The reasons for the change of heart are not clear. Aside from the state backing away from its earlier plan to build a double-decked road, little about the project has changed since 2014. With inflation, project costs are now estimated to reach or exceed \$1 billion.<sup>150</sup> Local transit service continues to struggle for funding to maintain service levels.<sup>151</sup> The project’s revival also comes amid budget shortfalls related to the COVID-19 pandemic: Wisconsin has suffered steep decreases in revenue and in July, Governor Evers ordered state agencies to cut their budgets by \$250 million.<sup>152</sup>

# | Conclusion

OVER A YEAR DOMINATED BY COVID-19, much of American public life has been on pause. Policymakers have had to reevaluate spending across government in light of multibillion-dollar revenue shortfalls. And throughout, Americans have had to worry about their health. Despite all this, highway boondoggles that in normal times represented wasteful and damaging spending have continued to move forward, and to absorb billions of dollars of scarce public funds while delivering few benefits.

Now more than ever, policymakers must choose a different path. Officials at all levels of government – local, state and federal – should reexamine proposed highway expansion projects in light of changing transportation needs and growing realization of the damage caused by our current transportation system. Instead, they should adopt a series of policy changes to prioritize real transportation improvements.

Specifically, they should:

- **Invest in transportation solutions that reduce the need for costly and disruptive highway expansion projects.** Investments in public transportation, road pricing measures and technological measures that help drivers avoid peak-time traffic, for instance, can often address congestion more cheaply and effectively than highway expansion.
- **Adopt fix-it-first policies** that reorient transportation funding away from highway expansion and toward repair of existing roads and investment in other transportation options.
- **Use the latest transportation data and require full cost-benefit comparisons for all projects, including future maintenance needs.** This includes projects proposed to be completed via public-private partnerships.
- **Give priority funding to transportation projects that reduce growth in vehicle-miles traveled,** to account for the public health, environmental and climate benefits resulting from reduced driving and fossil fuel use.
- **Invest in research and data collection** to better track and react to ongoing shifts in how people travel.
- **Revise transportation forecasting models** to ensure that all evaluations of proposed projects use up-to-date travel information, reflect a range of potential future trends for housing and transportation, and incorporate the impact of all transportation options, from public transit, biking and walking, to newer options such as car-sharing and bike-sharing.



# Appendix A: Status of previously covered boondoggle projects

| Status                                | Project   | Year Included in Boondoggles Report |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Cancelled<sup>153</sup></b>        |   |                                     |
|                                       | Dallas Trinity Parkway, Texas                           | 2014                                |
|                                       | Tesoro Extension, California                            | 2014                                |
|                                       | 710 Tunnel, California                                  | 2016                                |
|                                       | High Desert Freeway, California                         | 2019                                |
| <b>Completed<sup>154</sup></b>        |   |                                     |
|                                       | Alaskan Way Viaduct, Washington                         | 2014                                |
|                                       | I-11, Nevada  | 2014                                |
|                                       | C-470 Express Lanes, Colorado                           | 2014                                |
|                                       | I-77 Express Lanes, North Carolina                      | 2016                                |
|                                       | Portsmouth Bypass, Ohio                                 | 2016                                |
|                                       | State Highway 45 Southwest, Texas                       | 2016                                |
|                                       | Route 20 Widening, Iowa                                 | 2016                                |
| <b>On Hold<sup>155</sup></b>          |   |                                     |
|                                       | Illiana Expressway, Illinois and Indiana                | 2014                                |
|                                       | I-94 East-West Expansion in Milwaukee, Wisconsin        | 2014                                |
|                                       | Paseo del Volcan Extension, New Mexico                  | 2016                                |
|                                       | Interstate 73, South Carolina                           | 2017                                |
|                                       | Illinois State Route 53/120, Illinois                   | 2017                                |
| <b>Study and Review<sup>156</sup></b> |   |                                     |
|                                       | Effingham Parkway, Georgia                              | 2014                                |
|                                       | I-11, Arizona   | 2014                                |
|                                       | I-26 Connector, North Carolina                          | 2014                                |
|                                       | Widening I-94 Through Detroit, Michigan                 | 2014                                |
|                                       | Mon-Fayette Expressway: Route 51 to I-376, Pennsylvania | 2016                                |
|                                       | Tampa Bay Express Lanes, Florida                        | 2016                                |
|                                       | Widening I-95 Across the State, Connecticut             | 2016                                |
|                                       | Interstate 30, Arkansas                                 | 2017                                |
|                                       | Interstate 75 North Truck Lanes, Georgia                | 2017                                |

| <b>Status</b>                           | <b>Project</b>  | <b>Year Included in Boondoggles Report</b> |
|---|---|--|
|   | Interstate 84 Expansion, Connecticut                    | 2017                                       |
|   | Madison Beltline, Wisconsin                             | 2017                                       |
|   | "Traffic Relief Plan," Maryland                         | 2018                                       |
|   | I-49 Inner City Connection, Shreveport, Louisiana       | 2018                                       |
|   | Interstate 35 Expansion, Austin, Texas                  | 2018                                       |
|   | North Houston Highway Improvement Project, Texas        | 2019                                       |
|   | I-83 Widening, Pennsylvania                             | 2019                                       |
|   | I-5 Rose Quarter Widening, Oregon                       | 2019                                       |
| <b>Under Construction<sup>157</sup></b> |   |  |
|   | Cleveland Opportunity Corridor, Ohio                    | 2014                                       |
|   | State Highway 249 Extension, Texas                      | 2016                                       |
|   | Widening I-70 in Denver, Colorado                       | 2016                                       |
|   | Puget Sound Gateway, Washington                         | 2016                                       |
|   | Interstate 4 "Beyond the Ultimate," Florida             | 2017                                       |
|   | Interstate 405 Improvement, Orange County CA            | 2017                                       |
|   | Interstate 66 Expansion "Inside the Beltway," Virginia  | 2017                                       |
|   | I-285 & SR 400 Interchange Rebuilding, Atlanta, Georgia | 2018                                       |
|   | I-94 North South Expansion, Wisconsin                   | 2018                                       |
|   | North Spokane Corridor, Spokane, Washington             | 2018                                       |
|   | Pennsylvania Turnpike Expansion                         | 2018                                       |
|   | U.S. Highway 101 Expansion, San Mateo, California       | 2018                                       |
|   | LBJ East Expansion, Dallas, Texas                       | 2018                                       |
|   | Complete 540, North Carolina                            | 2019                                       |
|   | I-75 Widening, Michigan                                 | 2019                                       |
|   | Tri-State Tollway Widening, Illinois                    | 2019                                       |
|   | "Connecting Miami" Widening Project, Florida            | 2019                                       |
|   | Interstate 81 Widening, Virginia                        | 2019                                       |

# Appendix B: State road expansion costs

## Per capita and total cost of federally backed road expansion projects (FY2018)<sup>158</sup>

*Cost includes both federal and state contributions*

| State                | Per capita cost | Per capita rank | Total cost (millions) |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Alabama              | \$23.22         | 29              | \$113.5               |
| Alaska               | \$105.42        | 4               | \$77.5                |
| Arizona              | \$26.64         | 25              | \$190.7               |
| Arkansas             | \$95.56         | 5               | \$287.6               |
| California           | \$18.37         | 35              | \$725.1               |
| Colorado             | \$162.62        | 2               | \$925.5               |
| Connecticut          | \$1.71          | 48              | \$6.1                 |
| Delaware             | \$35.73         | 21              | \$34.5                |
| District of Columbia | \$0.00          | 49              | \$0.0                 |
| Florida              | \$24.38         | 28              | \$518.0               |
| Georgia              | \$19.88         | 33              | \$209.0               |
| Hawaii               | \$0.00          | 49              | \$0.0                 |
| Idaho                | \$57.35         | 13              | \$100.4               |
| Illinois             | \$34.14         | 22              | \$434.4               |
| Indiana              | \$77.90         | 11              | \$521.6               |
| Iowa                 | \$41.48         | 17              | \$130.6               |
| Kansas               | \$28.13         | 24              | \$81.9                |
| Kentucky             | \$39.18         | 19              | \$174.8               |
| Louisiana            | \$9.98          | 40              | \$46.5                |
| Maine                | \$0.00          | 49              | \$0.0                 |
| Maryland             | \$19.15         | 34              | \$115.6               |
| Massachusetts        | \$40.46         | 18              | \$278.5               |
| Michigan             | \$10.98         | 38              | \$109.6               |
| Minnesota            | \$4.48          | 45              | \$25.1                |
| Mississippi          | \$28.61         | 23              | \$85.3                |
| Missouri             | \$2.40          | 47              | \$14.7                |

| State          | Per capita cost | Per capita rank | Total cost (millions) |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Montana        | \$26.12         | 26              | \$27.7                |
| Nebraska       | \$10.70         | 39              | \$20.6                |
| Nevada         | \$52.65         | 14              | \$159.4               |
| New Hampshire  | \$2.73          | 46              | \$3.7                 |
| New Jersey     | \$7.67          | 42              | \$68.2                |
| New Mexico     | \$69.81         | 12              | \$146.1               |
| New York       | \$46.89         | 16              | \$915.8               |
| North Carolina | \$78.11         | 10              | \$810.9               |
| North Dakota   | \$89.96         | 6               | \$68.2                |
| Ohio           | \$7.68          | 41              | \$89.7                |
| Oklahoma       | \$25.02         | 27              | \$98.6                |
| Oregon         | \$21.62         | 31              | \$90.4                |
| Pennsylvania   | \$22.41         | 30              | \$286.9               |
| Rhode Island   | \$383.45        | 1               | \$405.8               |
| South Carolina | \$13.10         | 36              | \$66.6                |
| South Dakota   | \$36.53         | 20              | \$32.1                |
| Tennessee      | \$84.29         | 7               | \$570.8               |
| Texas          | \$79.23         | 9               | \$2,268.2             |
| Utah           | \$11.35         | 37              | \$35.8                |
| Vermont        | \$7.05          | 43              | \$4.4                 |
| Virginia       | \$137.09        | 3               | \$1,165.4             |
| Washington     | \$20.27         | 32              | \$152.5               |
| West Virginia  | \$5.32          | 44              | \$9.6                 |
| Wisconsin      | \$81.64         | 8               | \$474.1               |
| Wyoming        | \$50.21         | 15              | \$29.0                |

# Appendix C: State debt and roads in poor condition

State debt from bonds issued; percent of roads in poor condition via Transportation for America

| State         | 2018 debt of state transportation agencies (millions) <sup>159</sup> | Percent of roads in poor condition in 2017 <sup>160</sup> |
|---------------|--|---|
| Alabama       | \$1,207  | 14%   |
| Alaska        | \$263  | 20%   |
| Arizona       | \$1,718  | 19%   |
| Arkansas      | \$880  | 9%  |
| California    | \$22,592   | 45%   |
| Colorado      | \$1,003  | 22%   |
| Connecticut   | \$5,540  | 34%   |
| Delaware      | \$2,178  | 19%   |
| Florida       | \$11,840   | 8%  |
| Georgia       | \$2,376  | 5%  |
| Hawaii        | \$401  | 42%   |
| Idaho         | \$523  | 5%  |
| Illinois      | \$11,679   | 19%   |
| Indiana       | \$1,068  | 13%   |
| Iowa          | -  | 9%  |
| Kansas        | \$2,317  | 10%   |
| Kentucky      | \$1,891  | 10%   |
| Louisiana     | \$3,582  | 25%   |
| Maine         | \$566  | 22%   |
| Maryland      | \$5,062  | 11%   |
| Massachusetts | \$8,797  | 30%   |
| Michigan      | \$1,278  | 24%   |
| Minnesota     | \$2,201  | 15%   |
| Mississippi   | \$991  | 30%   |
| Missouri      | \$1,832  | 23%   |
| Montana       | \$39   | 11%   |

| State          | 2018 debt of state transportation agencies (millions) <sup>159</sup> | Percent of roads in poor condition in 2017 <sup>160</sup> |
|----------------|--|---|
| Nebraska       | -  | 7%  |
| Nevada         | \$785  | 14%   |
| New Hampshire  | \$571  | 25%   |
| New Jersey     | \$37,892   | 34%   |
| New Mexico     | \$1,091  | 31%   |
| New York       | \$18,794   | 19%   |
| North Carolina | \$1,695  | 13%   |
| North Dakota   | \$10   | 10%   |
| Ohio           | \$4,151  | 18%   |
| Oklahoma       | \$2,358  | 33%   |
| Oregon         | \$2,594  | 7%  |
| Pennsylvania   | \$15,851   | 30%   |
| Rhode Island   | \$506  | 53%   |
| South Carolina | \$355  | 18%   |
| South Dakota   | -  | 14%   |
| Tennessee      | -  | 5%  |
| Texas          | \$28,460   | 11%   |
| Utah           | \$2,317  | 22%   |
| Vermont        | \$31   | 17%   |
| Virginia       | \$3,992  | 10%   |
| Washington     | \$8,386  | 29%   |
| West Virginia  | \$1,166  | 31%   |
| Wisconsin      | \$3,993  | 29%   |
| Wyoming        | -  | 8%  |



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