

Dynamics of Policy Change: Reflections on 1991 Federal Transportation Legislation

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The legislative history of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) is examined from the standpoint of four theoretical models of the policy process. The models, drawn from the policy literature, focus on (a) interest groups and iron triangles, (b) policy networks and entrepreneurs, (c) enlightenment, and (d) advocacy coalitions. The logic of each model is outlined, and the manner in which it applies to the process surrounding the passage and implementation of ISTEA is suggested. The relative merits of the models are compared, and their usefulness in providing an understanding of the dynamics of the policy process is discussed.

In October 1991 the U.S. Congress passed a transportation bill, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), that reauthorized the national highway and transit programs for the next 6 years. Observers describe ISTEA in a number of different ways, ranging from those who see it as a distinct departure from past policies to those who view it as a natural extension of ongoing debates within the transportation policy community. The purpose of this paper is to describe and compare several of these perspectives in order to understand more fully the dynamics behind this important legislation.

MODELING THE POLICY PROCESS

The study of public policy can be approached from two different sets of questions or concerns. The first emphasizes rational analysis and recommendations for adopting one policy rather than another. This broad umbrella encompasses technocratic and economic studies prescribing the most efficient policy and engineering studies that draw on professional criteria to analyze and evaluate specific policies. Much of the transportation policy literature falls into this category, at least ostensibly.

An alternative set of concerns focuses on the policy process, on how decisions are made. It questions, among other things, how different issues are placed on the policy agenda, the roles of interest groups and administrative agencies, who has the most influence on decisions, and how change comes about. Many who focus on transportation policy view this process as essentially a black box that is either unfathomable and anarchic or less interesting than the first set of concerns—namely what policies are rationally preferable.

Others, however, attempt to think more systematically about this process and lay out, if you will, the internal dynamics of the black box. One way to do this is to develop a model of the process. By identifying the major variables and the relationships among them, models provide theories or explanations that help us understand the policy process. They are essentially propositions that the policy

process is not an entirely random affair, that we can trace patterns and relationships and improve our understanding of the process. Models by definition simplify reality much as a road map does. As a result there is always a tension between a model and the reality that it purports to describe. Does it overlook some key variables? Does it lure us into manipulating reality to fit the model?

In describing and comparing models, we would like especially to emphasize the distinction between rational analysis and studies of the policy process. It is common to deal with one or the other of these concerns with either analysis or process. However, some of the most interesting questions about the policy process ask whether there is a connection between analysis and process. Does politics override rational analysis? Or does analysis simply follow the election returns, as Thomas Dooley disparagingly remarked about the Supreme Court? Conversely does analysis help to shape political debate and policy choices? To what extent do technocrats, economists, policy professionals, and engineers fit into the policy process? And by extension, by understanding the process can we increase the effectiveness of rational analysis?

In explaining the development of ISTEA, some have suggested that a particular model of the policy process seemed to explain events as they unfolded. They stress the dramatic changes introduced by ISTEA, a view widely portrayed in the media and by some of the participants in the legislative process itself. These sources stress that ISTEA marked a major departure from traditional highway policy by increasing the funding potential for transit, by opening dedicated highway funding to a broad spectrum of uses ranging from historic preservation to bicycle trails, and by elevating metropolitan planning organizations from an advisory capacity to full partners in programming transportation funds.

Others challenge this emphasis on change and on winners and losers as greatly overdrawn, however. Instead of traditional highway interests losing out to a new coalition, they argue that ISTEA was broadly influenced by the best thinking on the subject, that there were no big winners and losers on the important issues, and that in any case the results are too murky to fully anticipate the results of the legislation (personal interviews, Steve Lockwood, November 23, 1993; Ron Kussey, April 9, 1993).

This paper draws from the wider policy literature to present several models, asking what they tell us about the policy process surrounding ISTEA and the role that analysis plays. It outlines the logic of each model and then suggests how it applies to the process surrounding the passage and implementation of ISTEA. In the conclusion we compare their relative merits and try to determine if one is more useful than another. Does a particular model help us understand some part of the process that we may have overlooked? Does it resonate with our understanding of what happened better than another one does? Does it help us anticipate the prospects for the ISTEA legislation? Note that we are not asking which model is true

in any objective sense, but which one is most useful and robust in helping us understand the dynamics surrounding the policy. Does one model point to a question or aspect of the policy that we would otherwise have overlooked? Does one help us anticipate the eventual outcome of the policy or the difficulties that may arise in implementation?

INTEREST GROUPS AND IRON TRIANGLES

The traditional view of the policy process holds that policy is driven solely by bargaining among narrow and relatively fixed political interests. One popular version of this common view holds that policy is made by an iron triangle—special interests, related congressional committees, and agencies. In this model each of these parties is driven by its own interests and mandates to collude with the other parties to put forth a policy that serves their mutual and immediate interests. These parties establish close working relations and reinforce each others' interests, making it hard for others to enter the process. Policy analysis in this model works within this constellation of actors—it is funded by their agenda and promotes their interests. There is little or no room for independent analysis or studies that do not serve the interests of this cartel.

This model predicts that the highway lobby and its congressional allies were the major players in developing ISTEA and that these interests mobilized to shape new highway legislation as the existing authority approached expiration in 1991. As events unfolded, however, it became increasingly clear that the highway lobby was not simply a set of colluding interests with strong congressional allies. It was composed of several different groups, and although they all shared a basic and strong belief that highways should be the centerpiece of any federal program, there were important differences among them. Major players included, first, the Congress, which was deeply interested in congressional control over the disposition of funds and projects or, in more colloquial terms, "pork." A second major group of players was professionals in the highway planning community at both the federal and the state levels. Consistent with their identity as nonpolitical technical experts, their main goal was to apply professional or technical criteria to the program (1,2). They tended to see a basic difference between their own interest in applying technical, professional standards and the political orientation of Congress toward separate constituencies. A third group included suppliers and interest groups—for example, road builders and materials suppliers—who were primarily interested in keeping the funds flowing. This third group tended to support the goals of the others but was not wedded to them immutably.

As 1991 approached the Interstate highway program, which had provided the framework for distributing funds since the mid-1950s, was nearing completion. It became increasingly clear that pork would be a very salient issue and that it could undermine the entire highway program. In 1987 President Reagan had vetoed a highway bill, and although Congress overrode his veto by a single vote, it was the first veto in the history of the federal highway program. His reasons for vetoing the bill—that it contained too many pork barrel demonstration projects—signified the eroding credibility of the program. Although the override secured highway and mass transit funding for another 6 years, professionals recognized that federal surface transportation policy was in serious trouble. The increase in congressional earmarking of funds for specific projects was viewed as a natural outgrowth of the diminishing rationale for expanding the highway system on a federal basis. Indeed the 1987 bill had 152

earmarks. Members of the highway lobby, successful for so many years in dominating policy decisions, feared that unless action was taken to develop a new rationale for a national program, congressional earmarking would escalate and further damage prospects for a continued federal program.

These fissures suggest that the iron triangle model may be too simple and one dimensional. The three models described in the following sections challenge its relevance, claiming that it ignores much of the fluidity and unpredictability in the policy process and that it greatly underestimates the roles that ideas and analysis can play. We will describe each model briefly and consider whether it tells us anything useful about the development of ISTEA.

POLICY NETWORKS AND ENTREPRENEURS

According to the model that focuses on policy networks and entrepreneurs, policy is not made by a narrow and fixed set of actors. Rather the policy arena is made up of loose collections of parties who share a concern or knowledge about a specific policy issue (3). This arena contains a number of elements or policy streams—problems, ideas, and interested actors. By and large these elements go their separate ways with little or no relationship among them (4,5). Likening this arena to a "policy soup," Kingdon (6) observes that "[p]roposals are generated whether or not they are solving a problem, problems are recognized whether or not there is a solution and political events move along according to their own dynamics."

For example, transportation analysts may be working on some new technology that may or may not address a problem that is salient in the political system and that may or may not be of interest to political leaders. Changes in oil prices or new evidence of pollution may trigger a transportation problem unrelated to existing policy proposals. In the meantime research on new energy sources or automobile technology tends to follow its own dynamics and may or may not address these problems. Political elites respond to a host of competing issues, and the salience of transportation issues may have more to do with what else they have to address than with the immediacy of particular problems or the logic of suggested policies. Political actors become involved around particular aspects of transportation that fit with their own agendas and then may move on as another issue—health care or crime, for example—grabs their attention. Policy analysts for their part typically pursue the logic of their chosen methodologies and prescribe policies that may or may not address the realities described earlier.

According to this model scores of issues are ignored or sidetracked and are never dealt with. But sometimes policy is made, and the interesting question is how these elements connect to each other. The model predicts that at various times, often serendipitously, opportunities arise for connecting problems, policy ideas, and elite interests and that entrepreneurs may perceive that it is in their interest to take advantage of these occasions and mobilize the various parties to craft a policy response. According to Kingdon and others (5,7) entrepreneurs are individuals who are "willing to invest their resources in return for future policies they favor.

What questions does this model pose for the development of the ISTEA legislation? It is sensitive to the numerous actors who became involved in the development of the legislation and the fact that transportation policy was formulated by a larger set of actors than those traditionally associated with the highway lobby. Thus it can account for the important roles of those with environmental and urban interests who came to transportation via these other policy

arenas. It also predicts that the issues and participants will shift and that subsidiary issues will become attached to transportation, such as local participation in planning and clean air. And finally it suggests that there can be important differences among the various participants as they move from issue to issue. It helps us trace out the various problems and solutions that were being posed by the different parties and the fact that they did not always connect with each other.

As noted the policy professionals were pursuing their own definition of highway policy that challenged the widespread use of pork. The Interstate had been turning into a pork barrel project for some time, and the technical criteria that had ostensibly defined the program had been eroding slowly with small provisions that ensured that each state got its fair share. Whereas funds were originally allocated according to cost to complete, for example, political agendas led to changes in the mid-1960s to give every state a minimum 0.5 percent of the funding. In the face of these adjustments, the highway lobby emphasized technical criteria and highways of national significance to refocus the program around a more defensible rationale. They believed that there were several lessons to be learned from the 1987 legislative experience and that a replacement for the Interstate system was needed to distribute highway funds in a manner that relied on technical criteria rather than political criteria. They hoped that their technical analyses would give them the muscle they needed to counter congressional efforts to divert funds to special demonstration projects.

In the meantime the administration initiated an independent parallel set of activities under the rubric of Secretary Samuel Skinner's strategic plan. Early in 1991 the administration, partially concerned with not increasing the federal budget deficit, unveiled its post-Interstate proposal after the President introduced it in the State of the Union address. Like the proposal from the highway lobby the administration position focused first on the need for a nationwide system of highways to replace the Interstate and second on the need for greater flexibility in the use of funds. The term *national significance* was never defined clearly, however. The selection criterion for nationally significant highways was primarily its level of traffic. Flexibility in funding was to be accomplished through block grants to states (8).

Other players, as predicted by the model, were pursuing their own agendas and interests. The main impetus for transportation policy had always been in the House Environment and Public Works Committee, chaired by Representative Roe (D-N.J.), who had campaigned in the House for his chairmanship by promising new projects. To support such projects Roe was preoccupied with raising funding levels and focused his energies on a campaign to give a "Nickel for America" in the form of an additional 5-cent gas tax. To win support for this proposal, he tied the success of his promised \$6.8 billion in "congressional projects of national significance" (i.e., pork barrel demonstration projects) directly to support for the tax.

The Nickel for America proposal, although supported by the House leadership, created major strategic problems for the traditional highway community. First, as presented by Chairman Roe, it was explicitly linked to demonstration projects and thus it was directly at odds with the intention of the crafters of post-Interstate policy. Second, by raising the possibility of tax increases, the House leadership caused a significant splintering of support among members and within the transportation community. (For example, the trucking industry was opposed to the tax increase.) In the meantime the President was determined not to raise taxes, and Roe eventually had to drop his tax plans. Because of these conflicting agendas and

the lack of any strong leadership, Roe was never able to put together a supporting coalition behind the House bill.

There was also some division within the highway community over the technical merits of various approaches to the bill. California at one point threatened to break away from the AASHTO-led bill and support a more reform-oriented bill.

The model also predicts that policy would very likely never be passed without strong leadership from someone who saw a chance to take advantage of a new opportunity. The party who played the kind of entrepreneurial role predicted by the model most clearly was Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.). Moynihan had a long-standing interest in public works and a particular interest in urban highways dating from the 1950s (9). He had been instrumental in the development in the 1960s of Washington, D.C.'s, Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, which eventually revitalized this major urban artery, and had actively pursued his interest in public works during his tenure in the Senate. Moynihan had an unusually free hand as chair of the subcommittee because the aging chair of the full committee, Quentin Burdick (D-N.D.), who died in office a year later, had been a fairly weak chair since his reelection in 1988. He also succeeded in forging an unlikely alliance for reform with the ranking minority member of the subcommittee, Senator Steve Symms (R-Idaho), who supported devolution of authority to states and localities, as well as Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-N.J.) and longtime environmental advocate Senator John H. Chafee (R-R.I.).

This model thus highlights several important aspects of ISTEA's development that would be overlooked by the traditional iron triangle model.

ENLIGHTENMENT MODEL

A second alternative to the iron triangle model is the enlightenment model. This model also stresses that policy is made in a loosely constructed arena of interested parties—advocacy groups, professionals, actors associated with other policy arenas, and so forth. The various parties are all pursuing their interests, but their interests are not fixed and inviolable. They can change and shift as events unfold and as new information and analyses are presented. The emphasis here is on the ideas that float around in this arena rather than on the disconnect among the various streams.

Picture a community of specialists. . . . Ideas float around in such communities. Specialists have their notions of future directions and their specific proposals. They try out and revise their ideas by going to lunch, attending conferences, circulating papers, holding hearings, presenting testimony, publishing articles, and drafting legislative proposals. Many, many ideas are considered at some point along the way. (10)

Thus ideas can play an independent role and introduce new information and proposals into the process. Individuals are not only pursuing reasonably well defined interests but also get caught up in thinking about and trying to solve policy problems. Over time a consensus gradually coalesces around a policy response to an emerging problem. Because this consensus usually evolves over time and because it involves a genuine change in perspective, it is referred to as an *enlightenment model*, pointing to the gradual acceptance of new ideas (11).

This model tells us to look for efforts to wrestle directly with the policy issues involved and to develop a consensus among the different parties. And, in fact, beginning as early as 1967 the highway community initiated a series of efforts to build a consensus for a

post-Interstate policy. By the mid-1980s they increased their efforts and organized a broad-based series of meetings to orchestrate and coordinate the various interests in new legislation. Hearings were held in each state, technical advisory groups were organized to solicit and synthesize the views of all interested parties, a history of the Interstate program was commissioned to glean the lessons learned from the program (12), and a series of strategic plans was prepared and published both within the U.S. Department of Transportation and in the industry in general. Led by AASHTO and the Highway Users Federation for Safety and Mobility, these groups organized a series of actions, known as Transportation 2020, which involved a series of public meetings around the country and the creation of a technical advisory committee with representatives from a wide range of groups. The aim of the Transportation 2020 approach was to present a united front to the Congress for the 1991 bill.

Depending on one's perspective it was possible to find evidence of consensus and agreement as well as strong differences. One participant noted that professionals came to agree on several major issues. One was the value of flexibility and the value of allowing states some leeway in developing their own plans. Another was the value of simplicity and reducing complex federal guidelines and oversight criteria. Political officials, however, never agreed on the value of simplicity and in the end were responsible for an increase in the number of federal regulations. Differences also remained over the amount of money to be contained in the legislation, because the administration continued to resist any increase in taxes and the congressional committees favored more funds for demonstration projects.

ADVOCACY COALITIONS

A third alternative to the iron triangle model agrees that relatively open networks of shared interests dominate the policy arena and that policy is made as members of the network come to agree on an idea. According to this model, however, there are severe limitations on the extent to which policy actors will change their core beliefs and it is very unlikely that change will come about by searching for a consensus. Rather, change occurs when there is a coalition of action-oriented individuals who are capable of transforming an idea into policy and displacing those who adhere to the existing policy (13). "Once an advocacy coalition is formed, the idea evolution process essentially ends. The central purpose of the coalition is not to second-guess its belief-ideas system, but rather to displace the status quo policy, its support structure, and to establish the dominance of its own policy ideas" (14). Thus the model emphasizes the difficulty of changing basic ideas and policy commitments and the unlikelihood that change will come from learning or the exchange of ideas. Whereas the enlightenment model stresses the evolution of ideas through increased knowledge and understanding, the advocacy coalition stresses strong allegiance to a core ideology. Policy change is unlikely unless one organized coalition displaces the dominant one.

The model predicts several important facets of the process surrounding ISTEA. Legislative change was unlikely as long as the highway lobby continued to dominate the process. Change depended on a new, opposing coalition that challenged the positions of the highway lobby. The two coalitions would pursue fairly defined initial commitments and core beliefs that would change little once the coalitions were formed and that would remain very powerful and determinative. Finally, it predicted that a change in policy

would reflect the view of one coalition over another rather than a compromise between them.

There is some evidence to support these predictions. Interviews with members of the highway lobby suggest that they were completely preoccupied with the technical aspects of highway legislation and the dissension in their own ranks and overlooked other policy debates related to the environment and urban sprawl. Their initial policy framework distracted them from defining the issue in broader terms or learning from parallel events or interests outside their traditional coalition. They were partially supported by the House, whose members were preoccupied with congressional earmarking and developing a more positively conceived system of national significance.

In the meantime a completely different coalition was developing outside of the purview of the first coalition. Specifically, several environmental and urban planning groups were becoming increasingly active in the transportation arena. Their activity stemmed from a prior interest in the environment and specifically in clean air legislation. A cluster of environmentally oriented and urban planning groups had come together around the reauthorization of the clean air legislation, which passed in 1990 [Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA)]. Several members realized that the prospects for clean air were profoundly affected by transportation legislation. Indeed, some of their proposals for effecting cleaner air through transportation measures had failed to survive in the development of CAAA. This coalition reassembled as the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP). Unlike the traditional transportation community's belief in the need for a national highway system, the underlying belief of the STPP coalition was quite the opposite—existing incentives for using single-occupancy vehicles and for building new highways for those single-occupancy vehicles had to be ended.

Although STPP was a new player in the transportation policy network, members of the coalition seized on the opportunity presented by the renewal of transportation legislation as a natural extension of their work on CAAA. They saw the 1991 surface transportation act as an opportunity to overcome some of the weaknesses in CAAA and to devise some positive means to encourage clean air rather than to rely solely on a regulatory approach. Furthermore, they realized that in drafting the CAAA they had underestimated the dominant role of state departments of transportation in affecting air quality. Several saw the transportation issue as an occasion to rectify this oversight and counter the role of the state highway departments. The following quotation underscores that this interest in transportation was a natural extension of their prior work on the environment:

We knew early on that clear air was going to be driving a lot of where the committee was going. . . . The transportation debate has been so overwhelmingly dominated by the highway community for so many years. The nature of what the committee did on clean air should have been a signal to the highway community. (15)

This common belief system was reinforced by the close ties of the group to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, which had jurisdiction over CAAA. The environmental groups organized under STPP and the chair of the Senate subcommittee, Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), shared a strong commitment to a non-highway-oriented bill. Moynihan, as noted, had a long and active interest in urban planning issues dating back to the 1950s and appreciated that 1991 might provide a long-awaited opportunity to rethink the highway program. Moynihan needed the support and expertise of the environmental groups, and over the

course of the next few months they hammered out a bill that looked very different from that passed by the House.

A number of observers and media reports reinforce the picture of competing coalitions, of intentional gamesmanship, and of clear winners and losers. For example, according to some observers, those drafting the Senate bill took pains to keep their activity very low profile, particularly vis à vis members of the highway lobby and those working on the House bill. As a result the traditional planning community was quite surprised when the Senate introduced a surface transportation bill before the House did. This perspective is reflected in the reporting on the bill's introduction:

In a significant victory for a coalition of environmentalists and urban planners, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on May 22 approved a five-year surface transportation bill that would radically alter federal highway policy. . . . Most remarkable about the Senate bill is that it was crafted with the interest of environmentalists and urban planners in mind, rather than those of the traditional highway lobbyists who have typically left their imprint in such reauthorizations. The so-called road gang of highway lobbyists was focused on the House Public Works Committee, which traditionally has taken the lead in introducing such bills, when the Senate bill was unveiled. The group includes the American Trucking Associations, state transportation officials, motor vehicle manufacturers and the Highway Users Federation. (16)

Finally, the model raises an interesting question about the relationship between legislation and implementation. It suggests that if legislation promotes significant policy change it usually favors the beliefs and agenda of one group over another. It is well known, however, that in our decentralized political system, interests that do not prevail at one level are very likely to pursue their interests during other stages in the process, such as the implementation stage. As Stone (17) warns, even when a policy is crafted in an open and broadly representative process, political adjustments during the implementation process "often are narrowly based, typically are achieved covertly, and therefore encourage self-serving behavior." Thus it is predictable that when legislation is passed because one coalition displaces rather than accommodates another, the legislation is less likely to be implemented in its original form and is more likely to respond to narrow special interests during implementation.

COMPARING MODELS

ISTEA was finally passed on November 27, 1991, and was signed into law on December 18. The Senate had moved quickly in the previous summer to pass its bill on June 19. The House bill had a much more troubled course. The Nickel for America proposal foundered and was pulled from the floor on August 1 and was formally abandoned on September 18. A revised House bill was introduced on October 10, passed by the committee on October 15, and passed by the full House on October 23. A 20-day conference ensued as the differences were worked out.

The final bill contains important aspects of both the House and Senate bills (Table 1). One apparent victory for the Senate was the inclusion of \$6 billion for congestion mitigation and air quality, the only new money in the act. The Senate provisions for special treatment of large metropolitan areas did survive the conference, as did a strong urban orientation for funding. House provisions prevailed on overall funding levels (\$38 billion) and congressional approval of the national highway system map.

In assessing which positions prevailed, however, because the Senate bill was a matter of record during the development of the final House bill, the House provisions were almost certainly crafted with the conference in mind. Thus it is extremely difficult to assess winners and losers without a careful and thorough analysis of which parties held which positions at a particular time, which is beyond the scope of this paper. Furthermore, even stated positions at a point in time cannot be accepted as completely objective measures of a party's true position, since all parties engage to some extent in grandstanding, manipulation, and gamesmanship.

How useful are the models in anticipating the dynamics of the process and its results? And more particularly, what do they tell us about the role of analysis in the process and indeed whether it played a significant role? A growing number of observers argue that there is no single, unambiguous answer to these questions, that the answers depend on the perspective one has on policy making. Each of the models outlined here leads to different questions and evidence and conclusions. These observers go on to argue that it is helpful to apply several perspectives to a given policy issue because each will direct us to certain events and activities that we may have otherwise overlooked (18). If we applied only the traditional iron triangle model we would overlook significant differences within the highway coalition and the important cleavage between professional analysts and congressional and administration interests. The policy arena model points to a much more fluid and interactive arena of activity and suggests why it was initially very difficult to formulate a coherent policy. The enlightenment model leads us to look at the ideas circulating within the broad community and to ask whether various parties changed their views and what efforts were made to formulate a consensus. And, finally, the advocacy coalition model directs us to look for evidence of competing interests and the power and salience of deeply held commitments and beliefs. Taken together the models provide a more robust understanding of the process surrounding ISTEA and the eventual outcome than any single one of them would have.

Some may find it unsatisfying to conclude with multiple models and will try to identify the one that is most useful in providing an understanding of the process and the role of analysis in that process. We would agree with Graham Allison, however, that it is seldom useful to apply only one model to the policy process. Such efforts inevitably leave out some dimensions and opportunities for shaping and influencing the debate and substance of policy. Thus we conclude that the policy process is not simply a black box that defies analysis and explanation, that it is possible to model what goes on within the box. But neither can it be captured in a single model or explanation. The policy arena is much more interesting and ripe with opportunities than either of these options suggests.

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TABLE 1 Surface Transportation Legislative Provisions

Provision	House Bill (as passed)	Senate (as passed)	Final
National highway system (spending)	\$37.6 billion for 155,000-mile system.	\$22 billion for interim national highway system, including \$14.2 for maintenance.	\$38 billion for national highway system, including \$17 million for maintenance.
National highway system (map)	Congress to approve proposed road map for system within two years.	Anticipates formal system from DOT Secretary within two years.	Requires Congressional approval of map by 9/30/95.
Transfer of highway funds to transit	Up to 35%	Up to 20%	Up to 50%; up to 100% with DOT Secretary approval
Surface transportation program	\$36 billion for "flexible mobility" programs	\$45 billion.	\$23.9 billion
Urban/rural mix of funds	\$13 billion for urban areas; states choose whether to spend another \$13 on urban or rural areas. Urban \geq 50,000	75% of surface transportation program to be divided among metropolitan areas of at least 250,000 and other less-populated areas in amounts equal to the proportion of their population. Remaining 25% could be spent anywhere.	\geq 20% of surface transportation program on safety and transportation enhancement; \geq 62.5% of remaining 80% divided among urban areas of at least 200,000 and other less-populated areas in amounts equal to the proportion of their population. Remaining 37.5% could be spent on projects regardless of population.
Metropolitan planning	Urbanized areas must establish metropolitan planning groups to coordinate modes. Each group must work with state DOT to develop a transportation improvement program that encompasses all projects in the area. The program would have to conform to a long-range transportation plan and Clean Air Act programs.	Metropolitan planning group must be designated for each metropolitan area of more than 50,000 by agreement between governor and local governments. Larger metropolitan areas must form planning groups, as well as smaller.	Urban areas of more than 50,000 must establish metropolitan planning groups, which will work with states to develop a transportation improvement program that encompasses all federal transportation projects within the metropolitan area. It must conform with a long-range transportation plan and Clean Air Act programs. Areas with more than 200,000 are deemed transportation management areas and have stricter planning requirements.
Congestion and air quality	Nothing	\$5 billion for "congestion mitigation and air-quality improvement" program for urban areas of 50,000 or more that fail to meet federal clean-air standards	\$6 billion.

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