

**Letter from the CNU DC Board:
The 2009 Federal Transportation Policy Bill, the Transportation for America (T4America)
coalition, and how it pertains to CNU DC and our professions**

Dear CNU DC member,

Over the past five years since the CNU Congress here in Washington, CNU DC has done evening lectures, lunchtime seminars and weekend walking tours. We've gradually built our membership and networks, obtained nonprofit status, and earned full CNU chapter designation. Now it's time to rally together and really make a difference. As urbanists we spend our careers attempting to make our cities more livable, but what could transportation funding possibly have to do with anything we do?

Think about the crises the media is constantly reminding us of: our dependence on oil and rising gas prices, the mortgage banking fiasco and lack of affordable housing options, crumbling metropolitan infrastructure from deferred maintenance and environmental stress, and melting polar ice caps from global warming. The playing field has changed but our national transportation program is geared toward solving yesterday's problems rather than building our future.

At this critical point, it turns out conditions are lining up for a new course for success. The political analysts say this is the greatest opportunity for change we've seen in decades.

What kind of change are we talking about? Imagine transportation policy with land use and community development integrated from top to bottom. Imagine transportation funding that recognizes, for the first time, the benefits of walkable and transit oriented development. For the first time, to have a national vision, purpose and goals for transportation, with local communities deciding how to meet those goals and the needs of their residents.

The revamping of the transportation funding stands to have a large influence on not just the way we live our daily lives but how we practice:

- Transit oriented development could be standard work instead of a special project;
- Infill and redevelopment will be responsible growth rather than simply a market segment; and
- "Sustainability" and "green" will finally become integral concepts instead of just buzz words.

All the ideals that are near and dear to us are fast becoming necessity and reality.

Imagine ... we have an opportunity to help build a political platform that may influence federal policy for transportation spending over the next decade. And this policy stands to answer many of the environmental and quality-of-life issues we struggle with in our projects and professions. We also benefit from the process itself – by strengthening our partnerships with the smart growth coalition, and starting to connect new urbanism to the federal policy realm.

This is the opportunity we've been waiting for! Please get involved.