

**Judith Rodin, President of the Rockefeller Foundation**  
**Remarks as Delivered**  
**Philanthropy's Role: Supporting a Bold, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Infrastructure Agenda**  
**America 2050 Forum • Bicentennial of the Gallatin Plan**  
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Thank you, Bob, and all our truly terrific partners: America 2050, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, the Surdna Foundation, and the Division of United States Studies at the Woodrow Wilson Center. I'd also like to recognize all of our special guests: members of Congress and leaders of extraordinarily diverse civic organizations. Even the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Union leadership have come together. As we talk about building bridges, we should think about it figuratively, not just literally. And it's always a pleasure to join Congressman Blumenauer. He is one of Congress' clarion voices, has energized so many people, and we at the Rockefeller Foundation are also energized by his leadership and his insights.

You heard Chairman Oberstar who couldn't physically be with us this morning, and I'm glad because I'm going to steal something that I've heard him say on other occasions. He cites the Texas A&M's 2007 Urban Mobility Report. The data are incredible. They indicate that traffic congestion in 2005 – the most recent year for which we have data – drained a total of \$78 billion from our economy, adding 4.2 billion hours to Americans' commutes, while wasting 2.9 billion gallons of gasoline that would have been unnecessary if cars had driven at posted speeds. As Congressman Oberstar has been known to say, this isn't just an economic issue; it's a moral one. In fact, the name of the Lord may be uttered more often in traffic during weekday commutes than in synagogues, mosques, and churches during weekend services.

We're here, of course, to commemorate the bicentennial of the Gallatin Plan. It was a visionary effort of Thomas Jefferson's Treasury Secretary, who argued the new

U.S. government had to design, engineer, and build a bridge to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It became a mainspring for historic expansion because it recognized that public resources, not just private capital, were essential for constructing the new nation. In his words, the task was too great to be left to “individual exertion.” Today, we must build on that same fundamental recognition, but with a key revision. Our challenges are so immense that we can’t afford to think about investment and financing as an either-or proposition – a false choice between private capital or public funds. We need new partnerships, new ideas, new sources of revenue. Our challenges require us to chart a different way forward. It takes the collaborative and unrelenting efforts of elected officials, business, labor, and civic leaders, and advocates for reform – many of whom are in this room.

Foundations also have a central role to play in facilitating this 21<sup>st</sup> century bargain, drawing together the public, private, and nonprofit sectors: connecting people and organizations with diverse perspectives and engaging them, as is happening here, in collaborative alliances; supporting the research and development that leads to the best policy options and new products and services, and better research data to help inform and influence public discourse; and encouraging and cultivating innovation – ideas that change the way we understand and solve problems.

Let me give you just a few illustrations to make the case. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation hatched the idea for a national 911 response system. The Ford Foundation promoted the concept of Community Development Corporations that would create jobs, preserve affordable housing, and promote small businesses. The Carnegie Foundation supported the initial development of the Public Broadcasting System and Pell Grants. Our forbearers at the Rockefeller Foundation invented the field of public health, funded the research for the ideas that evolved into the U.S. Social Security System, and established some of the earliest substantial efforts to open the doors of higher education to African Americans. Within just the last three

years, the Rockefeller Foundation provided the money and muscle for the planning process that supported – and we hope will sustain – New Orleans’ recovery from Katrina.

The point is that foundations are privileged because they can dare to be bold. They can dare – and they have the resources – to take risks, to think – and to urge others to think – a quarter-century down the road, not just about quarterly earnings or about next year’s election. And we are most useful when we can galvanize and leverage the actions and resources of others to meet the difficult challenges of the new century.

And, frankly, the challenges are difficult, indeed. A national Pew Research Center survey, released just a few weeks ago, indicated that fewer Americans now than at any time in the past century believe they’re moving forward in life. A recent CBS News poll said 81 percent of Americans believe the country is on the “wrong track.” These metrics capture and convey a sense of great unease, frustration, and fear – a collective anxiety among Americans. Much of this is a response to a war without end, heightened awareness of terrorism, and a looming recession. But some of it reflects – and the data supports this – a growing uncertainty about an infrastructure network that’s overburdened and obsolete.

We’ve responded, as Americans, in critical moments like this before. A little more than a half-century ago, President Dwight Eisenhower signed legislation establishing the United States’ interstate highway system. It was called the interstate and highway defense system, which is important to remember as we think about what the role of highways was perceived to be at the beginning – in his words, “vast system of inter-connected highways, criss-crossing the nation” was essential to national security, economic growth, and public safety.

It was among the boldest, most daring ideas of its time. It was the blueprint for infrastructure that enabled fifty years of unrivaled economic prosperity and opportunity. The interstate highway system moved the products of industry to market. It connected millions of people to well-paying jobs and affordable homes. And it affirmed Americans' enduring belief that a better future was only and always just down the road.

And yet, planning became paving, and this same interstate system triggered a host of unanticipated consequences. It entrenched our reliance on an oil economy we cannot possibly sustain. It produced, over the long-haul, harmful consequences for our communities, environment, and social mobility. We spend more time in cars, less time with our families, drive longer distances between home and work, and flood our atmosphere with greenhouse gasses. The same systems that supported tremendous growth for generations now serve to undermine it.

So, today, we must again dare to think and act boldly, but in a different way, because we live in a very different time. First, the demography of our national community is changing. Accelerating, unplanned urbanization is creating new risks along with new opportunities. Second, the economic security of our workforce is deteriorating as markets globalize – as we talked about this morning. Third, our overreliance on automobiles is dramatically worsening the build-up of greenhouse gasses that are warming our world. Transportation-infrastructure policy is intertwined with all of these critical issues.

First, as many of you – Bruce Katz and others – have so powerfully demonstrated, major demographic and economic forces have clustered communities and jobs in urban mega-regions. These are sprawling metro networks. They anchor the country's workforce and industries, points of commerce and ports of trade, centers of research and crucibles of innovation, gateways of immigration and crossroads of cultural vitality. The United States' largest 100 metro areas cover only 10 percent

of its land mass, but account for 65 percent of its G.D.P., and 75 percent of its population. And, they're unprepared for the deluge of people on the way. Open spaces are disappearing. When was the last time you weren't stuck in traffic on the Beltway? And the stress on our aging infrastructure multiplies as urban populations expand.

Second, Americans feel increasingly vulnerable as their jobs leave, benefits evaporate, and healthcare bills mount. These issues took center stage when the three leading presidential candidates debated a temporary suspension of the gas-tax. Whatever you think about the candidates' proposals – and I'm sure there are some strong points-of-view around this room – the debate illuminated an urgent reality. If Washington keeps U.S. transportation policy on its current path – if the federal government fails to frame a coherent, unifying vision for change – the American promise will slip further from reach for millions and climate change will continue unabated. The costs of transportation are prohibitive. Low-income families spend an astonishing one-third of their income getting from one place to another. Transportation is now Americans' second highest household expense.

And third, beyond an economic challenge; this is an environmental one. The transportation sector produces one-third of the nation's, and one-twelfth of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. Washington, however, directs four-of-every-five gas-tax dollars to road construction and maintenance. Because of this backwards funding allocation, because of current land-use and development patterns, and because of limited access to affordable transportation alternatives, Americans drive more than anyone else.

Last year, Congress passed major legislation increasing vehicle fuel efficiency to 35 miles per gallon by the year 2020. Nonetheless, projected increases in automobile travel alone – estimated at about 1.6 percent annually – will release such a large volume of greenhouse gasses by 2020 that environmental protections achieved

through this new gas-mileage requirement, along with anticipated advances in low-emissions fuel, will be completely negated.

So, let's think, together, about the future. Thankfully, many of you are already leading the effort to shape smarter policies. And philanthropy must continue lending its support.

In the short term, we must make "fix it first" the rule not the exception. This means dedicating transportation money to repairing and rebuilding, rather than expanding or widening roadways – a political challenge we must meet. It will contain our carbon footprint and set a ripple effect through local economies. The Economic Policy Institute determined that repair work could begin on 6,000 structurally deficient bridges across the country for about \$30 billion, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Over the long run, transportation systems must be rebuilt to include affordable, accessible, and environmentally sustainable options. Fortunately, the opportunity to change course will arise – regardless of who wins in November – when the new president and Congress debate the highway bill next year. It is a decisive crossroads. Between now and then, we must vigorously search for solutions.

What's so exciting is new kinds of partnerships can push these issues to a tipping-point. Individuals and groups must come together, across party lines and disciplinary boundaries. And – right here in this room – we can see this happening. People interested in land-use are joining with those interested in energy security. People interested in health are joining with those interested in water scarcity. If we can work together and seize this moment, we'll soon push over that tipping point.

As with the Gallatin Plan in 1808, the Roosevelt Plan in 1908, and the interstate highway plan in the 1950s, progress always starts with daring ideas. I believe

firmly that we can lead the global economy of the 21st century – we haven't yet squandered that opportunity – just as we led the industrial and manufacturing economies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but we must be intelligent, innovative, and socially conscious, and we have to harness forces of transportation and transformation to benefit more people, more equally, in more places.

We can manage more sustainable patterns of growth. We can build 21st century infrastructure and create jobs in the process. We can mitigate the climate change we're causing, and develop clean, reliable, renewable, sustainable energy supplies. We can build stronger resilience so people aren't left vulnerable to the wrath of a world that we know will continue warming no matter how many Hummers are traded in for Priuses. And so we must. We must do all these things in a way that widens the circle of opportunity.

I want to thank all of you for your commitment to partnering, to framing new ideas, raising awareness, and forging a coalition that can get the job done. Together, we can and must – we will – build a better road forward for America.

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