

U.S. Department of Transportation

Accomplishments Overview

Under the leadership of [Secretary Ray LaHood](#), the U.S. Department of Transportation has continued its commitment to making the U.S. transportation systems the safest in the world, while creating more affordable and reliable transportation options for hardworking American families.

Safety is DOT's primary mission. Secretary LaHood created the [U.S. Department of Transportation Safety Council](#) to identify and address the top safety issues that cut across all DOT agencies and to ensure an even stronger safety culture throughout the department. DOT launched an [aggressive national campaign](#) in 2009 to end the dangerous practice of distracted driving, and specifically texting and cell phone use behind the wheel. In 2009, only 18 states had laws against texting and driving. Today, 39 states, D.C., Guam and the Virgin Islands ban texting while driving, and 10 states, D.C., Guam and the Virgin Islands ban all hand-held cell phone use behind the wheel.

DOT has made major improvements and investments in our nation's infrastructure. DOT provides States, metropolitan areas and transit agencies approximately \$40 billion annually to maintain 4 million lane miles of local roads, state highways, and interstate highways across America. Over the past four years, DOT has awarded \$5.4 billion to rehabilitate runways, taxiways, and aprons at 1,115 airports around the country. Since 2009, DOT investments in rail have constructed or improved 6,500 miles of rail corridors and upgraded 40 stations. The Department has also invested \$7.9 billion to help build major new transit rail and bus infrastructure projects across 13 cities in 10 states since 2009. DOT has also awarded 129 Small Shipyard Grants to shipyards in 77 cities along the East Coast, West Coast, Gulf Coast, Great Lakes and Inland Waterways, Alaska, Hawaii, and Guam during the first Obama Administration.

Through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, or [TIGER Discretionary Grant program](#), DOT has provided \$3.1 billion to 218 projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Demand for the program has been overwhelming. Over four rounds, DOT received more than 4,050 applications requesting more than \$105.2 billion for transportation projects across the country.

[Livable](#) and sustainable communities have also been a focus of DOT over the past four years – putting all travelers on equal footing, whether they get behind the wheel of a car or put on a pair of walking shoes. DOT has supported states and communities in their efforts to give citizens a wider array of transportation options, including high speed and intercity passenger rail, streetcars and comprehensive walking and biking paths. As a result of DOT's efforts, people are back at work building these transportation networks and improving America's roads, bridges, airports, transit systems and railways. DOT has made great strides over the past four years in safety improvements and infrastructure investments working towards President Barack Obama's vision of an America built to last.

Over the last four years, Secretary LaHood has traveled to 50 states, 211 cities, and 18 countries. He has testified before Congress 40 times.

Infrastructure and Jobs. The Department of Transportation rapidly implemented [the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act \(ARRA\)](#), the most significant public works program since the New Deal, awarding \$48 billion in Recovery Act dollars for more than 15,000 transportation projects across the nation which created tens of thousands of jobs. The Recovery Act projects lead to nearly 42,000 miles of road improved, over 2,700 bridges improved or replaced and the purchase or rehabilitation of over 12,220 transit vehicles. The Recovery Act also made the first-ever investments in American high-speed rail, with the construction of approximately 1,000 route-miles of new or improved track benefiting high-speed and faster intercity passenger rail corridor programs.

TIGER. A unique feature of the Recovery Act was the \$1.5 billion [TIGER grant program](#) which allowed the Secretary to invest in critical projects that were difficult to fund through traditional programs. Through TIGER, cities, counties, states and other government entities applied to the Department of Transportation, with many getting direct access to Federal transportation funds for the first time. The best projects were funded through a competitive process that encouraged innovation and regional collaboration. Due to the program's popularity, Congress extended it for an additional three rounds, and the TIGER program has now provided \$3.1 billion to 218 projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

MAP-21. The Department of Transportation has rapidly implemented the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, known as MAP-21, the first long-term surface transportation authorization enacted since 2005. The Department has been working diligently across modal administrations to implement the many new funding and programmatic provisions in MAP-21, which provides \$105 billion in transportation funding over two years. The Department has provided guidance on over 50 provisions within three months, including major funding programs for highways, transit, and safety and the newly expanded TIFIA credit program. Throughout this process, the Department has continued to provide opportunities to the public and transportation stakeholders to engage and have input.

Regional Projects. The Department of Transportation put an emphasis on regional partnerships, bringing together state, county and municipal leaders for a common purpose to build or improve major infrastructure projects in every corner of the country. In Los Angeles, DOT provided a \$545 million TIFIA loan to help build the new Crenshaw Light Rail Line that will help riders connect to the city's airport and downtown area. In the Midwest, DOT is supporting the modernization underway at Chicago's O'Hare Airport and recently gave \$25 million to kick-start Detroit's M1 streetcar line. On the East Coast, the Department's oversight of the DC to Dulles Silver Line will connect the region's busiest international airport to the city's metro system that runs throughout DC, Maryland and Virginia. These projects and others like it help towns and cities tackle the big picture transportation needs their communities – and their surrounding regions – need to compete and succeed in the future.

FAA Reauthorization. President Obama signed the FAA reauthorization bill into law, ending a five-year wait for long-term FAA funding and ending a string of 23 short-term funding extensions. The reauthorization bill has helped the FAA to continue to run the world's safest system while accelerating the delivery of NextGen benefits to the traveling public.

CAFE. Under the President's leadership, DOT and EPA set historic new standards that will nearly double the fuel economy of passenger vehicles on our roadways by 2025 and cut greenhouse gas emissions in half. The Administration's national standard creates an even playing field and sets expectations for auto manufacturers, while saving consumers trillions at the pump, reducing the nation's dependence on oil, and improving air quality.

Pilot Fatigue Rule. After 25 years of deadlock, Secretary LaHood [announced a major aviation safety achievement](#) – the overhaul of pilot rest rules. Under the rule announced in December 2011, commercial pilots will have the opportunity to get proper rest before reporting for duty.

Car Allowance Rebate System (CARS). The Car Allowance Rebate System (CARS), also known as Cash for Clunkers, was the most successful short-term economic stimulus initiative in DOT history. In a matter of weeks, Americans traded in nearly 700,000 gas-guzzlers for more fuel-efficient cars, improving the environment, providing a lifeline to the auto industry and giving the economy a shot in the arm when it desperately needed it. NHTSA estimates the program resulted in a \$6.8 billion increase in GDP and 60,000 jobs created or saved.

NextGen. Aviation is an economic engine. Our skies are too congested and our existing aviation infrastructure can't handle expected future demand. Over the last three and a half years, the FAA has made significant strides in transitioning our aviation system from radar to satellites. NextGen will deliver more on-time flights, reduce fuel burn and further ensure that we maintain the safest aviation system in the world. In 2012, the FAA continued to rollout a collaborative NextGen effort – called the Metroplex initiative – to major cities and regions nationwide that will increase safety, help airlines improve on-time performance and reduce aircraft emissions.

High-Speed Rail. Today, thirty-four states across the U.S. and the District of Columbia are laying the foundation for high-speed rail corridors that will link Americans with faster and more energy-efficient travel options. The federal government is investing \$12 billion in upgrading, improving and expanding the nation's rail network. Over the next forty years America's population will expand by another 100 million people. The growth in population demands new travel options. Investing in the next generation of higher performing rail equipment, upgrading track structures, and renovating and building new rail stations leads to better, faster, more reliable intercity passenger rail service. Increased rail usage leads to a cleaner environment, more travel choices, expanding economic opportunities and more jobs for the American public.

Livable Communities. Beginning in 2009, DOT partnered with HUD and EPA to help improve access to affordable housing, more transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment in communities nationwide. This coordination marks the first time the three agencies have aligned funding decisions to ensure taxpayers earn maximum benefits. DOT has supported funding, planning, and technical assistance for a wider array of transportation options, including high speed rail, streetcars and comprehensive walking and biking paths. DOT has also improved access to transportation options to people with disabilities, including intercity, commuter and high speed passenger rail as well as those who travel on boats and ships.

Connected Vehicles. As part of its safety mission, the Department's Research and Innovative Technology Administration is exploring "connected vehicle" technology, which uses a wireless communications network to alert drivers to potential accidents, dangerous curves, unsafe road and weather conditions and other hazards. In August, the Department began a year-long model deployment, at a test site in Ann Arbor, Mich., testing connected vehicle technology in approximately 3,000 cars, trucks and buses under real-world conditions.

Every Day Counts Initiative. FHWA launched the Every Day Counts (EDC) Initiative in 2009 to shorten project delivery, accelerate technology and innovation deployment, and reduce the carbon footprint of FHWA. Dozens of EDC strategies, ranging from innovative contracting methods to using alternative asphalt, have been adopted in some form by every single state and are at work on thousands of projects nationwide to bring the traveling public better and smarter infrastructure while reducing congestion. This is one of the steps DOT is taking to get job-creating projects underway and completed as quickly as possible.

New Fuel Economy Labels. In 2011, Secretary LaHood and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson unveiled new fuel economy labels for new cars and trucks sold in the U.S., the first update since the labels were introduced 30 years ago. The new labels provide consumers with more information in a more usable format. New car shoppers can now see the amount of savings over a five-year period, a fuel economy comparison to other vehicles in the same class, and easy-to-understand guidance about each car or truck's environmental impact. Shoppers can also scan a code with their smartphones to store that vehicle's information, compare it to other vehicles, and access www.fueleconomy.gov for even more information. The new labels help fulfill President Obama's plan to provide Americans with relief from high gas prices and break the dependence on foreign oil.

Open Skies. The Obama Administration continued to seek liberalized Open-Skies agreements with aviation partners around the world. Open-Skies agreements remove restrictions on routes, destinations and pricing and allow airlines to respond to market demand. Fifteen new aviation partners agreed to Open Skies with the United States during the current administration, bringing our total number to 109 Open Skies partners.

International Alliances. The Department of Transportation has granted antitrust immunity to international aviation alliances, including the Star Alliance and oneworld alliance, when we have found that immunity will improve competition and expand services for consumers. The Department's grants of immunity have allowed the alliances to add new airlines and expand their networks to more destinations, providing consumers with additional travel options.

Distracted Driving Campaign

Under the leadership of U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, the Department of Transportation launched an aggressive national campaign in 2009 to end the dangerous practice of distracted driving, and specifically texting and cell phone use behind the wheel. Today, 39 states, D.C., Guam, and the Virgin Islands ban texting while driving, and 10 states, D.C., Guam, and the Virgin Islands ban all hand-held cell phone use behind the wheel.

Raising Public Awareness. Secretary LaHood and the U.S. Department of Transportation launched a dedicated website, Distraction.gov, and hosted two national distracted driving summits in 2009 and 2010 to raise awareness among the public and the media about the dangers of texting and cell phone use behind the wheel. In 2010, Secretary LaHood launched “[Faces of Distracted Driving](#),” a [video series](#) exploring the tragic consequences of texting and cell phone use behind the wheel by sharing the stories of people from across the country who have been injured or lost loved ones in distracted driving crashes. In 2012, DOT released a “[Blueprint for Ending Distracted Driving](#),” which lays out a plan for building on the progress DOT has made to date and arms safety partners, advocates, and community leaders with clear, forward-thinking strategies for continuing the fight to end distracted driving. DOT has also partnered with organizations including State Farm, Allstate, the Ad Council, the FOX television show “Glee”, Walt Disney Corporation, National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS), Consumer Reports, ESPN, the Better Business Bureau, Regal Cinemas, and others to highlight the dangers of distracted driving.

Providing Leadership. In February 2012, DOT [proposed a set of guidelines](#) to automakers that would reduce the risk of distraction from electronic systems in vehicles. These voluntary guidelines, the first of their kind, include recommendations to reduce task complexity and limit the amount of time drivers must divert their eyes or take a hand off the wheel to operate an in-vehicle electronic device.

Encouraging Enforcement. In April 2010, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) launched the “[Phone in One Hand, Ticket in the Other](#)” enforcement program in Hartford, Connecticut, and Syracuse, New York. The pilot campaigns were the first in the country to test whether increased law enforcement efforts combined with public service announcements could get distracted drivers to put their cell phones down and focus on the road. Following four enforcement waves in both cities, the [results revealed](#) that distracted driving incidents dramatically decreased if existing laws banning texting and handheld cell phone use were properly enforced. Following the success of the Hartford and Syracuse pilots, DOT [announced federal support](#) for the expansion of the program to Sacramento, California and the state of Delaware in 2012. DOT also announced a new program in 2012, authorized by Congress under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), that will [provide grants](#) to states with laws banning distracted driving.

Conducting Research. In 2011, NHTSA unveiled a new measure for fatalities related to distracted driving, called “[distraction-affected crashes](#).” Introduced as a way to get better information about the role of distraction in crashes, the new measure focuses more narrowly on crashes in which a driver was most likely to have been distracted. While NHTSA’s Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) previously recorded a broad range of potential distractions, the new measure focuses on distractions that are most likely to affect crash involvement, such as distraction by dialing a cell phone or texting or by an outside person or event. Using this refined methodology, new data shows that an estimated 3,331 people were killed in distraction-affected crashes in 2011.

Enacting Regulations. In conjunction with the launch of DOT's national campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving, [President Obama signed an Executive Order](#) in 2009 banning four million federal employees from text messaging while driving government-owned vehicles, while driving privately owned vehicles when they’re on official government business, and when using electronic equipment supplied by the government while driving. Building on the President’s commitment, DOT launched a [multi-modal regulatory campaign](#) against distracted driving that banned all hand-held cell phone use by commercial drivers and banned texting on electronic devices by drivers operating a motor vehicle containing hazardous materials.

Safety

In 2009, Secretary LaHood created the U.S. Department of Transportation Safety Council to identify and address the top safety issues that cut across all DOT agencies and to ensure an even stronger safety culture throughout the department.

Traffic Safety

New 5-Star Rating System. In October 2010, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration unveiled a new 5-Star Rating System that uses more rigorous tests, better crash data and higher standards to make safety ratings tougher for vehicles and more meaningful for consumers. These new standards, including side pole crash testing and the use of a female dummy, are being applied to all vehicles produced in 2011 and [beyond](#).

Combating Drunk Driving, Heatstroke and Child Safety Seat Programs. To better protect drivers and passengers, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration launched a new advertising campaign, “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over,” to help get drunk drivers off the road; worked to prevent heatstroke in hot cars by hosting a series of national and local press events on the issue; and issued new safety guidelines for child seats that keep pace with the latest scientific and medical research and take advantage of new child restraint technologies.

Aviation Safety

NextGen Increases Aviation Safety. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) continues to make progress in the roll-out of NextGen, which is transforming our national airspace from a ground-based system to satellite-based navigation and air traffic control. NextGen will maintain safety and deliver more flights on time and reduce fuel burn. NextGen technologies and procedures include Automatic Dependence Surveillance Broadcast (ADS-B) – one of the cornerstones of NextGen that uses satellites to track air traffic more precisely which now covers more than half of the country. The FAA also issued the final ADS-B rule so aircraft operators know what avionics they need to put in their aircraft in order to meet equipment requirements by 2020. In 2012, the FAA rolled-out the [Metroplex](#) initiative in major cities and regions to increase safety, help airlines improve on-time performance and reduce aircraft emissions. The Metroplex initiative is based on satellite navigation, called Performance-Based Navigation (PBN), that enables pilots to fly aircraft using satellite coverage or by utilizing the on-board flight management system. PBN allows shorter, more direct routes that reduce flight time and fuel consumption, and result in fewer carbon emissions.

Preventing Pilot Fatigue. After over 20 years of trying, the Federal Aviation Administration overhauled outdated flight and duty rules in December 2011 to give commercial passenger pilots the opportunity to get the sleep they need to operate safely. Incorporating the latest research on alertness, sleep and fatigue, the [new rules](#) sets different requirements for pilot flight time, duty period, and rest based on the time of day pilots begin their first flight, the number of scheduled flight segments, and the number of time zones they cross.

No-Nonsense Approach to Cockpit Laser Strikes. In 2011, the number of reports of someone on the ground shining a laser into the cockpit of an airplane overhead continued to increase nationwide from 2,836 in 2010 to 3,592 in 2011. So, to protect passengers, flight crews, and people on the ground, the agency used a long-standing federal statute to impose [civil penalties against those who point a laser into an aircraft](#). Now, the FAA is pursuing stiffer penalties for individuals who purposefully point laser devices at aircraft, and announced last June it would begin to impose civil penalties against individuals who point a laser device at an aircraft. The maximum penalty for one laser strike is \$11,000, and the FAA has proposed civil penalties against individuals for multiple laser incidents, with \$30,800 the highest penalty proposed to date. The FAA has also undertaken serious outreach and made it easier for people to report these crimes.

Transit Safety

Stronger Transit Safety Oversight. The Obama Administration and Secretary LaHood proposed the Public Transportation Safety Program of 2009 – historic, first-of-its-kind legislation to establish and enforce federal safety standards for rail transit systems. This became [law](#) under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). Under MAP-21, FTA gained significant new authority to establish and enforce a comprehensive framework to oversee the safety of public transportation throughout the United States for the first time. The authority in the new legislation has the potential to save lives and strengthen oversight of transit safety for millions of riders every day.

Rail Safety

Technology to Prevent Train Accidents. The result of over a decade of work by FRA and its stakeholders, Secretary LaHood announced in January 2010 a [final rule requiring the installation of Positive Train Control technology](#) on the nation's major rail lines and commuter and intercity passenger rail routes. Positive Train Control sends and receives a continuous stream of data about the location, speed, and direction of trains and will help prevent train-to-train collisions, derailments caused by excessive speed, and accidents caused by human error or misaligned switches.

Motor Carrier Safety

Increased Commitment to Motor Carrier Safety. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has taken aggressive efforts to strengthen passenger carrier safety and enforcement, significantly increasing the number of bus inspections of the nation's passenger carriers. Over the past seven years, motorcoach inspections have nearly tripled from 12,991 in 2005 to 33,684 in 2012. In 2012, there were 33,684 motorcoach inspections, resulting in 880 motorcoach drivers and 1,831 motorcoach vehicles being placed out of service.

In just the past two years, FMCSA has placed 255 bus companies out-of-service for safety and compliance violations. The largest single safety crackdown in FMCSA history took place on May 30, 2012, along Interstate-95 from New York to Florida that shut down [26 bus operations](#). The Department has taken steps to put high-risk and chameleon operators out-of-service through new rulemakings and requested statutory authority. FMCSA unveiled [SaferBus](#), a first-of-its-kind app that gives bus riders a quick and free way to review a bus company's safety record.

Pipeline Safety

Pipeline Safety Initiative and Legislation. Secretary LaHood launched a national [Call to Action](#) to improve pipeline safety. Following accidents in San Bruno, California and Allentown, Pennsylvania, he successfully worked with Congress to strengthen oversight and increase the maximum civil penalties for pipeline violations. In January 2012, these initiatives became law when President Obama signed the Pipeline Safety Act. The Secretary continues to urge pipeline operators to step up and replace or repair aging pipelines, which included the launch of the nation's first cast iron pipeline inventory that highlights the location of this infrastructure. Under the Secretary's leadership, PHMSA has held workshops, webinars and issued advisories on safety issues such as valve placement, leak detection, risk assessment and control room management. In addition, DOT and PHMSA hosted the first ever pipeline emergency response forum and issued a safety advisory about pipeline emergency coordination to make sure the needs of emergency responders are represented in national pipeline policy. Pipeline enforcement updates and incident reports are now readily available on <http://www.PHMSA.dot.gov>, which keeps the public and local and state officials informed about pipeline safety issues in their communities.

Airline Consumer Protection

Over the past four years DOT has demonstrated its commitment to protecting consumers when they travel by air. DOT has virtually ended lengthy tarmac delays, prohibited the largest U.S. airlines from scheduling chronically delayed flights, increased compensation for bumped passengers, required advertised airfares to include the full price to be paid by consumers, and taken numerous other consumer-friendly actions. During the past four years, the Obama administration has issued two major rules that have significantly strengthened protections for airline consumers. More information is at the [Aviation Consumer Protection website](#).

December 2009 Rule - [Enhancing Airline Passenger Protections](#)

Ban on long tarmac delays. The Department established, for the first time, a limit on how long passengers could be forced to remain aboard an aircraft as it sat on the tarmac. Under the ruling issued in December 2009, U.S. airlines operating domestic flights cannot allow an aircraft to remain on the tarmac for more than three hours without allowing passengers to deplane, with exceptions allowed only for safety or security, or air traffic control reasons. DOT later expanded the tarmac delay rule to cover foreign airlines operating at U.S. airports with a four-hour limit on tarmac delays for international flights from U.S. airports.

Monitoring delays and banning chronically late flights. Airlines are subject to enforcement action if they schedule flights that are chronically late. Airlines must also designate an employee to monitor the effects of flight delays and cancellations, respond in a timely and substantive fashion to consumer complaints, provide information to consumers on where to file complaints, and display on their websites flight delay information for each domestic flight they operate.

Adopting customer service plans. Airlines must adopt customer service plans and audit their own compliance with their plans.

April 2011 Rule - [Enhancing Airline Passenger Protections](#)

Reimbursement of baggage fees. Airlines are required to reimburse passengers for bag fees if their bags are lost.

Increase in bumping compensation. Consumers are now eligible for up to double the previous level of compensation if they are bumped involuntarily from an oversold flight.

Disclosure of optional fees. Airlines are now required to disclose all potential fees on their websites, including but not limited to fees for baggage, meals, canceling or changing reservations, or advanced or upgraded seating. In addition, airlines and ticket agents must include all government taxes and fees in every advertised price.

Allowing passengers to cancel reservations without penalty. Airlines are required to allow consumers to cancel reservations without penalty, or hold reservations at the quoted fare without payment, for at least 24 hours after the reservation is made, if the reservation is made one week or more prior to a flight's departure date.

Ban on post-purchase fare increases. Airlines are required to not increase the price of a ticket after a passenger has purchased it unless the increase is due to government-imposed taxes or fees, and only if the passenger is notified of and agrees to the potential increase at the time of sale.

Stepped-up enforcement of airline consumer rules. Under the Obama Administration, the Department has aggressively enforced its airline consumer rules. Between 2009 and 2012, the Department's Aviation Enforcement Office has issued 203 civil penalties totaling \$16.5 million in fines, compared to 105 penalties and \$8.8 million in fines the previous four years.