

Myths & Facts about Transportation & Growth

Myth	Fact
Stopping development will stop traffic growth.	Even with no new development, traffic would increase due to the population's growth mobility. More drivers and more cars.
Growth is unpredictable, and therefore adequate planning is impossible.	Growth is generally predictable; plan made in advance are essential to cope with it.
Growth in a community primarily serves newcomers.	Much of the development in growing areas is needed to serve existing residents, not people moving in.
Reducing density will reduce traffic.	Limiting density of development does not reduce traffic, except in the immediate area. Lower-density residential, retail, or office projects generate more, not less, overall traffic.
Urban transportation's major challenge is improving commuting to downtown jobs.	In most growing areas, a diversity of transportation needs – dispersed suburban employment, reverse commuting, and non-work travel – are as important as, if not more important than, the problem of downtown commuting.
Suburbanites do not ride buses.	Suburbanites do ride buses when the service is reasonably fast and convenient.
Overall, new rail transit systems are needed to reduce traffic congestion.	Rail transit works best in high-density cities that already have it. It is an expensive and ineffectual way to reduce congestion in a city that does not develop around rail transit.
New roads should not be built, because they will only fill up with traffic.	Highway improvements are essential to a balanced regional transportation system. Their use is an indication of the need for them, not a sign of their failure.
Highways can no longer be built in urban areas.	New roads can, and are, being built in urban areas all over the United States.
People must change their attitudes so that they depend less on the automobile.	Commuters' choices are based on comparisons of cost and convenience, not abstract values. It is not attitudes that must be changed, but the relative service and cost of options offered to commuters.
We should not make capitol investments because they will be outmoded by new technology.	Transportation options for the near future will be much like those available today. We should continue to work with these options while seeking better technologies for the more distant future.
Original Source: ULI, "Myths and Facts about Transportation and Growth," ULI, DC 1989	Second Source: "Interpreting the City: An Urban Geography," Truman A. Hartshore, 1992