



## UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM BOARD

September 22, 2015

The Honorable Penny Pritzker  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Pritzker:

On behalf of the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (Board), we are pleased to offer to you our comments on the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) "Beyond Traffic 2045", a 30 Year framework for our nation's transportation system. We greatly appreciate your desire and willingness to provide USDOT with the Department of Commerce's recommendations for further integrating travel and tourism into future planning for the nation's infrastructure. A robust and healthy national transportation infrastructure is essential to maintain the United States' position as a top global destination.

The attached comments provide specific recommendations for tightly weaving travel and tourism into the fabric of USDOT's 30 year framework. We seek your endorsement of these recommendations in order to communicate to the USDOT that travel and tourism must be a priority consideration in the nation's long term infrastructure plans. Record travel exports generated \$181 billion for the U.S. economy last year, but critical domestic infrastructure investments are needed to support the expected growth in international visitors to the United States.

In brief, the comments cover the following themes:

- The United States has set a goal of attracting 100 million international visitors annually by 2021. Our already strained infrastructure must not only accommodate expected domestic population growth, but must also serve anticipated growth in international travel to the United States.
- In identifying trends that drive transportation decision making, we recommend adding a new trend: How We Move International Visitors. This section would describe:
  - Key land, sea and airports of entry to the U.S. for international visitors;
  - The need to move international visitors beyond entry gateways to national parks, rural and tribal lands; and
  - Recognize that Amtrak, transit and cruise will need to grow, along with highway improvements, to accommodate tourism growth.

- Recognize that modernization of our nation’s aviation system includes not only updating our air traffic control system, but also airport facilities. At the June Board meeting, we discussed with you the fact that no U.S. airports make the Skytrax list of the world’s 25 best airports. U.S. airport facilities need to be upgraded to accommodate the expected influx of international visitors.
- Expand on the statement that surface access to airports for passengers should be improved, by adding a focus on intermodal connections for international travelers.
- Expand and update the travel data to reflect the U.S. Department of Commerce’s latest information.
- Include in the discussion about shaping our future, more information about the challenges facing passenger air travel including airline consolidation, service to small and medium communities, the NextGen cost of “equipment” to airline operators, and the ability of the air traffic control system to accommodate projected traffic growth.

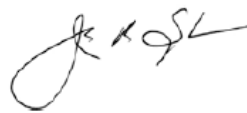
The outstanding work that is being done to secure the economic benefits of travel and tourism relies on a sound transportation infrastructure to attract and serve international visitors. The United States cannot afford to not invest in our travel infrastructure. The visitor spending, jobs, cultural exchange and enhanced reputation which accrue from enthusiastic international visitors generate long term payoffs.

We stand ready to assist in advancing these comments to the USDOT to ensure the entire U.S. government is speaking with one voice in advancing travel and tourism.

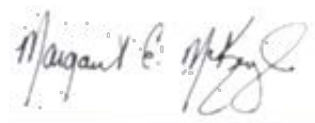
Respectfully submitted,



Sam Gilliland  
Chair



John Sprouls  
Vice Chair



Margaret McKeough  
Co-Chair, Infrastructure Subcommittee



Greg Stubblefield  
Co-Chair, Infrastructure Subcommittee

**U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Committee, Infrastructure Subcommittee Comments on  
“Beyond Traffic 2045 : Trends and Choices” – U.S. Department of Transportation 30 Year  
Frame work**

1. Introduction

Page 4 - add as a sixth bullet under the discussion of “How will we move?”:

- The United States has set a goal of attracting 100 million international visitors annually to the United States by 2021, with profound implications for ports of entry and movement of international visitors around the country, using infrastructure that is already strained today.

2. Trends Section – this section describes five major trends:

- a. How We Move
- b. How We Move Things
- c. How We Move Better
- d. How We Adapt
- e. How We Align Decisions and Dollars

Page 46 – add a new Trend: How We Move International Visitors. This new section would describe:

- a. How travel “exports” improve the economy and add jobs; projection of future travel “exports”; global competition for visitors. The U.S. Department of Commerce’s (USDOC) National Travel and Tourism Office publishes up to date information on this: [http://travel.trade.gov/outreachpages/download\\_data\\_table/Fast\\_Facts\\_2014.pdf](http://travel.trade.gov/outreachpages/download_data_table/Fast_Facts_2014.pdf)
- b. Key ports of entry. Page 67 shows Top Ten Freight Ports. A similar graphic should be developed for the Top 30 Gateway Airports; as well as key land borders and sea ports for cruise ships.

Key tourist destinations for international visitors. USDOC info:

[http://travel.trade.gov/outreachpages/download\\_data\\_table/2014\\_States\\_and\\_Cities.pdf](http://travel.trade.gov/outreachpages/download_data_table/2014_States_and_Cities.pdf)

- c. The need to move international visitors beyond gateways to rural and tribal lands.

- d. Recognize that Amtrak, transit and cruise lines will need to grow and highway improvements need to be made to accommodate tourism.

<http://history.amtrak.com/archives/magic-of-amtraks-america-flyer-1993>

**(Archives includes stories about proximity of Amtrak routes to National Parks)**

The current Amtrak marketing program to use Amtrak to see U.S. National Parks should be highlighted:

<http://www.amtrak.com/explore-national-parks-by-train>

- e. There is only a fleeting reference to **NextGen** and **GPS (pages 86 and 94)**. This should be developed further. <http://www.faa.gov/>

Page 116 states that rising sea levels will disrupt transportation and lists the elevation of eleven airports. We recommend a description of how the top international airport gateways potentially could be affected by rising sea levels.

Page 132 - The Alternate Fuels section should mention aviation use of alternative fuels and how this might affect air fares and international travel to the United States.

### 3. Aviation Section (pages 232- 240)

#### 1. Add:

- a. Under Growing Demand for Travel (page 233):

- i. Expand and highlight the information on page 193 of the report about the 100 million international visitor projection and Tourism and the U.S. Economy (**Note: the 100 million ‘visitors’ includes all modes of travel. In 2014, 40% of all inbound was surface... from Canada and Mexico**)
- ii. Add top 10 U.S. passenger ports (air/all modes) and top 10 ports of entry for international visitors. [See **Attachments-1 and -2, data prepared by the USDOC**]

- b. Add Section – Modernizing our Nation’s Airports (to follow “Modernizing our Air Traffic System (pages 235-237)

- i. No U.S. airport even makes the Skytrax list of the world’s 25 best airports  
[http://www.worldairportawards.com/Awards/world\\_airport\\_rating.htm](http://www.worldairportawards.com/Awards/world_airport_rating.htm)  
1
- ii. Airport facilities need to be upgraded to accommodate influx of international visitors:

1. Customs and Border Protection facilities need to be reconfigured
  2. Larger jet bridges to accommodate jumbo aircraft
  3. Baggage systems redesigned
  4. Airfield Improvements
- iii. The ACI-NA 2015 Capital Needs study indicates that airports, including both commercial and general aviation airports, have \$75.7 billion in total projects that are considered essential by the airport and airport users.

#### Recommendation 4: How We Align Decisions and Dollars Section

1. Page 149 – On the chart that discusses that U.S. transportation spending is insufficient to compete in the global economy, replace the box describing the pilot program in Oregon on road user charges with a graphic that explains that the Airports Council International 2015 Capital Needs study indicates that there are \$75.7 billion in unfunded airport projects, while financing for airport modernization has been stuck at the same level since 2000, with purchasing power eroding by 50 percent. This comprehensive study focused on all airport projects, not just those that are Airport Improvement Program (AIP) eligible, as is the case with the Federal Aviation Administration’s National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) report. Many of these projects are necessary to increase the capacity of U.S. airports to accommodate and increase in domestic and international travelers

<http://www.airportsunited.com/#!airport-economics/cfvg>

2. Page 149 – Investing in airports, important economic engines, is good for the economy. Using data from more than 90 airport economic impact studies encompassing 485 commercial airports in the U.S., a 2013 study found that U.S. commercial airports support nearly 9.5 million jobs, create annual payrolls totaling \$356 billion, and produce an annual output of \$1.1 trillion
3. Page 161 discusses the Airport and Airway Trust Fund but does not discuss funding for airport improvements. The adequacy of current funding sources for airport improvements should be evaluated (Airport Improvement Program grants, Bonds, Passenger Facility Charges) in meeting airport modernization needs.

#### Recommendation 5: Add focus on Intermodal Connections for International Travelers

1. Policy Implications – expand on the statement (page 240) that surface access to airports for passengers and freight should be improved.
  - i. Good intermodal connections especially important for the international visitor

- ii. Highway/transit/Amtrak/Sea Port intermodal connections important to international visitors and other travelers

Recommendation 6: Tourism in U.S. Economy (page 193)

1. International travel exports (spending in U.S.) listed for 2013. Should be updated to reflect recent BEA changes  
<http://travel.trade.gov/tinews/archive/tinews2015/20150225.html>
2. Expand section to include Travel and Tourism Satellite Account (TTSA) report impact of all travel and tourism on U.S. economy. Including jobs.  
<http://travel.trade.gov/tinews/archive/tinews2015/20150408.html>  
Reference to National Travel and Tourism Strategic Plan.  
<http://travel.trade.gov/pdf/national-travel-and-tourism-strategy.pdf>

Recommendation 7: Shaping our Future (page 275)

1. The discussion about the challenges facing passenger air travel should be developed more, including:
  - a. Consolidation of the airline industry
  - b. Air service to small and medium communities
  - c. NextGen – cost of ‘equipage’ to airline operators...\$1 billion per year for next 15 years
  - d. Ability of the air traffic control system and airports to accommodate projected growth in traffic [http://www.faa.gov/data\\_research/aviation/aerospace\\_forecasts/media/forecast\\_highlights.pdf](http://www.faa.gov/data_research/aviation/aerospace_forecasts/media/forecast_highlights.pdf)