

Remarks from Benjamin de la Pena, Associate Director, The Rockefeller Foundation

For release of *Driven Apart: How sprawl is lengthening our commutes and why misleading mobility measures are making things worse*

September 29, 2010

We at the Rockefeller Foundation are very excited about this report because we think it has very serious implications on our shared future.

We spend close to billions of dollars each year on transportation infrastructure – and up to 80c of every federal dollar we spend goes to building roads.

In a globally competitive environment and given the current constraints on national resources, spending on transportation infrastructure should be treated as investments –and our choice of investments must be guided by the right metrics – and framed by clear national goals.

We need to have that national conversation – what do we want our transportation investments to accomplish? What kinds of return do we want from these billion dollar investments? We need these investments to produce jobs, yes, but also we also need them to ensure long term sustainability, to help build the new, green economy and to make more competitive in the world.

The Rockefeller Foundation supported this critique as part of our initiative to promote equitable and sustainable transportation. We've funded research, public education, and advocacy to help re-think transportation policy. We know that our transportation choices not only impact our environment but also directly affect the budgets of everyday Americans, and therefore the quality of life of all American households.

We should invest in transportation infrastructure that gives working Americans more options and reduces the transportation expenses of our households. Our transportation investments also shape our communities and have direct effects on the environment.

The right infrastructure can help us reduce our greenhouse gas emissions while also addressing issues of equity and sustainability. Our current transportation infrastructure makes us overly dependent on a single mode of transportation that also makes us dependent on foreign oil and generates up to a third of our greenhouse gasses.

How we measure transportation systems matters, and the nation needs a better set of measures than it has today.