

America's Failing Infrastructure

By [Global Research News](#)

Global Research, November 19, 2013

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Region: [USA](#)

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By Scarlett Jackson



America's Failing Infrastructure

America's greatest generation built the world's greatest infrastructure network.

Building...

Roads

1950's: Eisenhower Interstate Highway System[6]

Over 47,000 miles of interstates

Today: Close to 4 million miles of total roads

Enough to circle the Earth 160 times

Rails

1860's: First intercontinental railroads constructed

Today: 150,000 miles of mainline track

The busiest and largest rail system in the world

Bridges

1950's: Louisiana's Lake Pontchartrain Bridge (24 miles) is the longest bridge in America completed.[1]

Today: 607,380 bridges

Tunnels

1979: the Eisenhower tunnel spans 1.7 miles through mountains west of Denver. At 11,000+ feet it is the highest point of the Interstate Highway System.[2]

Canals

1825: Erie Canal connects the great lakes to the Atlantic through NYC.[3]

1914: Panama Canal finished, cutting off 8,000 miles from the the NY to LA sea route.

Ports

April 6th 1776: defying British rule, all American colony ports are opened to international trade.[4]

Today: 360 commercial ports in the U.S. ship \$1.73 trillion in goods, or 11% of total GDP [5]

Airports

1909: College Park Airport in Maryland is the oldest continually operating airport in the world.

Founded by Wilbur Wright. [8]

Today: Over 640 million passengers and 19.6 billion pounds of shipped goods in 2013.[7]

But over time it's failed to adapt.

By 2010, America wasn't even in the top ten for infrastructure competitiveness:

- 1.) Hong Kong
- 2.) Germany
- 3.) United Arab Emirates
- 4.) France
- 5.) Singapore
- 6.) Switzerland
- 7.) Netherlands
- 8.) United Kingdom
- 9.) Canada
- 10.) Sweden

...

15.) United States

Which costs a lot, personally, and nationally.

Personally: Even with higher household earnings, we spend more money on transportation than other developed nations.

[% of household earnings spent on transportation]

America: 17.6%

Canada: 14%

EU: 13%

Japan: 12.5%

That's \$8,810 yearly per family![\$50,054 x .176]

With 4.8 billion hours wasted in traffic jams in 2008.[9]

TO the tune of 3.9 billion gallons of gas.

Nationally: Freight bottlenecks and congestion cost about \$200 billion[9]

Or 1.6% of the U.S. GDP in losses each year.

Chicago is the nations largest railroad center.

Due to congestion, it currently takes a freight train longer to travel through Chicago's city limits than it takes for a train to travel from Chicago to L.A.

We're not doing enough to remedy the solution

[% gdp spent on investment in new infrastructure]

2.4% Australia[9]

1.66% Sweden

1.53% France

1.48% Poland

1.29% Spain

1.15% UK

1.03% Belgium

.8% Germany

.6% America

[% gdp spent on maintenance of infrastructure]

Maintenance Costs:

9% China

4% Canada

1.7% U.S.

Even though EVERY CENT of our GDP relies on infrastructure.

Rails-

15,000 miles of high speed rails worldwide[9]

Close to 0 of which are in the U.S.

=

less efficient highway and plane passenger travel

High Speed vs. Old-Fashioned
New York-Chicago
711miles/42 MPH/17 Hours

Beijing-Shanghai
819 miles/168 Mph/5 hours
America's passenger trains are slower than they were 50 years ago.

Highways-
131,723 miles of roads built just from 1988 to today!
(Enough to circle the Earth 5 times)

...Without a plan to take care of existing roads...

210 million daily trips are taken across deficient bridges in our 102 largest cities.[10]
1/4 American Bridges are functionally obsolete, or structurally deficient.
Including 77% of Washington D.C.'s bridges falling into these categories.

Ports-
The U.S. has fallen to 22nd for quality of port infrastructure
And is losing traffic abroad.

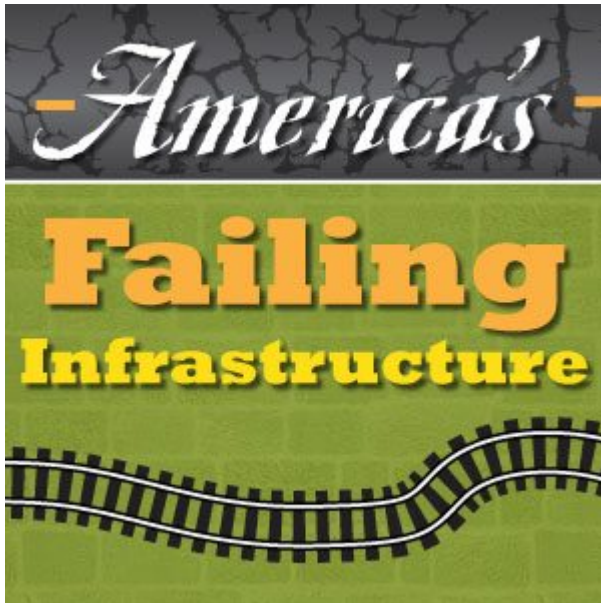
Airports-
High inefficiency=waste

- 1.) Are still using the same ground-based, radar system developed in the 1950's.[9]
- 2.) 1/3 of all U.S. flights pass through NY, magnifying any delays at NY's 3 main airports across the country.[9]

Without a plan it's only going to get worse.
Projected increase in travel and freight:[9]

2020: Port volume will double
2030: Car passenger miles to increase 80%
2035: Train freight to increase by 88%

Our personal safety, financial stability, and lifestyle depends on the health of our infrastructure.



Citations:

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