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## Candidates on Transportation

Compiled by Brookings Institution experts, this chart is part of a series of issue indices to be published during the 2008 Presidential election cycle. The policy issues included in this series were chosen by Brookings staff and represent the most critical topics facing America's next President. Available voting records and statements vary based on time in office.

### CANDIDATES



**Barack Obama (D)**  
 Senator from Illinois



**John McCain (R)**  
 Senator from Arizona

Published 08/26/08. The index displays the top candidates from both major parties. Opportunity 08, a Brookings project in partnership with ABC News, aims to help presidential candidates and the public focus on critical issues facing the nation, providing ideas, policy forums, and information on a broad range of domestic and foreign policy questions. Brookings is an independent think tank (501c3) that does not support or oppose any candidate for public office. Voters should learn all they can about the candidates on a range of issues and should not rely on any single source of information before making their decision.

Candidates	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
<b>Increased Federal Financing for Transportation</b>	<p>“Obama will address the infrastructure challenge by creating a National Infrastructure Reinvestment Bank to expand and enhance, not supplant, existing federal transportation investments. This independent entity will be directed to invest in our nation’s most challenging transportation infrastructure needs. The Bank will receive an infusion of federal money, \$60 billion over 10 years, to provide financing to transportation infrastructure projects across the nation.” –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>The August 2008 edition of Governing explicitly states that McCain supports cutting ‘pork from transportation spending’ and does not support a larger federal role in the transportation sector. –Governing.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>Transportation Earmarks</b>	<p>“Shine Light on Earmarks and Pork Barrel Spending: Obama’s Transparency and Integrity in Earmarks Act will shed light on all earmarks by disclosing the name of the legislator who asked for each earmark, along with a written justification, 72 hours before they can be approved by the full Senate.” –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>“McCain has been a tireless warrior against wasteful spending, and one of the few leaders who has the guts to challenge abusive Congressional earmarks and the pork barrel politics that grip Washington. John McCain understands that, fundamentally, wasteful spending is an issue of ethics.”</p> <p>“McCain would shine the disinfecting light of public scrutiny on those who abuse the public purse, use the power of the presidency to restore fiscal responsibility, and exercise the veto pen to enforce it.” –JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>McCain was one of four Senators who voted against the current federal transportation legislation, SAFETEA-LU. From his official statement accompanying the legislation: “This monstrosity of a conference report which costs an astounding \$286.4 billion is both terrifying in its fiscal consequences and disappointing for the lack of fiscal discipline it represents.” –States News Service</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>Private Investments in Transportation</b>	<p>The Infrastructure Bank will leverage private investments. –The National Journal</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>“McCain will propose a \$300 million prize to improve battery technology for full commercial development of plug-in hybrid and fully electric automobiles.” The idea is to spur private investment in R&amp;D, a notion pushed by campaign adviser Nancy Pfothenauer. –John McCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a> and <a href="#">read more</a></p>

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<b>Roadway Pricing</b>	<p>WNYC reporter Dan Blumberg reported on March 27 that Obama thought New York City's "proposal for congestion pricing is a thoughtful and innovative approach to the problem" but thought "congestion pricing should not replace federal funding of mass transit."                      –NewYorkObserver.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>In an interview in Pittsburg on July 8, McCain noted that pricing decisions "should reside within the states, and of course it has to be coordinated with the federal government because we've got a national highways system. But I'd like to see most of those decisions handled by the governors, the legislatures, the mayors, the city councils and the county people."                      –PittsburghTribuneReview.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>Gas Tax 'Holiday'</b>	<p>"Obama rejected a tax holiday as bad economic policy. 'I've said I think John McCain's proposal for a three-month tax holiday is a bad idea,' Obama said, warning consumers that any price cut would be short lived before costs spike back.</p> <p>"Obama also said that pausing the tax would deprive the federal highway fund of its revenue source for needed infrastructure repairs. But he said he opposed an increase in the gas tax, despite a need for Americans to reduce their dependence on oil."                      –WSJ.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>"Hard-working American families are suffering from higher gasoline prices. John McCain calls on Congress to suspend the 18.4 cent federal gas tax and 24.4 cent diesel tax from Memorial Day to Labor Day."                      –JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>Fuel Efficiency Investments in Automobiles</b>	<p>Invest \$150 billion over 10 years in clean energy. Transportation proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investments leading to the goal of two billion gallons of cellulosic ethanol into the system by 2013.</li> <li>- Local community incentives for biofuel refinery investments.</li> <li>- Establish a National Low Carbon Fuel Standard.</li> <li>- Require 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels to be included in the fuel supply by 2022.</li> <li>- Reduce oil consumption by at least 35 percent by 2030.</li> <li>- Double fuel economy standards within 18 years.</li> </ul> <p>–BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>McCain's transportation-energy plan, The Lexington Project, contains the following proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- \$300 million prize to improve battery technology</li> <li>- Automaker tax credits for each zero-emission vehicle sold</li> <li>- Promote production of Flex-Fuel Vehicles</li> <li>- Promote market-based solutions that provide cleaner fuel alternatives, such as cellulosic ethanol.</li> </ul> <p>–JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>

Candidates	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
<b>View on Amtrak / Intercity Passenger Rail</b>	<p>“Obama has been a strong supporter of federal financial support for Amtrak. Obama believes we need to reform Amtrak to improve accountability.” –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>“Obama supports development of high-speed rail networks across the country. Providing passengers with safe high-speed rail will have significant environmental and metropolitan planning advantages and help diversify our nation’s transportation infrastructure.” –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>McCain referred to Amtrak as a symbol of government waste, claiming, “There’s only two parts of the country that can support a viable rail system - the Northeast and the far West.” –Boston.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>“Amtrak should be restructured to eliminate its reliance on the American taxpayers and to allow for its privatization.” –Nation’s Cities Weekly, “Debate Begins in Congress on Future of Intercity Rail,” 3/11/02</p>
<b>Public Transportation Incentives</b>	<p>“[Parking and carpooling incentives give] drivers a nearly 2:1 advantage over transit users. Obama will reform the tax code to make benefits for driving and public transit or ridesharing equal.” –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>McCain: “What you’re going to see is an explosion in mass transit in America.”</p> <p>However, McCain so far has not offered any divergent proposals from the current federal role. –Video of the August 11 Town Hall</p> <p><a href="#">Watch the video</a></p>
<b>Telecommuting</b>	<p>“Obama will create a program to inform businesses about the benefits of flexible work schedules; help businesses create flexible work opportunities; and increase federal incentives for telecommuting. Obama will also make the federal government a model employer in terms of adopting flexible work schedules and permitting employees to request flexible arrangements.” –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>“Ubiquitous connectivity can allow employees to telecommute, or better yet, open up job possibilities to millions of Americans who wish to work from their home. As President, John McCain would pursue an agenda that includes encouragement of telecommuting in the federal government and private companies.” –JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>

Candidates	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
<p><b>Transportation Investments as a Job Creator</b></p>	<p>“... a robust federal infrastructure investment program today will help strengthen the U.S. economy and provide at least one million more U.S. jobs at a time when the housing and construction industries are slowing ... [the Infrastructure Bank] will create up to two million new direct and indirect jobs per year and stimulate approximately \$35 billion per year in new economic activity.”                      –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>McCain has not made any public comments on this issue during the campaign.</p>
<p><b>Smart Growth Considerations</b></p>	<p>“Obama will build upon his efforts in the Senate to ensure that more Metropolitan Planning Organizations create policies to incentivize greater bicycle and pedestrian usage of roads and sidewalks. As president, Obama will work to provide states and local governments with the resources they need to address sprawl and create more livable communities.”                      –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>“Obama introduced the Healthy Places Act to help local governments assess the health impact of new policies and projects, like highways or shopping centers.”                      –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>“Obama will also reform current law which simply asks governors and their state Departments of Transportation to ‘consider’ energy conservation as a condition of receiving federal transportation dollars. As president, Obama will <u>require</u> governors and local leaders in our metropolitan areas to make “energy conservation” a required part of their planning for the expenditure of federal transportation funds.”                      –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>“Sen. Obama says his administration would shift urban-policy making to so-called smart-growth strategies that synchronize transportation, commercial and housing needs for entire regions, rather than following the tradition of focusing first on fighting poverty and crime.”                      –WSJ.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>“McCain hasn't released a formal policy identified as targeting urban issues.”                      –WSJ.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>

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Candidates	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
<p><b>Transportation Security Considerations</b></p>	<p>“Obama's Department of Homeland Security will develop a meaningful critical infrastructure protection plan across the nation and will work with the private sector to ensure that all high-risk targets are prepared for disasters both natural and man-made.”</p> <p>“Obama believes we must redouble our efforts to determine if the measures implemented after 9/11 are adequately addressing the threats our nation continues to face from airplane-based terrorism. Obama has supported increased numbers of federal airport screeners and improved funding for aviation security”</p> <p>“He will fight for greater information-sharing between national intelligence agents and local officials and provide local law enforcement agencies with the everyday tools they need to protect their [mass] transportation systems.” –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>McCain has both supported and opposed federal expansions of transportation security. This includes co-sponsorship of the <a href="#">Aviation and Transportation Security Act of 2001</a> and the <a href="#">Rail Security Act of 2005</a> (this bill never came to vote). He supported the <a href="#">Port Security Act of 2006</a> and added an amendment to increase rail security to the bill.</p> <p>However, McCain has not explicitly mentioned transportation security so far in the campaign.</p>