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Report Studies Transportation Trends Across States to Help Future Growth

A new report released Monday by the National Conference of State Legislatures says that states need to focus on thinking ahead, using what they have, giving citizens choices, and trying to achieve multiple benefits when planning for their future transportation needs.

The report, "On the Move: State Strategies for 21st Century Transportation Solutions," examines the changing trends reflecting recent policy developments across each of the states. It does so through four specific sections, each outlining different approaches.

"Transportation policy and funding are at a critical juncture in the United States," the report states. "Faced with budget shortfalls and a host of other challenges, state legislatures are exploring and enacting a number of innovative policies to ensure that the future mobility needs of all Americans are met in a manner that is fiscally sound and supports a broad range of policy goals."

The first section, "Taking the Long View," focuses on sustainable transportation funding and offers such solutions as variable-rate and indexed fuel taxes, taxes and fees on alternative fuels and alternative fuel vehicles, and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) fees.

"Using What You Have," the second section of the report, speaks to how states can best explore cost-efficient approaches that help them make the best of existing infrastructure, such as fix-it first and asset management, operations management, and commute trip reduction.

The report then tackles "Giving People Choices," which discusses the importance of bicycle and pedestrian safety initiatives, complete streets policies, car- and bike-sharing programs, transit development, and human service transportation coordination, which focuses on improving transportation access and choice for all users, especially people with limited mobility and special needs.

Finally, the report highlights the importance of "Achieving Multiple Benefits," which pushes the importance of performance management and the integration of environmental and public health planning into states' transportation needs.

"This report is intended to provide a menu of possible policy options, informed by the experiences of policymakers and other experts," the report states in its introduction. "Not all policies are a good fit in all contexts, and nothing in this report should be construed as advocating for specific state policies or approaches."

The 91-page "On the Move" report is available online at bit.ly/NCSLonmove.

Questions regarding this article may be directed to editor@ashtojournal.org.