

# InfrastructureUSA

## Guest on THE INFRA BLOG

**Hon. Ray LaHood, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation**

**Conversation with Steve Anderson, Managing Director, InfrastructureUSA**

**Secretary LaHood**

### **Good signs for High speed Rail in the U.S.**

No other President has had vision like this President has for high speed rail. No other administration has invested 10 billion dollars in high speed rail. President Obama has invested 10 billion dollars in high speed rail. If you look at the President's budget that just came out recently, there's a lot of money in there for high speed rail. We have a very, very, big, broad vision for high speed rail, we have a plan to connect 80% of America in the next 25 years, and we have some very good partners around the country; in governors, in high speed rail enthusiasts, in high speed rail activists, and we're on our way. High speed rail is coming to America.

### **An Uniquely American High speed Rail**

We're going to have high speed rail that fits America. We're going to take some lessons from Europe and Asia, but our high speed rail will look like America. And it won't be the same every place in America. Obviously high speed rail in California is going to be trains going over 200 miles an hour. That's not the case in the Northeast Corridor. That won't be the case in Illinois where we're going to get trains going from 70 miles an hour to 110 miles an hour from Detroit to Chicago to St. Louis. So our high speed rail will reflect what's needed in different parts of America. And what people have dreamed about and planned for in different parts of America.

### **Americans Believe in Good Infrastructure**

I think that if there's one thing that the American people get, is the need for good infrastructure. And not just roads and bridges; roads and bridges are important, but there are many of Americans that don't own an automobile. And there are thousands of Americans that board buses and light rail, and streetcars, every day in America. And not just in urban areas. There are a lot of rural areas where people want to continue to live, that are aging, that rely on rural transportation to get into the city to go to the grocery store, or doctor's appointment, or to see a friend. And so people in this country rely on good transportation, all forms of good transportation. We have a state of the art interstate system; it's the best in the world. But we also have some very, very, good transit systems. We also have made good investments in our airports; we have a good comprehensive

transportation system in America. And Americans believe in it. They're willing to invest in it, they're willing to pay part of their taxes in order to continue to have good infrastructure. That's always been the American way; and I think it will continue to be that way.

### **Infrastructure and the Community**

Americans are very involved in transportation infrastructure, because they use it every day. They see it every day. They're asked to pay taxes in order to maintain the kind of roads and bridges and transit and other forms of transportation, maybe a walking or a biking path in their community. And that's why people get energized about really making sure that their communities have good infrastructure. Because they know it can be an economic engine, in some instances it can create jobs for their friends and neighbors; they know that every citizen can take advantage of it. Whether it's a bus line or a transit line, the light rail line, a road, a bridge, people are well invested both financially and personally in infrastructure in their own communities.

That's what America's all about: doing big things, taking care of its infrastructure, taking care of making sure people can get around America, in an affordable way. So we get our enthusiasm and energy from people we meet every day that care a lot about making sure their communities have good roads, and good bridges, and good buses, good streetcars, and walking paths and opportunities for people to get around their communities in many different ways.

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