

TRANSPORTATION SEMINAR + WEBINAR SERIES

The Drive for Dollars: How Fiscal Politics Shaped Urban Freeways and Transformed American Cities

Brian D. Taylor, PhD

Professor of Urban Planning and Public Policy & Director of the Institute of Transportation Studies | University of California, Los Angeles

Tuesday, March 19, 2024 • 12:00 pm – 1:15 pm (US Arizona)

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About the Talk

Freeways are the centerpiece of most American metropolitan transportation systems, a feature that distinguishes U.S. cities from almost all others. Comprising only a small fraction (6%) of urban road lane mileage, freeways carry over one-third of American urban vehicle travel. While freeway construction and expansion largely ended by 1980, driving on freeways is more popular than ever: Travel on urban freeways increased 230% between 1980 and 2015 alone. While they are phenomenally effective, and relatively safe, movers of vehicles, freeways in cities cause problems that transportation officials today are struggling to cope with: traffic congestion, crashes, noise, and vehicle emissions. In his book (published in 2023 by Oxford University Press) and this talk, Professor Taylor explores three questions: How did the U.S. come to mass produce urban freeways, particularly Interstate Highways, in the three decades following World War II? How did we finance this massive public expenditure, which at the time was the largest infrastructure project the world had ever seen? And what role did finance play in the system's successes and failures? The answers, he argues, hold lessons for transportation finance and planning today.

About the Speaker

[Brian D. Taylor](#), PhD, FAICP is a Professor of Urban Planning and Public Policy in the Luskin School of Public Affairs and Director of the UCLA [Institute of Transportation Studies](#). He studies travel behavior, public transit, and transportation equity, finance, history, and politics. Professor Taylor's current research examines post-pandemic travel behavior, the future of public transit, and sales taxes and road pricing as post-fuel tax transportation finance options. At UCLA he teaches courses on transportation, land use, and urban form; public transit and shared mobility; and transportation economics, finance, and policy. His many terrific former students hold transportation leadership positions around the world, including tenured/tenure-track faculty positions at Clemson, Florida State, Harvard, Maryland-College Park, Oregon, Rutgers (2 faculty), Southern California, SUNY Buffalo, UC Berkeley, UC San Diego, and Virginia.

This seminar will be webcast live to a worldwide audience using Zoom.

To register for the webinar, please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/267mbzrp>

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