

1.201J / 11.545J / ESD.210J Transportation Systems

FALL 2006

ASSIGNMENT 1: Transportation System Issues

Date assigned: September 7, 2006

Date due: September 14, 2006

Value: 8 points

In this assignment, you will write a paper that relates important general transportation system concepts to a particular transportation system or situation *of your choice*. This assignment is meant to get you thinking about the important issues and questions that must be considered when designing, evaluating or operating a transportation system. As such, you have quite a bit of latitude in your choice of transportation system for analysis.

The “Critical Issues in Transportation” and “The Secretary’s Vision” articles (see additional readings) offer a number of broad transportation issues for consideration as well as more specific challenges contained within each of those issues. These articles can provide a useful starting point for your own paper, although you should feel free to introduce other concepts and issues that go beyond the issues identified in these two readings. Another recent reference, *Vision 2050: “An Integrated national Transportation System*, has been placed on reserve in the Barker Library, and a hyperlink has been provided <http://scitech.dot.gov/policy/vision2050/docs/report.pdf> for your convenience.

Transportation systems are broad in impact, dynamic over time and often multimodal and intermodal. Identify the most important aspects of your system. Discuss how you might change the system to improve its performance and, if appropriate, assess the difference between the short-term and long-term effects.

You may choose to conduct additional research to enhance your knowledge of the system and your discussion. Please include a reference list with your assignment.

The page limit for this assignment is five pages (not including the reference list), so please keep your thoughts organized and clear. Focus on the quality of presentation of your ideas as well as the substance.