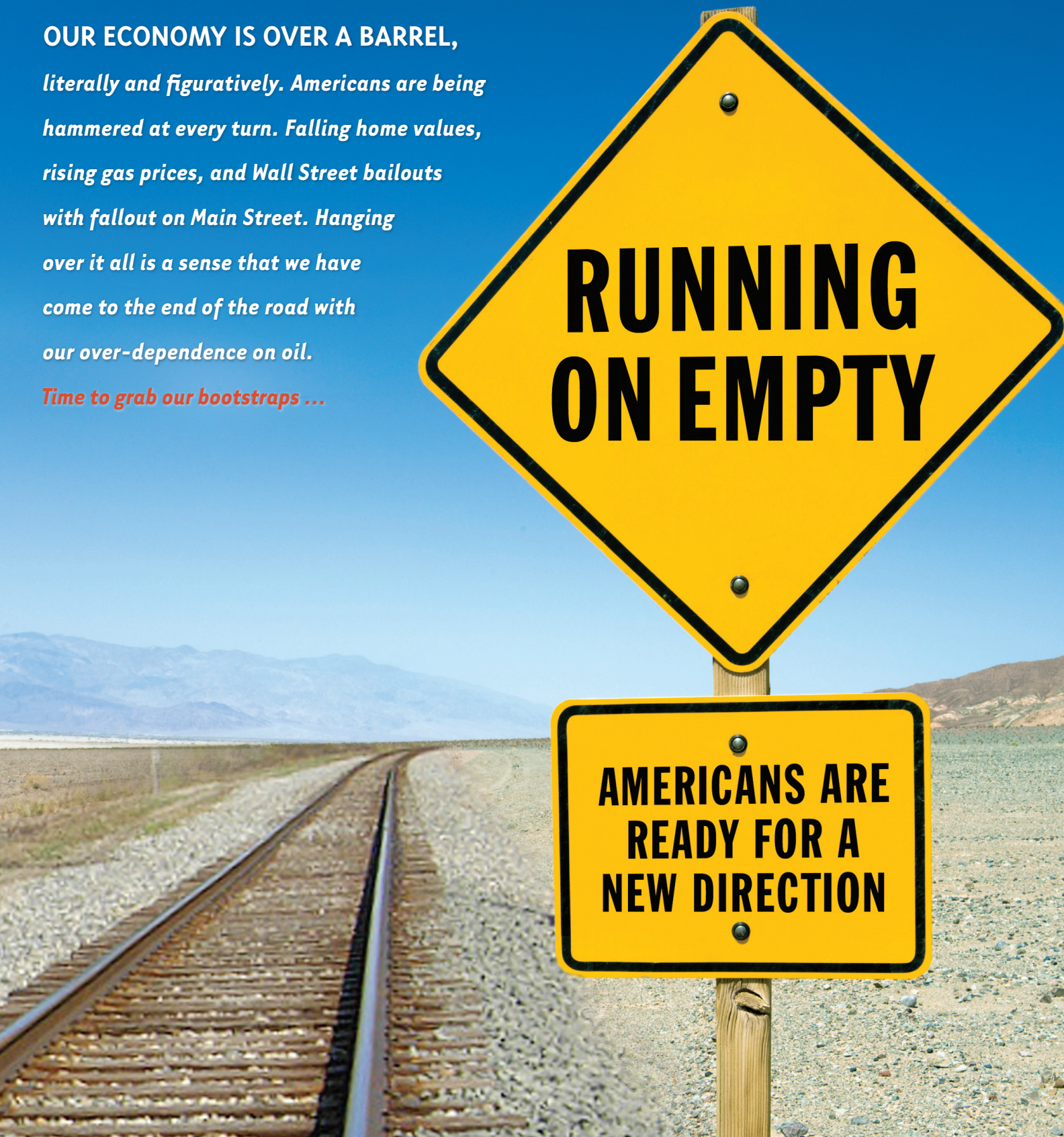
BUILD FOR AMERICA

A FIVE-POINT PLAN TO GET OUR ECONOMY MOVING

OUR ECONOMY IS OVER A BARREL,

literally and figuratively. Americans are being hammered at every turn. Falling home values, rising gas prices, and Wall Street bailouts with fallout on Main Street. Hanging over it all is a sense that we have come to the end of the road with our over-dependence on oil.

Time to grab our bootstraps ...



Struggling To Keep Going

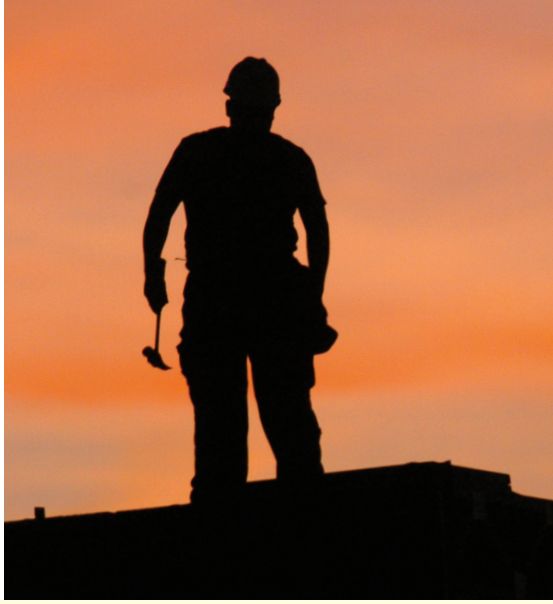
Our Current Transportation Path

AMERICA'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM — the network of highways, railroads, public transportation, walkways and bikeways — is the backbone of our economy.

But today that system is broken. The interstates have been built and need upkeep. Bridges are crumbling. Many Americans—young, old, rural—are stranded without transportation choices that are affordable, efficient, and convenient.

Americans are looking to cut back on driving, but it's hard when only half of us have access to public transportation and most live in places built for car dependence. Meanwhile, our metro areas are absorbing millions of new residents as our population grows toward 400 million, and struggling to accommodate them while remaining livable.

Now is not the time to squander money on projects or plans that do not help save Americans money, free us from oil dependence and create long-term jobs.



Good-Bye Backlog, Hello Jobs

Erasing the enormous backlog of needed maintenance and rail and rapid bus projects could support millions of jobs.

- ***6.7 million jobs associated with building $240 billion in ready-to-go rail and rapid bus projects in 78 metro areas.***
- ***14.8 million jobs associated with restoring crumbling bridges, roadways and transit systems, by investing the $512 billion needed over the next five years.***

Build for America

Investing to Compete and Thrive

ALREADY, TRANSPORTATION is the sixth largest federal expenditure, at $70 billion a year. Today, many are calling for infrastructure investments beyond that to stimulate an economic recovery. Given an economic crisis unheard-of since the New Deal era, those investments may be warranted. However, our nation cannot afford to spend those dollars as we spent them in the 20th century.

What if the next President and Congress followed a bold agenda, one that moves us out of out of economic peril by building 21st Century transportation for America? Modern, world-class train and bus systems in our cities and towns; high-speed rail that connects urban and rural areas; highways, bridges and existing transit in tip-top shape; affordable homes in convenient locations close to transportation; and complete streets that are safe for the increasing numbers who are walking and biking.

The good news is that we can start building our way toward prosperity again if the next President and Congress work together to:

1 BUILD TO COMPETE.

We must catch and pass competitors in China and Europe, by modernizing and expanding our rail and transit networks to reduce oil dependence and connecting the metro regions that are the engines of the modern economy.

2 INVEST FOR A CLEAN, GREEN RECOVERY.

Our nation's clean-energy future will require cleaner vehicles and new fuels, but it also must include support for the cleanest forms of transportation – modern public transit, walking and biking – and for energy-efficient, sustainable development.

3 FIX WHAT'S BROKEN.

Before building new roads, that will themselves have to be maintained, we must restore our crumbling highways, bridges and transit systems.

4 STOP WASTEFUL SPENDING.

Re-evaluate projects currently in the pipeline to eliminate those with little economic return, that could deepen, rather than relieve, our oil dependence.

5 SAVE AMERICANS MONEY.

Provide more travel and housing options that are affordable and efficient, while helping people to avoid high gas costs and traffic congestion. Save taxpayer dollars by asking the private developers who reap real estate rewards from new rail stations and transit lines to contribute toward that service.

Twenty-First Century Transportation ... Just Waiting to be Built

- ***Across the country, 78 metro areas have identified $240 billion in needed transit investments to expand or create service.***
- ***The Federal Highway Administration has identified the need for $512 billion in investments over the next several years to restore our existing roads, bridges, and transit systems.***
- ***More than 72,000 of the nation's bridges are currently deemed structurally deficient.***

Adding Up the Benefits

Creating Economic Prosperity

AFTER BAILING OUT WALL STREET, Congress and the next President must invest in Main Street. The Build for America five-point plan is about choosing the right investments—those that save consumers money, create jobs, improve our energy security, and revitalize our communities.

SAVING MONEY FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES. Giving people options other than driving helps them reduce spending at the gas pump. Families living in neighborhoods adjacent to rail transit spend just 9 percent of their household budget on transportation as compared to 25 percent for those in automobile dependent areas. A person can achieve an average savings of $9,499 per year by taking public transportation instead of driving.

MORE GOOD—AND GREEN—JOBS THAN HIGHWAY-BUILDING ALONE. Road and bridge maintenance and repair create 9 percent more jobs than construction of new road capacity, according to a 2004 analysis of the U.S. Department of Transportation's job-creation model. The same analysis found that construction of new public transportation creates nearly 19 percent more jobs. That figure does not include the permanent jobs in operating and maintaining the system.

REDUCED OIL CONSUMPTION. Public transportation already saves the U.S. 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline each year. By building a transit, walking and biking infrastructure that helps more people in our ever-growing nation to live in closer proximity to their daily needs, America could save billions more gallons.

HELP FOR COMMUNITIES STRUGGLING WITH GROWTH AND CONGESTION. In 2005 alone, public transportation saved Americans 541 million hours in travel time and 340 million gallons of gas — resulting in a total savings of $10.2 billion. Today, 78 metro areas around the country are working to raise funds for much-needed rail and rapid-bus lines. An aggressive effort to complete their transportation networks will assure that these engines of our economy remain prosperous and livable.

REDUCED CARBON EMISSIONS, AT NO EXTRA COST. Transportation makes up a third of our greenhouse gas emissions nationally and an even higher percentage in many states. Giving Americans more options apart from driving, in communities where biking and walking are safe and convenient, is critical to a climate solution.

RESTORING VALUE TO AMERICAN NEIGHBORHOODS. Across the nation, neighborhoods with the best access to jobs and public transportation are holding their value, while those that are dependent on long car commutes are hurting for buyers.

Calling on Washington

The Next President and Congress Must Act

WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD to invest precious transportation dollars as though we are expecting a return to cheap gasoline. We need to invest in a way that reduces our vulnerability to oil shocks and price increases while making our economy stronger, our households wealthier and our climate safer.

The path to strengthening our economy by building 21st Century transportation for America requires immediate action for change. We all share a responsibility to getting America moving again.

But our next President and Congress can put us on the right path by committing to a bold plan that guarantees our transportation investments produce the best returns for our economy, our pocketbooks, and our communities. Express your support and learn more by visiting: ***www.BuildForAmerica.org.***

Sources for the figures in this document are available online at BuildForAmerica.org

Transportation
For America

The Transportation for America Campaign

Transportation for America is a broad, diverse and unprecedented coalition advocating for a national vision for a 21st century transportation system.
For more information, please visit:

www.t4america.org