

**Call for Papers**  
**Economics of Transportation in the 21st Century**  
**Virtual Conference — October 24, 2025**

To promote research in transportation economics and to strengthen the economic foundations for transportation policies in the 21st century, the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) will host a virtual conference on Friday, October 24, 2025, from 1:00 to 4:30pm ET, to showcase new research findings. The conference, organized by NBER researchers Edward Glaeser (Harvard University), James Poterba (MIT), and Stephen Redding (Stanford University), will bring together researchers in various subfields of economics to study issues of current importance in the transportation sector and to develop an agenda for future research.

The meeting will address a range of possible topics, including but not limited to:

- The returns to investments in transportation infrastructure, including roads, rail, air, pipelines, ports, and liquid natural gas terminal.
- The impact of the transportation sector on the broader economy, including its effects on the labor market, the employment prospects for workers at various skill levels, the competitiveness of the US economy and its various constituent sectors.
- The financing, maintenance and utilization of transportation infrastructure, with particular reference to the potential role for public-private partnerships and lessons from such partnerships in the US and elsewhere.
- The potential effects of emerging technologies, such as driverless cars and robo-taxis, automated package delivery, and air taxis, on the supply of transportation services and the utilization of transportation capital.
- Transportation safety and the impact of new technologies, such as in-vehicle tests for sobriety and new vehicle design features, on it.
- The impact of new technologies for managing surface freight transportation logistics, including those involving large data sets combined with statistical analysis such as machine learning, on load factors and other performance characteristics of the surface freight industry.
- The international experience with the provision of air traffic control services with various roles for the public and private sector, and with managing transitions as systems are upgraded.

- The role of transportation in affecting the internal structure of economic activity within urban areas and the spatial distribution of economic activity between rural and urban areas.
- The measurement of the benefits and costs of, and willingness to pay for, transport infrastructure improvements, along with market-based mechanisms for pricing such improvements.

To be considered for inclusion on the program, papers must be uploaded by 11:59pm ET on Wednesday, September 3, 2025 via the following link:

<https://conference.nber.org/confsubmit/backend/cfp?id=ETf25>

All papers should include a comprehensive conflict of interest statement that describes any financial or other interests that the researchers might have with regard to the research. Submission of papers by researchers with and without NBER affiliations and by early career scholars are welcome. Please do not submit papers that will be published by October 2025.

Decisions about which papers will be included on the program will be announced by mid-September. Please feel free to forward this call to others who might be conducting research on related topics. Questions about this meeting may be directed to [confer@nber.org](mailto:confer@nber.org).