

## (September 17, 2007) LIPINSKI ANNOUNCES KEY CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON CHICAGOLAND TRANSPORTATION NEED

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[CHICAGO] Congressman Dan Lipinski today announced that the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit will meet in Chicagoland to hear regional transportation needs for the 2016 Olympics and beyond. This influential Subcommittee is charged with writing the laws that distribute hundreds of billions of federal surface transportation funds.

Scheduled for Monday, October 29, 2007, this will be the first-ever Highways Subcommittee field hearing in Chicago. It will also be the first field hearing that will be used to prepare for the reauthorization of the highway and transit funding bill.

Lipinski, Chicagoland's sole member on the powerful U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, called for this hearing in Chicago to prepare for the reauthorization of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), a \$286.5 billion highway and transit funding measure that expires in 2009.

"Chicago is the transportation hub of the nation and transportation is - metaphorically and literally - what keeps our region moving," said Rep. Lipinski. "This hearing will allow us to build on Mayor Daley's leadership and help to secure funding to ensure that Chicago's transportation infrastructure is ready for the 2016 Olympics and beyond. Just as the 1893 World's Fair put Chicago on the world's map and left a legacy in Chicago, I believe the 2016 Olympics can leave an important transportation legacy here in Chicagoland."

The House Highways and Transit Subcommittee is a key panel that will lead the congressional efforts to reauthorize the nation's highway and transit funding programs. SAFETEA-LU, the last bill, was passed in 2005 and authorized \$286.5 billion. Illinois received over \$1.2 billion in project-specific earmarks and an over thirty percent increase in federal highway funding. Its predecessor, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, authorized \$218 billion.

"As the transportation hub of the nation, we are in a unique position," continued Rep. Lipinski. "We need to plan for the future and start planning for the next highway bill now, so we can build regional consensus on our transportation needs, and put ourselves in the best standing for the reauthorization. And with the upcoming reauthorization bill, the time to start planning for the future is today. This hearing will provide an excellent opportunity for Chicagoland to get a head start toward securing federal transportation funding in the next bill."