

Good morning,

I am Vincent Valdes, Executive Director of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, the federally certified MPO and local development district for southwestern Pennsylvania.

I'd like to thank the Transportation Committee for giving me the opportunity to testify today and to provide you with my perspective on key considerations for transportation planning and implementation in our region.

This is a region of remarkable energy and extraordinary communities. It's also a region of amazing potential building on a past of industry, resilience and innovation. The question before us now is how do we go about realizing that potential in the most equitable and productive way possible.

Transportation, or better said mobility, is one of the major components for realizing that potential. And we have to create a framework for planning and building the right infrastructure so that we're providing equitable access across all of the communities in our region.

And that is what this about, access: access to education, access to healthcare, to employment and all the other services and societal benefits we all need on a daily basis.

More concretely, I'd suggest that our mobility framework be based on 4 principles so that we can optimize our investments.

- 1) We explicitly state as a goal that we provide equitable access to all of the residents of our region regardless of their circumstances or location (rural, suburban or urban).
- 2) We take a multimodal approach to our solutions. We take advantage of the right mode of transportation for the right context, be that transit, roads, micromobility solutions or other new solutions. The right tool for the right job.
- 3) We consider telemobility and connectivity as a new transportation mode and treat it as such, planning for its project implementation in the same way we do infrastructure.
- 4) We link our investments to societal and economic outcomes so that we can gauge the real return on investment for these very expensive projects.

It's safe to say to that transportation as a sector has changed more in the last 10 years than it did in the previous 75. With artificial intelligence, automation, electrification, microtransit, micromobility and other new technologies and new concepts of operation, we have an opportunity to create an integrated network of truly universal, seamless mobility. Our rules, requirements and regulations could be crafted to support innovation, flexible mobility and the community building that comes for effective, accessible transportation.

Thank you.