



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on August 30, 2011

It's the Spending, Stupid, the Stupid Spending!

Remember when a million per mile seemed like a crazy price for a new road? Now it's a billion per mile for a transportation project and the politicians are just fine with it, even if the project is totally unnecessary, even if we're already broke.

To make it allegedly easier for people in San Francisco to get in and out of Chinatown in a hurry, a new 1.7 mile subway line is in the works.

The original projected cost was \$647 million. Now it's \$1.6 billion, and growing.



There's already bus and light-rail service that covers the same route — plus roads for cars if you're still the un-green and independent type who enjoys riding alone and listening to the radio and maybe even downing a good hoagie while driving between points A and B.

The 1.7 mile subway line “misses connections with 25 of the 30 light-rail and bus lines that it crosses, and there's no direct connection to the 104-mile Bay Area Transit line or to the ferry,” stated the *Wall Street Journal* in a recent editorial.

There's also the problem of going eight stories underground to get to the new super-short subway — not a good underground place to be during an earthquake, or during a terrorist attack.

And then there's the red ink, of course, simply because there's no money to pay for it. San Francisco's metro system already loses \$500,000 a day.

So they're coming after all our wallets, seeking nearly a billion dollars from the Federal Transit Administration.

They'll probably get it, even with the feds already over a trillion a year in the hole, because there's a big soft spot among the central planners for anything that promises to get some cars off the road.

The *Journal* quotes a January 2010 statement by Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood.

“Everywhere” he goes, he said, people tell him they “want the opportunity to leave their cars behind” and want “to enjoy clean, greener neighborhoods.”

And “everywhere” includes Detroit? I'd guess that jobless auto workers would tell LaHood that they're more important than a slightly quicker ride to Chinatown.

Either way, if getting rid of cars is the goal, adding more buses would be millions cheaper than this \$1.6 billion boondoggle.

July's Silver Fleece Award highlighted another example of egregious government spending, a \$64



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million federal “stimulus” award to provide broadband service to Gallatin County, Montana.

“According to an analysis conducted by Navigant Consulting, 93 percent of the households in the project's proposed service area were already served by five or more broadband providers,” explained Mark Kirk, U.S. Senator for Illinois.

“The fact that tens of millions of taxpayer dollars were spent to subsidize broadband service in an area with already strong private sector representation is reprehensible,” Kirk stated. “Perhaps even more staggering, though, is the taxpayer cost of these services per unserved household. According to the program's own definition of ‘unserved household,’ this project cost taxpayers more than \$340,000 per unserved household.”

But many of these so-called ‘unserved’ households have access to 3G wireless broadband, explained Kirk: “Subtracting the number of homes that had existing access to 3G wireless leaves only seven households in the Gallatin County service area ‘unserved’ by broadband. It cost the U.S. taxpayer an astounding \$7,112,422 per household to provide broadband service to this truly unserved population.”

Obama’s jobs program? Take \$7.1 million from “the rich,” the people who have the wherewithal to invest and create jobs, and toss it down a worthless hole by hooking up one solitary house out in the middle of nowhere?

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