TRANSIT FUNDING; WHY THE POLITICS?
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING IN NEW YORK CITY AND LOS ANGELES

ABSTRACT
Suburban sprawl and automobile dependence has undermined support and funding for mass transit in Los Angeles and New York, and has instead dedicated funding from gas tax revenues to highways. Infrastructure coalition building in Los Angeles is turning public need and support into dollars. The challenge is what can New York City learn from the soon to be ex-autopolis and what can Los Angeles learn from the funding transit legacy of New York. This thesis asks the questions of why there is more transit momentum in Los Angeles than in New York City, and what is making it easier to fund projects in a relatively conservative political environment. Points of similarity and divergence in transit funding in New York City and Los Angeles are be identified through critical review of the funding strategies of the two systems. Interestingly, though these two cities have historically pursued transit in inversely opposite manners; the newfound transit religion in Los Angeles is currently juxtaposed with what seems to be stagnate growth in New York. The impetus and values driving the grassroots coalition in Los Angeles are strengthening political support and helping secure financing for transit projects, and points to the importance of champions in securing funding for transit.

KEYWORDS
Transportation Planning, Transit Finance, Public Transportation, Sprawl, Local Sales Tax

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