Abstract


Transportation technology has always dictated the size of cities. This thesis evaluated three cities in three different megaregions: Hartford, Chicago, and Orlando. It assessed, from the consumer prospective, the total reach, cost, reliability, and convenience of the current transportation network as well as a potential high-speed rail network within these three megaregions. It was determined that based on these four inputs there is an efficiency gap in the current transportation system in these three megaregions. That is, at short distances, the most efficient mode of intercity travel is the auto, and a long distances, the most efficient mode is air. However, there exists an intermediate distance at which the most efficient mode is high-speed rail. These finding have implications for intra-megaregion travel. The policy recommendations that resulted from this research include increased interstate cooperation as well as increased federal funding for high-speed rail at the megaregional level.