

1.221J / 11.527J / ESD.201J Transportation Systems

FALL 2002

ASSIGNMENT 2B: Transportation System Fundamentals

Due in: Two weeks

Value: 18 points

Each of the 30 Key Points is important in understanding transportation systems. In this assignment, you will write a paper which relates these key points to a specific transportation system.

The transportation system that you will examine is Amtrak, the intercity passenger rail transportation system in the United States. While Amtrak is the focus of this assignment, it is *not* simply “about Amtrak”. We urge you to take a broad view, considering its relationship to other transportation systems, such as the passenger air transportation system, and issues such as 1) why intercity rail is so successful in countries such as Japan, Germany, France and others and so unsuccessful in the U.S.; 2) how Amtrak relates to larger issues such as urban form.

Your task is to take some of the 30 Key Points and relate them to this transportation system. Of course, not all key points are equally relevant. Indeed, some may be irrelevant to this particular system. Choose the key points you think are most applicable. Explain your rationale for choosing the key points you select and clearly discuss how each selected key point applies in this case. In addition, discuss connections *between* your key points where appropriate, and the effects one may have on the other(s).

Use the article given in Assignment 2A, as well as several other articles attached here, as sources of information for your paper. Feel free to conduct additional research to aid in the formulation of your thoughts. Further information on the key points can be found in the lectures and the readings, while additional details on the U.S. rail transportation system can be found in many online resources. Lexis-Nexis (web.lexis-nexis.com/universe) is an excellent searchable database for newspaper and journal articles. If you are unfamiliar with Lexis-Nexis, please see the TA, for assistance.

The assignment has a maximum page limit of twelve pages (not including the reference list), 1.5- or double-spaced, using 12-point font. As with previous assignments, clarity and presentation will be factored into the grading of this assignment.