At 60, America's Interstate Highway System Is Showing Signs Of Age

"I don't think so. The world has changed quite a bit since that vision in 1956. And our population has increased from 91 percent from roughly 168 million to 321 million today so it's kind of hard to be able to project that kind of growth."

On the status of maintenance funding for the interstate highways

"The current backlog of needed improvements is roughly $189 billion. Fifty-nine billion is needed to improve pavement conditions, $30 billion to improve bridges and another $100 billion for needed system expansion. And a lot of it is to the fact that the motor fuel tax is not keeping up with the needed repairs. It was last raised in 1983, and it's 18.4 cents. When the Interstate Act was passed, it was a three-cent gas tax increase, and if you would have indexed that for inflation, that would be about 26 cents today, so we're not even letting our motor fuel tax keep up with needed repairs."

On why it seems like there are more tolls on the East Coast than other parts of the country

"Los Angeles was famous for coining the phrase 'freeway.' Here in the East Coast, some of the highways that went into the interstate system were already toll roads, like the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the New York Thoroughway. I think you're going to see more tolling in the future with the gas tax not being raised because that's one way to improve the system, and I think you'll find that many of the toll roads are actually in better shape because they're raising enough money to make the needed repairs and improvements."

On the outlook for putting more highways underground

"That is probably an ideal way to go. But right now we're not spending enough to maintain the system we have so until there's some form of motor fuels tax or some other sustainable form of funding for the federal highway trust fund, I think we're going to have a very difficult time just maintaining the system as it is today."

Guest

William Wilkins, executive director of The National Road Information Program (TRIP), a transportation research group. The organization tweets @TRIP_Inc.