



# Transportation Policy Priorities

## FOR THE TRIANGLE METRO REGION

### KEYS TO A MOBILE FUTURE

Transportation is big. But it is always part of something bigger: economic development opportunities or healthy, active neighborhoods or greater access to jobs and education. The Triangle Metro Region – urban, suburban and rural -- was home to 37% of the state’s growth from 2010-17, and is expected to add another million people over the next generation. A transportation policy that enables North Carolina to continue to compete effectively must focus on 3 key areas:



**Economic Development & the Attraction of Diverse Talent**



**Healthy, Complete Communities Accessible to All Residents**



**Safety for All Travelers, From Youth to Seniors**

### REGIONAL POLICY PRIORITIES

Seven key priorities can result in fast-growing regions staying ahead of the growth curve, rural areas and small towns taking advantage of economic opportunities and every community providing complete streets and safe solutions tailored to local conditions.



#### INVEST FOR SUCCESS

- ➔ Enable critical transportation infrastructure across all modes to be addressed sooner with a statewide transportation bond.
- ➔ Create a new funding source for multi-modal mobility investments tied to economic development projects in small towns, rural areas, and along major corridors in metro regions.

The BuildNC bond is a good start, but it needs to support major multi-modal investments, not just highways. While the bond would let us invest faster, it does not increase total investment; it lets us spend tomorrow's revenue today. The state needs an economic development-focused revenue source for investments that are not well suited to the long and constrained process of the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) program.



*- Minnesota's Transportation Economic Development Program could be a model for a nimble, economic-based effort -*



#### MAKE INVESTMENTS RELIABLE AND PREDICTABLE

- ➔ Remove caps and constraints on rail transit funding

The STI program distributes state and federal transportation dollars in a reasonable way with one exception: the caps and constraints on rail transit. Rail transit should be held to the same standards as other investments. Caps on state allocations and handcuffs on receiving state funding should be removed so that projects can compete on a level playing field and be funded on their merits. Businesses tell us that risks, uncertainties and changing rules stifle success - transportation investment is a key business for the state and its communities.



*- \$1 million invested in transit generates 4,200 job-hours; \$1 million in roadway investment generates 2,400 job-hours -*

## **ENABLE CRITICAL CORRIDOR INVESTMENTS TO BE MORE COST EFFECTIVE**

→ Relax the cap on statewide tier funding within a corridor.

While the reasoning behind a cap is sound, its application can lead to inefficient, piece-meal spending which costs more in the long run and affects travelers throughout the state. The cap can also prevent investments on parallel reliever roadways that could be cost-effective and complimentary investments.

- 31% of vehicles on the Triangle's busiest stretch of I-40 - which is hampered by the corridor cap - are from areas outside Wake and Durham counties -

## **REMOVE FUNDING BARRIERS FOR SMALL TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS IN DIVISIONS WITH LARGE MPOS**

→ Exempt Surface Transportation Block Grant-Direct Allocation Funding from the STI Allocation.

These funds are allocated from the federal government to MPOs to address additional mobility challenges of congested urban areas. Exempting these funds from the STI formula at the Division Tier would allow funding to be more evenly distributed and let small towns and rural counties better compete for funds.

- STI already exempts 8 other categories of transportation revenues -

## **MAKE NC A LEADER IN ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS**

→ Reinstate funds for economically beneficial and safety-focused bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Whether its a critical link to attract tourism on the East Coast Greenway, an important sidewalk connection to make travel to school safer, or a Main Street bike and pedestrian project to serve businesses, state funding provides crucial leverage for federal funds and local contributions.

- 16% of crash fatalities are pedestrian or cyclists; the state is a necessary partner in solutions -

## **STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR DEMAND-MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY**

→ Grow the state's investment in Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and technology applications such as ramp-metering and managed motorways.

The most cost-effective dollar spent is on efficiently managing the demand for the supply of roads we already have. Working with employers on ways to offer workers alternatives to peak-hour, drive-alone commuting and deploying technologies to maximize the roadway supply are key elements of the smart city movement.

- The Triangle TDM program has reduced vehicle miles traveled by nearly 280 million miles over the past 5 years -

## **RECOGNIZE STATEWIDE PROJECTS IN OTHER MODES, NOT SOLELY ROADWAYS AND FREIGHT RAIL**

→ Establish standards and scoring criteria for designated statewide passenger rail and trail investments.

Just as major highways serve statewide interests, so do other modes. Passenger rail from Charlotte to Raleigh serves 5 NCDOT divisions and 3 NCDOT regions. Great trails also traverse the state - the East Coast Greenway stretches from VA to SC and the Mountains-to-Sea Trail runs 1,175 miles from the Great Smokey Mountains to the Outer Banks.

- Passenger rail between Charlotte and Raleigh contributes \$60 million to business output and \$30 million to GSP annually-

