



# 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, healthy, active neighborhoods, greater access to jobs and education. The Triangle Metro Region – urban, suburban and rural – was home to 35% of the state’s growth from 2010-2020, 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 Equitable for 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

- ➔ Create dedicated, recurring state funding as a match for competitive federal funds, such as the BUILD, passenger rail, and Capital Investment Grant (CIG) programs.
- ➔ Create state economic development funding for multi-modal investments serving job hubs in small towns, rural areas, and along major metro mobility corridors.

The BuildNC bond was a good start, but fast, flexible funding is needed for multimodal projects not well suited to the long and constrained STI process. Regions will do their part - they need a handshake, not a handout from the state - a committed partner to match regional action with state action.



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

### MAKE INVESTMENTS RELIABLE AND PREDICTABLE

- ➔ Remove constraints and account for multimodal benefits for rail transit funding.

The STI program allocates funding in a reasonable way, with one exception: rail transit. Rail transit should be held to the same standards as other investments, and its measurable multi-modal benefits should be included. Constraints on 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 the 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.



- 30% of vehicles on the Triangle's busiest stretch of I-40 - which is hampered by the corridor cap - is 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

➔ Surpass peer states in funding economically beneficial and safety-focused bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Whether its a critical link in NCDOT's Great Trails State Plan, 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

➔ Stabilize and grow the state's investment in Transportation Demand Management (TDM) to match local and regional commitments. Implement the Regional Technology (ITS) plan for roadways and transit.

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 over 300 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-

