

Joint MPO Policy Priorities Revision Guide

December 1, 2020

Introduction

The Capital Area MPO (CAMPO) and Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO (DCHC) have developed 7 joint policy priorities to strengthen their combined voices in advocating for mobility improvements for the citizens and businesses of the Greater Triangle Region. This guide frames revisions that could be made to the current policy priorities document for initial consideration at the December 1, 2020 Joint MPO Policy Boards meeting. Based on feedback and guidance, a revised document will be brought back to the individual policy boards at their January 2021 meetings.

This guide addresses three of the seven current policies:

1. Invest for Success
2. Strengthen Support for Demand Management and Technology
3. Make NC a Leader in Active Transportation Investments

For each policy, some possible updates and revisions are offered, and questions for feedback and guidance are provided.



Priority: Invest for Success – See Page #2

1. Status – Several state-led efforts are underway that a more detailed priority document can address: the BuildNC Bonds, the NC MOVES 2050 statewide transportation plan and the NC First Commission
2. Potential Revisions – develop a more detailed document that emphasizes a state role to provide funds to leverage competitive federal grants and the value of funding key multi-modal corridors

Priority: Strengthen Support for Demand Management and Technology – See Page #4

1. Status – NCDOT's recent funding issues severely affected the continuity and reach of the Regional TDM program, at a time when demand for telework assistance from employers soared due to COVID; the region completed a new Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Plan in 2020
2. Potential Revisions – Stabilize state TDM funding and begin implementing the Regional ITS Plan

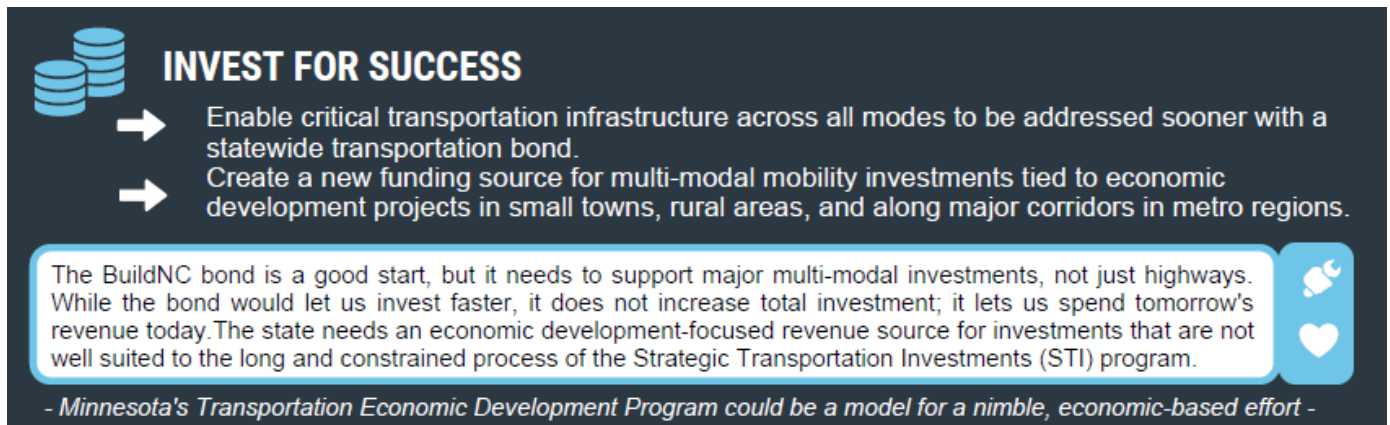
Priority: Make NC a Leader in Active Transportation Investments – See Page #5

1. Status – The state has made good policy and organizational changes, but ped/bike fatalities are rising and NC funding lags peer states
2. Potential Revisions – increase ped/bike safety funding, monitor the new Complete Streets Policy and expand the focus of ped/bike access beyond schools to work, parks, transit and groceries

Policy Priority: Invest for Success

1. Status

This first of the seven priorities is a “summary level” priority – providing high level guidance, but not detail as two of the other priorities do (Strengthen TDM & Technology, Lead on Active Transportation):



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 -

- BuildNC Bonds have been approved, but are limited to highway investments:
<https://www.ncdot.gov/about-us/how-we-operate/finance-budget/Pages/build-nc.aspx>
- NC Moves – a new State Transportation Plan – recently completed Public Comment; the draft was light on discussion of new funding sources:
<https://www.ncdot.gov/initiatives-policies/Transportation/nc-2050-plan/Pages/default.aspx>
- The NC First Commission – a group tasked with evaluating transportation investment needs and ways to pay for them – identified several possible funding sources; consideration likely to begin in 2021:
<https://www.ncdot.gov/about-us/how-we-operate/finance-budget/nc-first/Pages/default.aspx>

2. Potential Revisions

- Expand the priority to include more detail on the value of meaningful, dedicated, recurring funding for critical investments that are not well suited for the state's Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) process; next steps for the MPOS in working with the state; and what communities can do to help invest for success.
- Emphasize two critical needs, one new and one in the current policy priority:
 - Dedicated, recurring state funding as a match for competitive federal funds, such as the BUILD, passenger rail and Federal Transit Administration Capital Investment Grants (CIG) programs
 - A state economic development revenue source for multi-modal investments serving key job hubs in small towns, rural areas and along major metro mobility corridors

- c. Stress that the region will be doing its part – it seeks a “handshake” with the state, not a “handout” from the state – a committed partner that can match regional action with state action
- d. Define success and clarify “MPO Next Steps” to achieve these Invest for Success priorities
- e. Give examples of what individual communities can do to pursue successful mobility investments

3. Questions for Feedback and Guidance

How supportive do you think your community would be to:

- a. Dedicated, recurring state funds to provide matches for competitive federal grants
- b. A state economic development revenue source for multi-modal investments serving key job hubs in small towns, rural areas and along major metro mobility corridors

Policy Priority: Strengthen Support for Demand Management & Technology

1. Status

- a. NCDOT's fiscal condition had severe effects on the regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Partnership
- b. The TDM Partnership has grown to 14 service providers who work directly with employers and commuters.
- c. NCDOT reorganized to create the Integrated Mobility Division, which, as its name implies, brings together mutually reinforcing efforts like transit, pedestrian and bicycle access, and Transportation Demand Management.
- d. The on-line Telework Toolkit, created by the Triangle's regional TDM Partnership, has seen a huge increase in interest during COVID. The Partnership added virtual outreach and targeted webinars in response to COVID constraints.
- e. The two MPOs and NCDOT have finalized the regional Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Plan during the past year – several recommendations assign MPO leadership responsibility.

2. Potential Revisions

- a. Strengthen the language on the importance of sustained, stable state Transportation Demand Management funding to match MPO investments and service provider commitments
- b. Add language in "Next Steps for MPOs" that begins to implement the regional Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Plan, focusing on at least one of the three emphasis areas in the policy: Active Freeway Management, Traffic Signal Systems and Mobility in Regional Hubs.
- c. Explicitly incorporate equity considerations into TDM program monitoring and funding allocations

3. Questions for Feedback and Guidance

How supportive do you think your community would be to:

- a. A stronger call for sustained, stable state funding to match MPO Transportation Demand Management investments
- b. An "MPO Next Step" to begin implementing the Regional Intelligent Transportation System Plan
- c. Incorporating equity into Transportation Demand Management funding decisions and monitoring

Policy Priority: Make NC a Leader in Active Transportation Investments

1. Status

- a. NCDOT revised its Complete Streets Policy
- b. NCDOT reorganized to create the Integrated Mobility Division, which, as its name implies, brings together mutually reinforcing efforts like transit, pedestrian and bicycle access, and Transportation Demand Management.
- c. NCDOT has provided funding to Safe Routes to Schools programs.
- d. NCDOT is in the midst of a significant planning effort called the Great Trails State Plan.
- e. Bicycle and pedestrian crash fatalities are trending upward.
- f. MPO pedestrian and bicycle projects were delayed due to the NCDOT financial condition.
- g. COVID led to significant increases in walking and cycling.
- h. NCDOT lags peer states in funding “independent” bicycle and pedestrian projects (projects that are not part of a road project).

2. Potential Revisions

- a. Add language to the current policy priority document that stresses increasing safety funding proportional to bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and supports a “Vision Zero” perspective
- b. Add language in “Next Steps for MPOs” that calls for working with the NCDOT to monitor implementation of the new Complete Streets Policy.
- c. Maintain the current emphasis on active and safe routes to schools, but expand the focus to active and safe routes to other key destinations, including job hubs, parks, transit lines and grocery stores.

3. Questions for Feedback and Guidance

How supportive do you think your community would be to:

- a. Increased pedestrian/bicycle safety funding proportional to pedestrian/bicycle crash fatalities
- b. Increased MPO staff time working with the NCDOT to monitor implementation of the new Complete Streets Policy and design flexibility
- c. Expanding the focus of active and safe routes programs beyond schools to also include access to work, transit lines, parks and groceries