

The MPOs have focused on four most likely new sources of revenue:

1. Sales tax increase for public transit
2. Car registration fee increase
3. New state and federal transportation infrastructure program
4. I-40 HOT/HOV financing package

Typically, sales taxes are regressive, meaning that lower income households pay a higher percentage of their income in sales taxes than do higher income households (higher income households pay more in *actual* dollars in sales tax than lower income households, but these payments represent a smaller *proportion* of the total income of higher income households). Proposed legislation in NC seeks to mitigate the “who pays” side of the equation by excluding many necessities from the sales tax, including food, medicine, utilities and shelter. By excluding these items, a typical household in the lowest 20% income group would pay about \$3 per month for the transit tax, based on analysis by the North Carolina Budget & Tax Center. Households in the top 1% income bracket would average \$57 per month and those rounding out the top 5% income bracket would average \$17 per month. Also, one financial analysis showed that the impact of a one dollar increase in the price of a gallon of gasoline is about ten times worse for low-income households than the impact of a ½ cent sales tax.

Moreover, looking at who pays is only half of the equation. Analysis should also consider who benefits. Transit service is disproportionately used by people with lower incomes and households that do not have access to cars. Currently, 32,000 households in the Research Triangle Region report having no vehicle available. Our region’s travel forecasts estimate that more than 60% of transit trips after we invest in rail service and greatly expanded bus service will be made by people from households without cars and low-income households with cars. So looking at the whole equation, a sales tax that is spent entirely on transit would provide a net benefit to households most dependent on transit service to reach jobs and educational opportunities, different from if a sales tax were spent on services that were used equally by lower income and higher income households.

The details of the proposed new state and federal transportation infrastructure program are uncertain. The I-40 HOT/HOV project will require a detailed environmental review during project development. At that point, the project-level environmental justice impacts will be studied. The project would require the payment of tolls to use the new HOT/HOV lanes for single-occupancy vehicles. Low income populations will still have the option to use the facility for free by carpooling or use the parallel lanes non-HOT/HOV lanes free of charge. In addition, public transit vehicles will be able to use the facility free of charge. As a result, at this stage in project planning, the I-40 HOT/HOV financing package does not appear to disproportionately impact low income or minority populations.

### **9.3 Safety and Security**

Metropolitan Planning Organizations are being encouraged to effectively address safety and security issues in accordance with policies outlined with the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

SAFETEA-LU established this new core Highway Safety Improvement Program; which is structured and funded to make significant progress in reducing fatalities on highways; as well as other modes that use highway, railroads, and other conduits within the transportation network. The Highway Safety Improvement Program creates a positive agenda for increased safety by increasing the funds for infrastructure safety and requiring strategic highway safety planning, focusing on results. Other programs target specific areas of concern, such as work zones, older drivers, and pedestrians, including children walking to school, further reflect SAFETEA-LU's focus on safety.

### **9.3.1 Safety**

Both the Capital Area MPO and Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO have been proactive in addressing safety as a component of our overall transportation processes by pursuing the following actions:

- Both MPOs have or are in the process of funding “Safe Routes to Schools” projects that will benefit elementary schools throughout the region.
- Both MPOs include an “Accident/Safety” variable when determining the technical scoring and prioritization of highway projects for their Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs.
- Both MPOs have adopted bicycle and pedestrian plans that either highlight or stress the “Four-Es” (i.e. education, engineering, enforcement, and encouragement); have stressed the importance of safety in various public service announcements in the local media. Furthermore, both MPOs will be pursuing a project this year to further encourage bicycle and pedestrian safety; and will use a template created by another MPO in the state. One of the goals of the project will be to not only increase public awareness about bicycle and pedestrian safety, but to impact the region’s overall transportation culture by consciously having bicycle and pedestrian traffic and travel as a valuable asset of movement through the region.
- The DCHC MPO will promote the inclusion of the safety countermeasures identified in Appendix 5 of this report (cross-section and safety countermeasure guidelines) in the review and design of roadways in the planning area.

### **9.3.2 Security**

Following the Capital Area MPO and Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO have been proactive in addressing security as a component of our overall transportation processes by pursuing the following actions:

- The transit agencies in both MPOs (i.e. Capital Area Transit, Durham Area Transit Authority, Chapel Hill Transit, Cary Transit, Triangle Transit, and area human service providers) have or are in the process of meeting FTA security requirements such as: training employees and drivers how to handle situations that threaten human safety; providing on-board and transit station camera detection as a deterrent to crime, and, providing Mobile Data Computers/Automatic Vehicle Locators on their vehicles.
- Durham Area Transit Authority has also done extensive work in their security component for transit through increased law enforcement presence, requiring drivers to receive safety and security training as a part of their orientation program, and having a Safety and Security Committee that meets monthly. The Safety and Security Committee consists of representatives of the Durham Police Department consists of representatives of the DPD, Wackenhut Special Police, DATA safety personnel, and City of Durham/DATA administrative staff, Wackenhut Special Police, DATA safety personnel, and City of Durham/DATA administrative staff.
- C-Trans, as operated by the Town of Cary have conducted their “Threat-Vulnerability” assessment with the Cary Police Department. C-Trans as of 2011 will require its future transit providers to install video surveillance cameras on its vehicles. Both Navtrak and Drive-Cam video recorders are currently installed on both door-to-door and fixed-route service vehicles.

- Capital Area Transit (CAT) has completed a System Security and Emergency Preparedness Plan. Through the System Security and Emergency Preparedness Plan, CAT has created and staffed a Security Committee made up of senior staff persons.

Key points from this section:

- Those adopting Long Range Transportation Plans consider several factors in deciding what investments to make.
- One critical factor is air quality: Plans must demonstrate that they will meet air quality standards or federal funding and project approvals will be withheld until plans are brought into compliance.
- Environmental justice is another critical factor, ensuring that investments avoid disproportionately adverse impacts on poor and minority neighborhoods and that traditionally-underserved neighborhoods receive appropriate transportation services and facilities.
- Safety and security considerations play a prominent role in planning and funding roadway, transit and pedestrian/bicycle facilities.