

**CAPITAL AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**
LEAD PLANNING AGENCY: CITY OF RALEIGH
Phone (919) 807-8500 -- Fax (919) 807-8717

Professional Bldg, Suite 800
127 West Hargett Street
RALEIGH, NC 27601

February 13, 2009

M. Eugene A. Conti, Jr., Secretary
NC Department of Transportation
1501 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1501

Re: Input on Transportation Reform

Dear Secretary Conti,

In response to your request for input on Transportation Reform within the NC Department of Transportation, I am providing the attached letter and resolution which were sent on behalf of the NC Capital Area MPO to the 21st Century Transportation Committee. As you will see, these documents outline priorities from the Capital Area MPO on transportation issues.

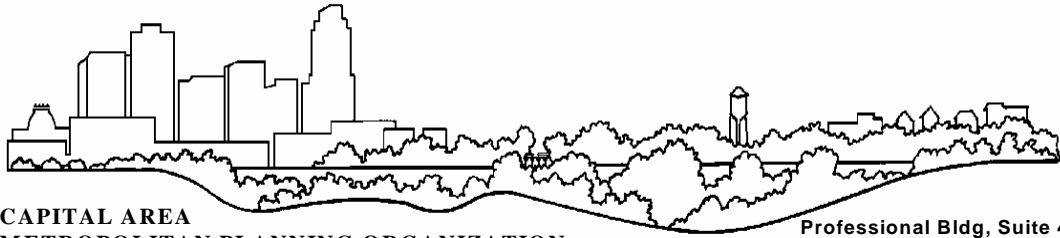
A response to your request for input, directly from the MPO's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) will be forwarded to you after their meeting on February 18, 2009.

The MPO appreciates the opportunity to comment on this item.

Sincerely,

Ed Johnson, Director
NC Capital Area MPO

cc: NC Capital Area MPO TAC members
NC Board of Transportation members



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127 West Hargett Street
RALEIGH, NC 27601

December 9, 2008

Mr. Brad Wilson, Chair
21st Century Transportation Committee
P.O. Box 2291
Durham, NC 27702

Subject: Resolution Providing the North Carolina Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Recommendations for Consideration by the 21st Century Transportation Committee

Dear Mr. Wilson:

The North Carolina Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) recognizes and appreciates the importance of the 21st Century Transportation Committee's study of the state's transportation needs. North Carolina's current transportation infrastructure is strained by the state's continuing growth, which is projected to result in a total population of more than 12 million residents by the year 2030.

The N. C. Carolina Capital Area MPO is currently updating our Comprehensive 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan and has identified a funding shortfall for our desired roadway improvement projects of \$8.4 billion. The funding shortfall identified for our desired transit projects is estimated to be \$3.5 billion. Including additional unfunded bike/pedestrian and other needs, our MPO's current unfunded needs exceed \$12 Billion.


As you are well aware, together we face increasing challenges to adequately funding our transportation needs; including recent dramatic increases in construction costs. This challenge is further compounded by declining state and federal revenue sources, and the recent severe economic downturn. Your committee's work is vitally important to us now, even more so than at its outset in 2007. Our commitment to working in close cooperation with you and all of our other partners to overcome these formidable challenges remains steadfast.

Brad Wilson – Resolution for the 21st Century Transportation Committee (cont.)
December 9, 2008

The enclosed resolution provides recommendations to the 21st Century Committee from our MPO's Board of Directors (Transportation Advisory Committee) which includes representation by elected officials from five counties, eighteen municipalities, and three highway divisions from in the Research Triangle region. This region has had the good fortune of being one of the fastest growing areas of our state for the past fifty years. These recommendations are offered as the priorities that we believe would benefit the continued prosperity of not only our region, but that of the entire state of North Carolina as well.

Thank you for considering these recommendations as you finalize the committee's work. If we can provide any further assistance, please let us know.

Sincerely,


Joe Bryan, Chairman
Transportation Advisory Committee
Capital Area MPO

cc: Lyndo Tippett, Secretary, NC Department of Transportation
Nina Szlosberg, NC Board of Transportation
TAC Members

**RESOLUTION PROVIDING THE NORTH CAROLINA CAPITAL AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION'S PRIORITIES FOR
CONSIDERATION BY THE 21ST CENTURY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

A motion was made by Chairman Bryan and seconded by Mayor Meeker for the adoption of the following resolution, upon being put to a vote, was duly adopted.

WHEREAS, the state of North Carolina's rapid growth has placed an increased strain on the State's current transportation infrastructure; and that growth is expected to continue with North Carolina projected to have more than 12 million residents by 2030; and

WHEREAS, due to the increases in construction costs for steel, concrete, and asphalt, the North Carolina Department of Transportation has experienced a significant funding shortfall over the past several years; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation has identified a \$64 billion funding shortfall in regards to statewide transportation needs through the year 2030 and additional funding sources are needed to construct important local, regional and statewide transportation projects; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization has identified a \$12 billion funding shortfall for multi-modal transportation needs through the year 2035 and additional funding sources are needed to construct important local, regional and statewide transportation projects; and

WHEREAS, traditional transportation funding sources have proved inadequate to address the multi-modal transportation needs of the State, especially highways, transit, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities as well as the congestion relief needed in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, the State Transportation Plan identifies state roads in terms of statewide importance as either Tier 1 – Statewide, Tier 2 – Regional, or Tier 3 – Sub-regional; and

WHEREAS, relatively small projects have the ability to significantly improve the efficiency of the existing transportation system in very cost-effective ways; however, funds to do so are very inadequate or restricted to other uses only ; and

WHEREAS, the current highway division structure – with funding allocated by highway division and with MPOs often located in two or more highway divisions – complicates the metropolitan and regional transportation planning processes; and

WHEREAS, the 2007 North Carolina General Assembly established the 21st Century Transportation Committee to study the transportation infrastructure needs of the State; and

WHEREAS, the 21st Century Transportation Committee was asked to report on several important topics related to addressing these challenges, including innovative funding methods, local funding options, urban congestion relief, the division of transportation infrastructure between State and local governments, multi-modal needs, and energy conservation with its report to due on or before December 31, 2008.

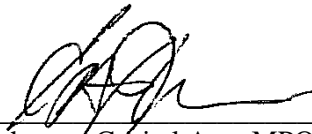
NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the North Carolina Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization submits the following list of priorities to the 21st Century Transportation Committee and strongly urge the Governor and the North Carolina General Assembly to work together to implement these priorities in order to address local, regional, and statewide multi-modal transportation needs.

1. Modernize the current highway funding distribution “equity” formula to directly address current traffic congestion, safety and maintenance needs. If the existing equity formula for the allocation of transportation funding is to remain in effect, it should apply only to existing revenue and be updated to reflect a current and thorough technically objective assessment of all current transportation needs, including in particular highways such as interstates, that are already multi-laned, but are in need of further capacity and safety improvements. New funding should be allocated to high priority congestion relief projects that are competitively awarded based on congestion and cost-effectiveness.
2. The current process for transferring roads from the State to local governments through mutually-approved street and highway system responsibility agreements that recognize the relative importance of all roadways --- not just state and federal highways --- to the integrity of the major thoroughfare system works well and should be maintained with enhancements as may be deemed beneficial. Any wholesale unilateral transfer of all state secondary roads within municipalities from the state to local governments is contrary to this principle and is strongly opposed. Any transference of maintenance and construction responsibilities for highways or secondary roads from the State to the local governments must provide continuing dependable funding sources for those roadways at a level acceptable to local governments, including at a minimum, adequate reimbursement schedules based on roadway lane-miles rather than center-line miles.
3. Adopt Congestion Relief/Intermodal Transportation Fund legislation to enable the Triangle to enact a local option sales tax and other authorized fee increases for highways and/or transit, as dependent upon an individual county by county referendum with a financial plan supported by the MPO and county commissioners; and develop an accounting mechanism that provides for the annual update of this information at the county level.
4. NCDOT’s transportation planning and distribution formula(s) funding regions should be aligned to be consistent with the state’s economic development regions and the predominant commuting patterns of our state. Modifying current highway divisions that are for maintenance and operations is not necessary to accomplish this objective.
5. Develop a corridor efficiency hot spot program that provides funding to NCDOT divisions and local governments to complete relatively low-cost projects that improve highway and transit network efficiency.
6. Adopt a complete streets policy for the State to ensure that facilities for transit, bicyclists and pedestrians are included in all appropriate transportation projects as consistent with the North Carolina Board of Transportation’s resolution as adopted on September 8, 2000.

7. Support study and implementation of transportation revenue options and other innovative sources of revenue that are, as much as practicable, user fee based such as those utilizing vehicle-miles of travel, ultimately by technology means that can vary the fee charged according to the degree of congestion on actual roadways being traveled so as to better help reduce congestion during peak travel periods.
8. Support greater levels of investment in strategic multi-modal improvements to establish and support alternative forms of passenger and freight transportation, such as railroads, public transit systems, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
9. Stop the transfer of Highway Trust Fund monies to the General Fund so that these funds can be directed to vital transportation needs.



 Joe Bryan, Chair
 Transportation Advisory Committee

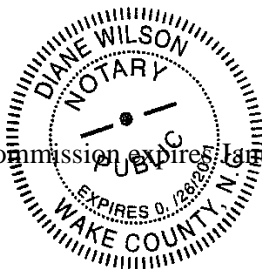


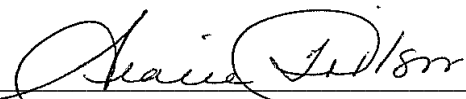
 Ed Johnson, Capital Area MPO Director
 Transportation Advisory Committee Clerk

County of Wake
 State of North Carolina

I, Diane Wilson, a Notary Public for Wake County, North Carolina, do hereby certify that on this 19th day of November, 2008, personally appeared before Joe Bryan and acknowledged the due execution of the foregoing RESOLUTION PROVIDING THE NORTH CAROLINA CAPITAL AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION'S PRIORITIES FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 21ST CENTURY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

Witness my hand and official seal, this the 19th day of November, 2008.


 My commission expires January 26, 2011.



 Diane Wilson, Notary Public