



POSITION STATEMENT Mass Transit Funding

Background:

As the population of our region (Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, and York) continues to grow, our need for adequate mass transit funding needs to be adjusted. This region is estimated to grow 14.7% by 2020 and will have significantly increased commuter traffic as a result. We estimate that in this 6-county area, if 1% of the commuters use mass transit or carpool, it will free 21 miles of traffic congestion on our roadways.

To accommodate our current growth and economic vitality, we must ensure adequate funding for the mass transit agencies that serve this area—Capital Area Transit (CAT), County of Lebanon Transit (COLT), RabbitTransit, and Red Rose Transit Authority.

Reasons for Support:

- Affordable public transportation will help as a greater demand for service continues and a dedicated funding source is needed for operation and capital of mass transit in our region (Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, and York) to accommodate more than 6.4 million riders that use the current operating service. Adequate funding is needed to stabilize these operations and meet the need for repair and capital investments
- With a predictable, dedicated source of funding, transit operations will be able to better plan for the future and meet growing demands for service. Also, funding should grow at a rate that is at least equal to the rate of inflation and meet the needs of rural, suburban, and urban service areas
- Support and use of public transportation reduces traffic congestion and improves air quality in service areas and their surrounding area, programs such as Commuter Services of South Central Pennsylvania demonstrates this through its promotion of mass transit and carpooling. These efforts have a positive impact on our roadways and the environment
- A 2006 Clean Air Task Force study ranked Cumberland County in the 96th percentile of most polluted areas in the nation. This is largely due to the amount of traffic on Interstates 81 and 83, the turnpike, and US 11/15. As this is a highly populated county in the region and has significant movement of goods and inter-county commuters, more access to alternative modes of commuting can significantly improve air quality in the region. This improved air quality will also improve the quality of health for county residents.

- State funding for this transit system, as with all transit properties in Pennsylvania, should be based on a consistent formula to generate a predictable and dedicated source of revenue. This is crucial as public transportation is a major means of transportation for Pennsylvanians and local municipalities and county governments do not have the resources to adequately fund mass transit.
- A consistent formula will also ensure that our region's residents, and our region's inter-county commuters, have an equal opportunity for public transportation funding as other regions in the state.
- The current Pennsylvania transit funding program does not recognize additional transit funding to accommodate population shifts or needs in service areas for our region.
- CORRIDOR_{one} in Lancaster and Harrisburg, and the proposed CORRIDOR_{two} in Hershey, Lebanon, and York are one aspect of mass transit that could play a critical role in the air quality, safety, and traffic mitigation for Dauphin, Lancaster, and Lebanon counties. This rail project will be financed through the use of Federal Transit Administration New Starts funding, Federal Fixed-Guideway Modernization funding, budgeted State Bond funding, and dedicated transit funding; operating costs will be financed from system revenue, Federal Preventative Maintenance Funding, and requested state support.
 - The \$10 million state share will pay for the cost of leased rail cars, maintenance of equipment, energy, staffing, and general administration

Recommendations:

- A consistent dedicated, predictable, and growth-oriented funding formula needs to be designed for all mass transit properties in the state.
- Funding formulas must also consider adjustments for inflation over time and should be cognizant of multi-modal transportation opportunities available.
- A fair and consistent funding formula is needed immediately that addresses the needs of commuters in all regions to ensure seamless travel to maintain our growing economic development opportunities, attract more employers, and offer a means of continual commuting for employees.

Summary:

We strongly urge the business community and public officials to support our region receiving more funding for mass transit. This mode of transportation allows convenient travel while mitigating traffic, improving air quality, and increasing the safety of our continually growing region.

Date: June 13, 2007

Chair & Vice-Chair: Jim Szymborski & Glen Hair

Committee: Transportation

Current Applicable Bills: *None*