

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
POLICY PRINCIPLES FOR THE 2015 REAUTHORIZATION OF
FEDERAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), which is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington Region, has the responsibility under provisions of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Metropolitan Area; and

WHEREAS, since 2000 the TPB has been calling attention to the region's long-term transportation funding shortfall, and has documented its unmet preservation, rehabilitation and capacity expansion needs for the region's highway and transit systems; and

WHEREAS, federal funding for transportation infrastructure plays a significant role in the National Capital Region; projects such as the interstate system and the Metro system could never have been built without the leadership, long-standing commitment, and financial support of the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the Washington region continues to face the challenges of accommodating growth in people and employment, more pervasive congestion on highways and transit systems, and delays in completing critical rehabilitation needs and key expansion projects; and

WHEREAS, MAP-21 was enacted on July 6, 2012 as a two-year bill, and was extended on August 8, 2014 through May 31, 2015, which was the ninth time in the last decade that Congress has enacted a short-term extension of the federal highway and transit programs.

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that Congress will likely again enact a short-term extension prior to the May 31st expiration of MAP-21, but the need for sustained and long-term federal funding could remain unaddressed; and

WHEREAS, the lack of predictability in federal funding programs has undermined the ability of state and local implementing agencies to effectively plan and build transportation facilities that are vital to meet the challenges of the future; and

WHEREAS, the lack of sustained and adequate federal funding for transportation undermines economic growth in our region and across the nation and hinders our global competitiveness; and

WHEREAS, both Maryland and Virginia took historic steps in 2013 to address their transportation funding shortfalls by raising new revenues, and the District of Columbia took similar steps five years ago, but nonetheless, the inadequacy of sustainable federal funding remains a critical concern; and

WHEREAS, the TPB has regularly communicated its positions regarding federal transportation legislation to Congress, including policy principles in 2002 and 2008, and a letter on May 21, 2014 calling upon Congress to protect the Highway Trust Fund from insolvency; and

WHEREAS, at the November 19, 2014 meeting, the TPB directed staff to develop a set of policy principles for the reauthorization of the federal surface transportation program that the Board might communicate to the U.S Congress ; and

WHEREAS, on April 3, 2015, the TPB Technical Committee received a briefing and commented on draft proposed policy principles;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD approves the attached 2015 Policy Principles for the Reauthorization of Federal Surface Transportation Programs” and further,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD calls on the United States Congress to reauthorize an enhanced federal surface transportation program for a full six-year period, consistent with the attached Policy Principles.

Adopted by the Transportation Planning Board at its regular meeting on April 15, 201

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2015 Policy Principles for the Reauthorization of Federal Surface Transportation Programs

The federal government has an historic interest in transportation. The benefits of federal investment in a balanced, multimodal transportation system have long been recognized as critical to our national interest, promoting economic growth and providing access to opportunities for all individuals. In addition, the federal government has a unique obligation to support interstate commerce and to meet critical emergency and security requirements, and thus should provide an equitable contribution towards the cost of maintaining, operating and building our transportation infrastructure.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board supports the following policy principles as a common-sense approach for reauthorization of the federal surface transportation programs.

1. Increase Federal Transportation Funding

- A substantial increase in federal surface transportation funding levels is needed to address the current under-investment in the maintenance, operations and expansion of the nation's transportation system.
- All reasonable and predictable strategies for sustained long-term funding should be pursued, including:
 - Increases in federal fuel taxes or other user-based taxes and fees;
 - Indexing fuel taxes and user fees to inflation so as to maintain the buying power of transportation funds;
 - Implementing pricing strategies enabled by emerging technology for all modes of travel, including rates that vary by time of day, type of vehicle, level of emissions, and specific infrastructure segments used;
 - Incentivizing federal support and coordination of innovative financing techniques, including public/private partnerships;
 - Utilizing savings from tax reform legislation; and
 - Creation of national infrastructure banks or bonding programs.

2. Fund Priority Needs

- An explicit program focus, with enhanced funding, is needed to put and keep the nation's transportation infrastructure in a state of good repair.
- Federal transportation policy should provide for increased federal funding focused on metropolitan congestion and other metropolitan transportation challenges, with stronger partnerships between federal, state, regional and local transportation officials.
- The federal commitment to balanced multi-modal transportation systems must be reaffirmed including by restoring parity between the transit commuter benefit and the parking commuter benefit. As communities seek to reduce dependency on driving and serve non-drivers, alternatives must be developed and supported. In particular, federal funding for public transit and safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure should be enhanced.

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3. Promote Effective Planning and Project Development

- More timely, detailed, and flexible requirements to comply with MAP-21's mandate for performance based planning and programming should be promulgated. Adequate and timely federal support, including funding, should be provided to the states and metropolitan areas to adopt and implement the program requirements.
- The current set of performance measures outlined in MAP-21 should be allowed time to take effect and be evaluated before enhancements are considered.
- Streamlining federal planning and environmental review processes, outlined in MAP-21, that are aimed at ensuring timely delivery of transportation projects, should be supported.
- Given the critical role of goods movement in our economy and the demands of freight on our infrastructure, a national freight program should be a key component of a long-term reauthorization act.