

Goal: Be successful in obtaining adequate funding for transportation facilities.

Background: An efficient and well maintained transportation system is essential to the continued prosperity and quality of life of this region. This system is a capital intensive investment that requires significant public expenditures for maintenance and improvement. The needs report documents that, as a regional community, we are not currently spending enough on required maintenance to keep the system in a state of good repair. In addition, there are numerous improvements in each of the modes that will be required to provide a safe and efficient system for future generations that will allow our area to prosper.

The Problem: Reviewing information from the needs report and input from the needs meetings held in the fall of 2005 the Funding Goal Group refined all that input into one problem statement.

Funding for transportation is not sufficient to continue to maintain existing systems let alone upgrade them for future demands

General Solutions: Success in addressing the shortfall in funding for transportation in our region will require understanding and support of local policy makers. To obtain this support the general public must better understand the importance and urgency of finding ways to increase funding for investment in transportation. The Goal Group recommends two general initiatives and six more specific sets of solutions to address this need.

Funding Initiative 1: Local transportation stakeholders must educate policy makers and local tax payers on the lack of adequate resources for maintenance and improvement of the current system (all modes - highway, transit, seaway, rail, air, pedestrian/bikeway) and the disproportionate inflation in material and other costs for maintenance, construction, and operation of the system that has eroded the buying power of current funding. This requires a consistent and factual message.

Funding Initiative 2: Local transportation stakeholders must educate policy makers and the public on the inadequacy of the current fuel tax mechanism as a means to support highway and transit investments in the future and the relationship between reduced fuel use (a positive trend) and reduced funding for transportation (a negative trend).

Transportation stakeholders will make a concerted and ongoing effort to present these messages. The following mechanisms to accomplish this will be undertaken:

- a regional speakers’ bureau will be coordinated by TMACOG;
- brochures and materials on funding needs will be developed;
- a media campaign will be jointly funded by local agencies;
- a “state of the streets” presentation will be developed and presented, and
- an educational message for schools will be developed.

Specific Solutions: Six more specific sets of recommendations are suggested by the group.

A. More efficiently use currently available funds and maintain appropriate balance between system preservation and capacity expansion

Initiatives

- Facilitate education of engineers on new materials, technologies, and practices to extend pavement life and address needs in other modes
- TMACOG convene a Regional Forum on projects to be built in next year (TIP program announcement) and present unified message on needs beyond what is being accomplished.
- Research efficient standards for system preservation goals, estimate required resources to maintain existing systems, and ensure that project selection criteria place priority on maintaining the system effectively while still leaving some resources for needed capacity expansion.

Policies

- Encourage agencies to accurately research the cost of maintaining and improving their roads with public staff and compare those costs to contractors and use most efficient approach.
- Encourage agencies to cost out rehabilitation strategies using life-cycle considerations not just initial capital comparisons and not always a “worst first” strategy.
- Encourage agencies to use new methods to stretch funding including design/build; construction warranties for extended periods.
- Encourage agencies to Use best available technology to build long-lasting roads

B. Encourage more regional cooperation to get the most out of current funding

Initiatives

- Research current joint projects and group purchasing to determine if they could be expanded to other jurisdictions for even greater overall cost savings. Potential project types include:
 - Purchase/fabrication of signs and signals
 - Mill and fill along jurisdictional boundaries (e.g. city-twp)
 - Contracting projects and services
 - Salt purchase (bring in by ship – sell to other local jurisdictions)
 - Materials purchases (e.g. asphalt)
 - Purchase of equipment (e.g. milling machines)
- Research current joint projects for operations and maintenance to determine if they could be expanded to other jurisdictions for even greater overall cost savings. Potential project types include:
 - Snow plowing
 - Signal coordination (e.g. Airport Highway)
- Educate public on many examples of already existing cooperation to save resources
- Create a regional database of existing cooperative governmental ventures and opportunities

B. Encourage more regional cooperation to get the most out of current funding (continued)

Policies

- Reward cooperative projects via regional project selection criteria
- Encourage jurisdictions to use state purchasing agreements and/or local multi-jurisdictional agreements
- Encourage local jurisdictions to specialize in services or materials where they are particularly efficient and make these available to other jurisdictions rather than duplicate efforts

C. Ensure that the region gets its fair share from current funding sources

Initiatives

- Use the annual Legislative Agenda to push for more funding for needed projects and programs
- Monitor current distribution of funding throughout the state and “benchmark” against other regions

Policies

- Support efforts to reduce / eliminate earmarks (“0” sum game with finite resources – doesn’t add to program)

D. Increase dedicated funding from traditional sources to meet growing transportation demands

Initiatives

- Research existing dedicated transportation tax mechanisms for the potential to provide additional funding for transportation needs including such things as:
 - Sales tax on bigger, heavier, and/or more expensive personal vehicles
 - Use taxes (e.g. licenses or vehicle registrations)
 - Fuel taxes
- Research if there is a direct correlation between transportation investment & economic development and demonstrate how using funds efficiently leads to more investment
- Research the importance of transportation expenditures related to the benefits (esp. to support increased tax initiatives)
- Educate elected officials and staff on how local jurisdictions are using current dollars efficiently to maintain and improve the current system

Policies

- Continue to ensure that dedicated transportation taxes are used for transportation purposes
- Support efforts to implement a mechanism to maintain the purchasing power of current transportation related taxes over time

E. Find innovative ways to get additional funding for transportation system upgrades

Initiatives

- Research burden and implications of mechanisms to raise additional transportation funding locally for priorities in our region (local self-help) as funding sources in Washington and Columbus produce less funding for local needs and focus primarily on higher level highway facilities (e.g. federal funding on Interstates and National Highway System, state funding on state routes in rural areas). Some possibilities include:
 - impact fees and tax increment financing (tif) districts on new development (including residential) especially where new transportation facilities or improvements will be required
 - multiple jurisdiction transportation improvement districts (TID)
 - multiple jurisdiction property tax for transportation uses
 - multiple jurisdiction general or fuel sales tax for transportation uses
 - multiple jurisdiction income tax for transportation uses
 - statewide mechanisms directed to local jurisdictions
 - expand statewide bond issues for local jurisdictions
- Research burden and implications of new, different region wide mechanisms to fund a truly regional public transit system over the long term
- Research burden and implications of mechanisms to raise additional transportation funding locally for paratransit and shared ride services for the whole region
- Research issues related to larger regional coordination / funding / compact across state line to address transportation issues on a truly regional basis
- Research methods to provide funding to smaller jurisdictions – Townships and more rural areas need “small projects” funds

F. Balance the split of funding between modes based on regional priorities and needs

Initiatives

- Research methods to determine fair and effective balance of funding between modes
- Include multi-modal and holistic transportation planning in TMACOG new–official training.
- Implement a mechanism for a jurisdiction that is contemplating initiating a project to notify adjoining jurisdictions, transit agencies, bicycle and pedestrian planning groups to work together on holistic design solutions
- Educate officials on need for balanced investment at Transportation Summit
- Develop and implement a method to require a jurisdiction to notify key modal and other stakeholders (e.g. nearby jurisdictions, transit agencies, bicycle/pedestrian groups) when a new project concept is being developed to allow coordination with plans or projects envisioned by these other groups
- Research ways to increase effectiveness of each mode and fund most effective solutions
Example: is transit a more effective solution to a problem than major street widening?

Policies

- Encourage multi-modal design of all projects [*“complete streets”*] and change project selection criteria to reward projects that incorporate multimodal elements such as:
 - bike lanes or paths with street upgrades
 - street upgrades with transit shelters, bump outs, and other accommodations
 - Park and Ride Facilities