



# HARRISBURG AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

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Harrisburg Metropolitan Planning Organization (HATS)  
Testimony Provided By:  
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Chairman Markosek, Chairman Geist, Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to testify on the transportation financial crisis we are experiencing and its impact on our regional/metropolitan area (Cumberland, Dauphin & Perry Counties). I will be reporting on Dauphin County, Perry County and significant regional/metropolitan wide transportation issues. My colleague Kirk Stoner, Cumberland County Planning Director, will report on Cumberland County related issues in separate testimony.

Beyond any doubt, our public transportation, highway and bridge systems are in a financial crisis. The ability to adequately maintain and improve our deteriorating transportation infrastructure is resulting in undesirable economic, environmental, and quality of life conditions for residents and businesses within and beyond our region. Based on our travel demand simulation model analyses, traffic volumes on our limited access roads are expected to increase between 30% and 40% by the year 2030.

This situation is created by deficient road capacities and the inability to adequately move traffic in a congestion free manner. As a result, many of our major corridors operate at Level of Service 'F' during the peak am and pm hours. Left unimproved, congestion on these deficient corridors will continue to increase, extend the duration of peak am/pm traffic periods, and create greater safety and air quality impacts. Another impact from lack of funding is that increased emphasis on simply maintaining the existing system is preventing us from advancing projects with strong transit, ITS, rail, pedestrian, bicycle, or other multi-modal components.

Thus, the emphasis is most significantly on roads and bridges, at the expense of other modes and modal connections. As an example, over the next 4 years our region will be programming \$235 million dollars on highways and bridges, but only \$52 million dollars on transit—a 4.5 to 1 investment ratio. Additional revenues dedicated to regional and local projects would enable much needed improvements to be completed sooner, providing earlier overall economic and environmental benefits of safer more reliable infrastructure, improved traffic flow, cleaner air, reduced travel time, reduced congestion, energy cost savings, stimulated economic development, and expanded employment opportunities. As funding will always remain a critical element in meeting transportation needs, a longer term solution will require continued pursuit of transportation investment strategies that promote use of energy efficient higher occupancy vehicles and mass transportation together with smart growth management strategies and sustainable environmental practices.

Inaction is not an acceptable choice. Transportation projects that are necessary to maintaining our economic vitality and environmental quality by efficiently moving people and goods into and through this nationally strategic transportation corridor are being delayed or not programmed due to funding shortfalls. With a considerable portion of limited federal and state transportation dollars being committed to the backlog of statewide significant road and bridge projects, many needed local projects are going unattended.

The level of funding, selection and prioritization of transportation improvements we are advocating are derived through a multi-level comprehensive planning process, that ultimately feeds into the Regional Transportation Plan. We are convinced that transportation investments, based on such a comprehensive planning process, are more likely to achieve their intended goal—to create a safe, efficient, environmentally sensitive, and congestion free transportation system; a system that is designed and constructed to adequately meet the service demands placed on it by the travelling public. Without going into details, I can report to you that the total estimated costs necessary to achieve the infrastructure needs identified in our Regional Transportation Plan through the Year 2035 amount to about \$4.6 billion dollars. Total projected revenues expected to be received over that same time period amount to about \$2.4 billion dollars. The estimated revenue shortfall for our Metropolitan Area is about \$2.2 billion dollars. Examples of additional transportation improvements that could be accomplished with enhanced funding include the following:

#### Dauphin County Projects:

- Walnut Street/Progress Avenue redesign/reconstruction – major commuter corridor
- Rt. 322 /Chambers Hill Rd./Grayson Road redesign/reconstruction – major commuter corridor.
- Local bridges – many on the County bridge system.

#### Perry County Projects:

- Rt. 34 Corridor Improvements – major commuter corridor.
- Rts. 11/15 Corridor Improvements – major commuter corridor.
- Local Bridges – many on the County bridge system.

#### Transit Projects:

- New CAT maintenance/administration facility (\$25 mill).
- Bus fleet replacements (\$6.4 mill).
- Capital Red Rose Regional Rail Service – operating subsidies for Lancaster-Harrisburg Service.
- Corridor II Premium Bus Service: Lebanon - Hershey - Harrisburg Service.
- Lemoyne Connector Grade Separated Crossing – strategic transit/emergency response access portal between Cumberland and Dauphin Counties.
- Expanded bus service to residential areas and employment centers.
- Multi-modal travel corridors that enhance street functions to also allow people to conveniently choose to walk, ride a bike, or take a bus.

#### Regionally Significant Projects:

- I83 Master Plan: I83/New Cumberland Turnpike Interchange to I81 connection. Major corridor and interchange redesign/reconstruction (\$1.3 billion).
- I81 Corridor improvements – add an additional lane in each direction from Cumberland/Franklin County line thru Cumberland County and Dauphin County to I78 connection in Lebanon County (\$1.3 billion).
- N/S Crescent Corridor Rail Freight Project impacts on the Harrisburg Intermodal Yard.
- PA 283/I283 Corridor and Interchange redesign and reconstruction.

In conclusion, without adequate funding, we will have no other alternative but to continue to address transportation infrastructure issues on a “system maintenance” platform, with precious few dollars available to invest in critical “system enhancements”. We will therefore not be able to achieve the goal of establishing a sustainable, safe, and effectively functioning transportation system for the Commonwealth. The construction/congestion cycle will remain unbroken, infrastructure capacities will continue to decline, and we will continue to sink into the abyss of transportation shortfalls. We have experienced this state of affairs in the past, and without adequate funding are preordained to revisit this dilemma again in the future, without having achieved resolution.