



## 2011 NJ Legislature Candidate Survey on Transportation and Land Use Policy

As a candidate for NJ State Legislature in the upcoming election, we hope you will take a few moments to answer this short, yet important, questionnaire regarding the transportation issues facing our state. Please feel free to attach sheets as needed.

### Organizational Overview:

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit organization working toward a more efficient, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. Since the mid-nineties, the Campaign has played a critical watchdog role in the field of transportation policy, helping state transportation agencies reform their approaches to solving transportation problems. Our work has increased funding for infrastructure maintenance and repair, created more effective road projects and led to millions of dollars in new funding for walking, cycling and mass transit projects.

### Purpose and Process:

Transportation policies directly impact New Jersey's citizens in a variety of ways. Elected officials influence the development of these policies and how certain transportation systems are funded and built, thereby impacting constituents' daily lives. This short questionnaire will be used to inform the public on the incumbents' or candidates' positions in key areas of transportation policy. The questionnaire will provide you with an opportunity to present your views and vision on how to address the transportation issues facing New Jersey residents at the state and local levels. Please be as detailed as possible when describing your positions. **The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-partisan organization that neither supports nor opposes any political party or candidate for office.** Questionnaire responses, however, will be posted on our blog at [blog.tstc.org](http://blog.tstc.org) and in our newsletter, *Mobilizing the Region*.

Upon completion, the survey may be emailed to [janna@tstc.org](mailto:janna@tstc.org), or faxed to (212) 268-7333 attention Janna Chernetz. Or mailed to: Tri-State Transportation Campaign, attn: Janna Chernetz, 350 W. 31<sup>st</sup> Street #802, New York, NY 10001. **Please return the surveys no later than close of business October 19, 2011.**

Name: Daniel R. Benson

Party Affiliation: Democrat

District Represented:

14<sup>th</sup> District

Contact Information: 1970 Route 33, Hamilton Township, NJ 08690 609-890-0218

Primary Contact and Title: Jason Ascher Campaign Manager



I support the “fix-it-first” initiative set forth in 2000. We should prioritize spending to repair/maintain any and all roads and bridges in need of repair before spending money on new projects.

## **NJ Transit:**

Transit saw 247 million riders last year statewide, an increase of 10% since 2008, yet state support for the transit system has decreased.<sup>3</sup> In 2004 nearly half, 49%, of the NJDOT Capital Construction Program was dedicated to NJ Transit.<sup>4</sup> Since 2004, that amount has steadily decreased to a third, or 33%, in 2012.<sup>5</sup>

Do you ride trains or buses? Y X N \_\_\_\_ When and Where? \_\_\_\_

I ride NJ Transit Trains both for work and for personal travel throughout New Jersey.

What would you do to address the increasing demand for public transportation?

In order to keep up with the current influx of NJ Transit riders we must properly fund the transit system.

1. Do you think the current level of public transportation service in NJ is adequate? Y \_\_\_\_ N X \_\_\_\_

While I commend NJ Transit for all they do to keep up with New Jersey’s high commuter rate, I believe there is room for improvement through overall efficiency, maintenance of vehicles, trains and increased mass transit opportunities for the ever growing number of New Jersey commuters.

## **NJ Transit continued:**

2. In 2010, Governor Christie cancelled the ARC project which would have doubled capacity across the Hudson River.<sup>6</sup> The Lincoln Tunnel Exclusive Bus Lanes and the Port Authority bus terminal are at capacity.<sup>7</sup> In addition, this past month, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey raised fares and tolls on PATH and Hudson River crossings.

3. Do you believe improvements to the cross-Hudson commute are necessary? Y X N \_\_\_\_  
If yes, what measures and/or projects would you promote to improve the cross-Hudson commute?  
Explain:

With the ARC tunnel cancelled we must look for additional ways to add capacity. Senators Menendez and Lautenberg have been active in advancing alternatives to ARC, I believe these need to be advanced in a timely manner to ensure that NJ’s economic growth is not inhibited by the lack of ability to grow.

## **Traffic Safety:**

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.apta.com/resources/statistics/pages/ridershipreport.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> NJDOT FY2004 Capital Program <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/capital/tcp04f/>

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 4 above.

<sup>6</sup> NJ Transit’s rail ridership has quadrupled since 1984 <http://www.arctunnel.com/about/>

<sup>7</sup> Wall Street Journal article April 19, 2011 <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703916004576271150274132500.html>

1. In 2009, there were 549 fatal automobile crashes on New Jersey's roads: of these, more than 171 were with pedestrians or cyclists. The total death count was 589.<sup>8</sup>

Do you believe current traffic safety measures are adequate? Y \_\_\_\_\_ N X \_\_\_\_\_

How will you address traffic safety in your district?

We must continue to support and fund programs that address the safety needs of not only the state's motorists but also pedestrians and cyclists, including but not limited to: safe routes to schools program, Bikeway grant program, Safe streets to Transit program, Transit village, Local Bridge and Future Needs, Municipal Aid and county Aid programs.

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2. Do you regularly walk or ride a bicycle? Y x \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_ I frequently when weather permits walk in my neighborhood and while meeting constituents in various communities I walk door-to-door to better understand their concerns. \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Sustainable Communities:**

Smart growth development policies (which encourage development around transit hubs and economic centers), sustainable communities and increased public transportation are often more effective and fiscally sound methods of curbing traffic growth while bringing economic, environmental and health benefits to municipalities.<sup>9</sup>

1. Will you promote smart growth planning and development in your district?

Y X \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ Explain :

### **Sustainable Communities continued:**

2. In 2012, the nationally recognized Transit Village program will be defunded. The program provides small grants to help towns promote development near train and bus stations. Previous funding levels were between \$1 and \$3 million annually.

Will you support the restoration of funding for the Transit Village program?

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<sup>8</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (FARS) <http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/States/StatesCrashesAndAllVictims.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> US EPA <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/topics/eb.htm>

Y\_\_x\_\_ N\_\_\_\_\_ If so, at what level?\_\_\_\_\_Restore funding to 2008 levels.\_\_\_

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**Above & Beyond:**

Is there anything else we should know about your goals regarding transportation?

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***Thank you for taking an interest in the future of New Jersey's infrastructure.***