

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 and in our newsletter, *Mobilizing the Region*.

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

Name <u>:</u>	Daniel R.Benson			
Dowler Affili	istism. Damasaust			
Party Amii	lation: <u>Democrat</u>			
District Re	epresented:			
14	4 th District			

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Primary Contact and Title: <u>Jason Ascher Campaign Manager</u>

Questionnaire:

Transportation Funding:

New Jersey's Transportation Trust Fund relies upon substantial transfers from the state's general fund over the next five years – contributions from the general fund will be \$76 million in 2012, increasing to \$605 million in 2016¹ – and contributions from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. However, there is no indication as to how New Jersey plans to find this money year after year without indentifying new revenue. (This summer, PANYNJ announced substantial fare and toll increases to meet budget demands.)

1.	Do you believe New Jersey will be able to meet the general fund transfers over the next five years? Y_X_ N If "yes," where will this money come from? If "no," why?
	Explain:I believe that transportation is a priority and as such, I will fight to ensure there is funding for transportation needs. I will work with my colleagues in the Legislature to fully fund the program
2.	Do you support increased funding for transportation? Y X N
	Explain: I support increased funding for transportation. Representing a State that relies on commuting to New York and Philadelphia I believe it is imperative to provide all residents with efficient, safe and quality transportation options.
3.	Through Local Aid, municipalities can apply for and receive funding for a variety of infrastructure and safety projects on a competitive basis. Local Aid has generally been funded at \$10 million annually. Do you believe this funding level to be adequate? Y N X
Explain	:
We mu	st fund Local Aid at the necessary levels to ensure good maintenance of our local infrastructure and the
safety (of our residents.

Roads and Bridges:

New Jersey has made progress in reducing the backlog of deficient bridges since it mandated a "fix-it-first" policy in 2000. "Fix-it-first" means existing road and bridges are repaired before new ones are built. But as of 2010, over 200 of New Jersey's bridges and 50% of New Jersey's roads² remain in substantial need of repair. Spending on new roads and bridges has also increased in recent years.

1. How will you ensure that New Jersey is adhering to its "fix-it-first" policy?

¹Transportation Funding Sources http://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/552010/pdf/TCP_Slides.pdf

²NJDOT Report on Roads http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/publicat/Imreports/pdf/pavementreport2010.pdf

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.³ In 2004 nearly half, 49%, of the NJDOT Capital Construction Program was dedicated to NJ Transit.⁴ Since 2004, that amount has steadily decreased to a third, or 33%, in 2012.⁵

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. The Lincoln Tunnel Exclusive Bus Lanes and the Port Authority bus terminal are at capacity. In addition, this past month, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey raised fares and tolls on PATH and Hudson River crossings.
- 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:

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

NJDOT FY2004 Capital Program http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/capital/tcp04f/

⁵ See footnote 4 above.

⁶ NJ Transit's rail ridership has quadrupled since 1984 http://www.arctunnel.com/about/

Wall Street Journal article April 19, 2011 http://online.wsj.com/article/SB1000142405274870391600457627 1150274132500.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 589.8 Do you believe current traffic safety measures are adequate? Y NX 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.
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
Smart g	inable Communities: growth development policies (which encourage development around transit hubs and economic centers), able communities and increased public transportation are often more effective and fiscally sound methods ing traffic growth while bringing economic, environmental and health benefits to municipalities. 9
1.	Will you promote smart growth planning and development in your district?
Y <u>X</u>	N Explain :
<u>Susta</u>	inable 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?

 $^{^{8} \ \}text{National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (FARS)} \ \underline{\text{http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/States/StatesCrashesAndAllVictims.aspx}} \\ ^{9} \ \text{US EPA} \ \underline{\text{http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/topics/eb.htm}} \\$

	Yx	N If s	so, at what le	evel?f	Restore fund	ling to 2008	levels	
Above & Be	eyond:							
Is there anythi	ing else we sl	hould know	about your	goals regar	ding transpo	ortation?		

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