



## 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: Gordon M. Johnson

Party Affiliation: Democratic

District Represented: D37

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Primary Contact and Title: Phil Meisner, Chief of Staff

## 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 2016<sup>1</sup> – 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 \_\_\_\_ N ✓ If "yes," where will this money come from? If "no," why?

Explain: If the State budget and State revenue remained the same it will be difficult to meet general fund transfers, an additional source of revenue will have to be identified.

2. Do you support increased funding for transportation? Y ✓ N \_\_\_\_

Explain: Although we are in a challenging economic and budgetary climate, we must fund increases in spending on transportation infrastructure as well as mass transit.

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 ✓

Explain: I think there should be an increase should the budget permit.

<sup>1</sup>Transportation Funding Sources [http://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/552010/pdf/TCP\\_Slides.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/552010/pdf/TCP_Slides.pdf)

## 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 roads<sup>2</sup> 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?

During the Conner administration and after the collapse of the Interstate bridge in Minneapolis, a study of all bridges in the State was ordered and the crossings were ranked

## 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>

1. Do you ride trains or buses? Y ☒ N ☐ When and Where? I use NJ Transit  
regularly to go between Bergen County and Trenton. I also use Amtrak  
on a regular basis.
2. What would you do to address the increasing demand for public transportation? We must  
increase funding for both infrastructure improvements and  
for operations.
3. Do you think the current level of public transportation service in NJ is adequate? Y ☐ N ☒  
Explain: I think demand for these services is even greater  
than we assume.

<sup>2</sup> NJDOT Report on Roads <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/publicat/lmreports/pdf/pavementreport2010.pdf>

<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.

## **NJ Transit continued:**

4. 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.

Do you believe improvements to the cross-Hudson commute are necessary? Y ☒ N ☐

If yes, what measures and/or projects would you promote to improve the cross-Hudson commute?

Explain: Increase of rail capacity is a must for the Cross-Hudson.  
I would have liked to have seen the ARC tunnel but I would  
alternatively back the extension of the 7 subway to Secaucus.

## **Traffic Safety:**

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 ☒

How will you address traffic safety in your district?

I believe we must enhance grants for traffic/pedestrian safety  
studies on the statewide level and otherwise encourage individual  
municipalities to create safe roadways. In addition, we must look at  
highways and driver safety.

2. Do you regularly walk or ride a bicycle? Y ☒ N ☐ Where? I walk regularly

in my hometown - Englewood.

## **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 ☒ N ☐ Explain: I have in the past and will continue to support  
it where appropriate in the future.

<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>

<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>

## 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?

Y ☒ N ☐ If so, at what level? I would attempt to fund  
at 3M or more, b/c the impact is so great compared  
to the amount to be expended.

## Above & Beyond:

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

I am extremely interested in the extension of rail transportation  
throughout the State and over the cross-Hudson. I have advocated  
for the extension of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail up the Northern  
Branch for my entire career and will continue until it becomes  
a reality.

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