

Good morning/afternoon, my name is Rich Farr, and I am the Executive Director of rabbitransit and the Chairman of the York Area MPO. I am here today offering these remarks on behalf of Felicia Dell, Director of the York County Planning Commission who sends her regrets as she cannot be here today due to another commitment.

The invitation letter for this hearing requested the presenters to respond to five specific bullet points related to highway, bridge and public transit system funding within your County or MPO. In York County these bullet points were addressed in the approach we took to develop the Long Range Transportation Plan for our County and MPO. Since the plan was so recently adopted, June of 2009, I want to provide an overview of the plan and the approach we took to develop it. Through this I am sure I will address the key points.

The plan began, as all good planning documents do, by completing an extensive inventory of our transportation system. Since transportation is inter-modal and since what affects one mode has an affect on another mode, the plan inventoried the spectrum of transportation systems serving York County including aviation and rail.

Upon completion of the inventory phase we undertook extensive public involvement to gain input on the county's transportation needs for the next 27 years. (I know this is an odd time period but we wanted to blend the Federal guidelines for a long range transportation plan with PennDOT TIP development cycles.) The public involvement took the form of on-line surveys, paper surveys and focus groups.

We also solicited participation from key stakeholders to work on one of ten different sub-committees created to identify future needs and estimate their costs. The sub-committees were created around the different modes and around key funding categories or issues that drive funding such as safety, security, capacity, maintenance, etc. After the work of the subcommittees was complete the results were scrubbed to eliminate overlap among the results from different committees. For example, air quality needs overlapped with the needs of the congestion committee, security needs were addressed in the needs of several other sub-committee, and aviation needs were projected and estimated but ultimately not included in the funding analysis since the MPO doesn't administer any of the funds to address those needs.

A price tag was developed for each of the committees projected needs. I hope you're ready for this. The price tag to address the transportation needs for the York Area MPO over the next 27 years is \$26 Billion. That's billion with a "B". Now let me tell you the sad part. The revenue projected to be received in our MPO based on existing funding sources that included Act 44 at full funding and a 4% increase each year is only \$3.9 Billion. This clearly creates a funding gap between needs and projected revenue of \$22.1 Billion.

To help reduce the funding gap other solutions were proposed such as evaluating the possibility of closing a bridge as opposed to replacing it, including transit as an improvement alternative for congested corridors and reducing single occupancy vehicles through the regional ride sharing initiative, Susquehanna Regional Transportation Partnership. These measures could only reduce the gap by several million dollars. The true funding gap remained in the range of billions.

In order to make the best use of the limited funds we receive, we created selection criteria to guide the MPO in funding the most critical, the most needed and the most deliverable projects. We also developed spending targets for each of the funding categories to use as a target for our TIPs over the life of the Long Range Transportation Plan. Since we are only in the first year of implementation, you will have to check in with us ten years from now and we will be able to better tell you how it's going.

I offer you that overview to let you know that in answer to your first bullet point, "Do you believe our transportation systems are in a financial crisis?" Absolutely, and we didn't have to wait for the FHWA to reject the I-80 tolling proposal to know it. We've known it for quite some time. A \$22 billion funding gap feels like a crisis to us.

Unfortunately, to some people it doesn't feel like a crisis because we have been prudent with our TIP dollars, lived within our budget and didn't plan on money for projects that wasn't already in hand. We prioritized projects for funding based on our most critical needs and/or the projects that are easiest to deliver. So, people still see transportation being funded and constructed. There appears to be a sense that things aren't as bad as what people are saying; there is no sense of urgency to solve this funding crisis. However, there has been a pretty significant shift over the years in the type of projects that are getting done. While we believe in the philosophy of "maintenance first", due to anorexic funding levels it has become a philosophy of "maintenance only". In a growing region like Southcentral PA there is no room in the budget to add capacity.

As you all know, time is money in many different arenas, and it is no different in the transportation arena. I know from experience that if the funding crisis is not solved this year it will be more expensive next year or the year after that. Let me remind you the price tag over the long run is \$26 billion just in York County! And, keep in mind that the \$26 billion in estimated costs aren't going to send the York Area MPO on a transportation spending spree. Those funds are needed to do necessary projects such as:

- maintain the existing transit services (operating and capital)
- replace 197 bridges that will turn 100 years or older during the life of this plan
- retime 179 traffic signals to better manage congestion
- repair the pavement on 1342 miles of roadway
- purchase hybrid busses for the core routes of rabbit transit
- expand the existing services of the Susquehanna Regional Transportation Partnership to better serve our region's commuters that cross county lines on a daily basis

So no, I do not believe that inaction is acceptable. You will most likely hear the same response from all of the presenters here today. But I am not just offering it in my professional capacity, I am also relaying the message we heard from our residents through the public surveys we completed. We specifically asked if it was acceptable to let our roads decline; not raise revenue to fix the roads. Nine percent of the respondents said yes; ninety-one percent said to do nothing is unacceptable.

So, I am urging you to take up this difficult issue. There is no advantage in waiting for a new governor or new federal legislation. There is no excuse that will make sense when the systems fail due to lack of funds. The crisis will still be there, it will just be more expensive.

Thank you for your time and attention today and good luck in your deliberations on this matter.