

THE WAY FORWARD

The Future of Community & Public Transportation

For the last several months the Community Transportation Association and *Community Transportation Magazine* have been sponsoring a number of events people in Washington like to call, “listening sessions.” As the phrase implies, a listening session is an opportunity to hear from those we represent and whose opinions we value about where we are in the business we call community transportation. Although as a membership organization we always try to listen, the special calendar created by a transportation reauthorization adds greater intensity to our efforts.

In early June we held three events that were important parts of our listening sessions. One event involved a meeting of our State Delegates and Board of Directors, one a session on transit reauthorization which was open to all those attending our conference, and a third, a *Community Transportation Magazine* event, not unlike a press conference to further look into some of the items we’ve been hearing about.

The listening stage of our effort isn’t over. We plan to gather more ideas and needs especially because the events of the last several months concerning energy and mobility have created such powerful actions and reaction. While that process goes forward, we’ve been organizing what we’ve heard into four basic categories that we think help us to explain not just what we’ve heard, but help us explain what we need. These four categories are: **Investment and Finance; Energy and the Environment; Social Inclusion; and Connectivity.**

1

Investment & Finance

- **Increase overall investment in all forms of community and public transportation**
- **Index the gas tax to match rising prices**
- **Allow transit agencies to access tax credit blocks**
- **Capture the value of transit’s emission reductions as local match or other revenue**
- **Achieve greater private investment in transit through mechanisms such as economic development, tourism and safe harbor taxes and tolls**
- **Realize a full or greater share of true costs of providing human services transportation, especially for medical trips**

2

Energy & the Environment

- Tax carbon emissions, with credits recognizing the positive environmental impact of transit
- Convince the public and its leaders of the severity of the energy crisis and the vital role of transit in addressing it
- Conduct more research on alternative fuels that do not increase costs to transit systems
- Demand coordination of federal agencies and programs to fund transit solutions on emissions and fuel use

3

Social Inclusion

- Focus on big-picture issues and results, rather than stovepipe paradigms
- Improve flexibility in investment and regulations at all levels of government to encourage local innovation
- Raise awareness of services and programs among community leaders and how their missions correspond with larger community needs
- Enhance community involvement and participation, especially at the consumer level
- Be mindful of language and concepts used in communication efforts – use ideas and strategies to achieve change
- Focus on good legislation and good policy to serve all Americans



4

Connectivity

- **Prioritize connecting people – regardless of location, mode, program or status**
- **Consider the value of and relationships between all modes: bus, rail, air, water, pedestrians and bicycles**
- **Seize the opportunity of transit's role in large, crucial issue, such as health care, energy, housing and the environment**
- **Promote a philosophy that encourages Americans to travel without cars**
- **Identify new and diverse sources of revenue**
- **Expand the boundaries of transit – we need a national system of connected regions, states and communities**

What's Next?

To make real changes in how our nation supports and expands transportation options to meet our needs, we need your help. Your ideas, perspectives, comments and suggestions are all crucial as our Association works with elected officials and other leaders.

Let us know what you think!

You can e-mail your thoughts on our Way Forward to cteditor@ctaa.org. If you prefer traditional mail, please send your contributions to:

Community Transportation Magazine
1341 G Street, NW
10th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Finally, you can fax your ideas to us at 202.737.9197.

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