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## PRESS RELEASE

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## Groups Urge Candidates to Pursue More Transit Oriented and Smart Growth Driven Future

HARTFORD - As the Connecticut gubernatorial race heats up, a coalition of transportation, environment, planning, business and civic groups issued a white paper that calls on the candidates—if elected—to institutionalize the more sustainable transportation policy that the Connecticut Department of Transportation has pursued over the past two years.

The document, prepared by over 15 groups from throughout the state, calls for the new governor to embolden ConnDOT to assume a greater leadership role when it comes to smart growth development and to support investments that promote a transit-oriented future for Connecticut. In addition, the paper emphasizes the need for a new Governor to prioritize maintaining and repairing existing road and bridge infrastructure over road expansions, and for the Governor to increase funding for non-motorized transportation options like walking and cycling, options that support smart growth development.

“CTLCV is dedicated to educating the general public, but this document is geared to educate our soon-to-be elected or re-elected public officials,” said Lori Brown, executive director of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters. “Our state is in gridlock because of failed transportation policies and lack of vision. We hope this document jolts the players into action.”

“Transit projects such as the New Haven Springfield commuter rail will help town centers attract residents and keep more young workers in-state,” said Amanda Kennedy, Associate Planner with Regional Plan Association.

With the Special Transportation Fund running out of money and a ConnDOT capital program that faces significant shortfalls, the groups urged the next governor to find a sustainable funding source that will support a multi-modal transportation system dedicated to smart growth and transit-oriented development.

The document identifies several possible funding options, including stopping the diversion of the gas tax from the Special Transportation Fund to the General Fund, increasing the gas tax and implementing some form of tolling on Connecticut's roads.

“Connecticut’s Special Transportation Fund is facing a nearly \$50 million deficit in 2011, and the unfunded state of good repair and transit component of ConnDOT’s capital program is huge,” said Ryan Lynch, Connecticut coordinator for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit advocacy and policy organization working toward a transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey. “If Connecticut wants a 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation system, the next governor will need to make the difficult decisions that Connecticut has put off for too long. This document provides some options for whoever that may be.”

“While the state recently has begun to stabilize a transportation system that has long been neglected, without a truly dedicated funding source, the state’s economic growth will be severely impacted by its inability to move people and goods efficiently,” commented Joe McGee, Vice President, Public Policy, The Business Council of Fairfield County. “An integrated system that links travel options – from bus to rail to car – and provides choices for residents is long overdue.”

"Business and environmentalists lay out a vision here for spurring the economy using transit oriented development that creates jobs. This program saves energy, helps protect our special landscapes, keep our rivers clean and fight global warming," said Curt Johnson program director of the Connecticut Fund for the Environment.

A copy of the white paper can be found [here](#).

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**The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit advocacy and policy organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly, and equitable transportation system in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. [www.tstc.org](http://www.tstc.org).**