



Greater
Philadelphia
Urban Affairs
Coalition

**Transportation Funding and Reform Commission
Listening Session
September 15, 2006
Philadelphia, PA**

Testimony of the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition

Members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon. My name is Sharmain Matlock-Turner and I am President of the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition (GPUAC). Our mission at GPUAC is to bring people together from throughout the Metropolitan Philadelphia region to solve urban problems, operate programs, and support an array of government and private-sector sponsored initiatives to help low-wage families succeed.

In 36 years of being in the business of assisting low-wage families to move up the economic ladder, we know the importance of having a flexible, responsive transportation system that working families can afford and that they can count on. It can determine whether they sink or swim. That is why I am here to say along with many others, “*Business as usual* for Pennsylvania’s transportation system is not acceptable.” GPUAC is here today to add our voice to the those of our partners and the voices of thousands of families who are relying on our legislators for an “extreme transportation makeover” - to redesign a transportation system for today that has an eye toward the future, that is flexible enough to respond to the changing demographic and market forces that impact people’s everyday lives, and that supports the widest possible range of mobility choices for all citizens - including our lower wage residents who are struggling to identify – and reach – better paying jobs.

We all know that yesterday’s transportation system produced a crisis at many levels – not just a fiscal one. With the greatest job growth occurring in the outer ring suburbs of a region,

yesterday's system left many residents still in need of "last-mile" connections to complete their commutes, access to flexible commuting options that permit them to work during the second and third shifts, and shorter, less complicated commutes from the city to the suburbs and between suburban locations. In yesterday's system, transit policies were pitted against highway/bridge policies, as if we could really do with one and not the other. Working adults with children - who may be concerned about getting to and from second-shift jobs, as well as to doctors' appointments, parent-teacher conferences and the supermarket - need a *range* of transportation options to work for them.

A transportation system that addresses the needs of all citizens - from enhanced mass transit to ridesharing to innovative car ownership programs for low-wage commuters - will require more money, but more revenue alone will not create a better system.

For 2007 and beyond, a new transportation system must also link transportation investments to other investments in infrastructure for businesses, homes and schools. Tying transportation strategies to local land use planning is not just a "smart growth" idea, but a wise anti-poverty strategy that supports access to job opportunities and amenities for all residents regardless of income. In every county, a dedicated source of funding for public transit must be found for the millions of passengers who rely on it, so that public transportation authorities can be nimble and respond to changes in the market - and (to highlight an issue we care about at GPUAC) make strategic investments that better link residents to areas of rapid job growth in their regions.

Despite the challenge that lies ahead, this is an exciting time for the state of Pennsylvania. We appreciate your hard work and insights so far on this important issue. On our end, GPUAC will continue to work to better prepare residents for employment and other economic opportunities, and as a member of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Development Network (led by 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania) we will continue to support your efforts to improve our state's transportation system.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to your final analysis and recommendations.