

TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

FEDERAL ROLE

CCI believes the federal Highway Trust Fund should provide funds solely for highway programs authorized in federal highway legislation and not other non-highway purposes. In addition, CCI believes federal highway funding should not be contingent on state and/or local compliance with federal mandates. CCI supports giving counties more latitude in undertaking and concluding “off-system” road projects and giving the state and counties more flexibility in determining transportation solutions and funding categories, whether transit or highways. CCI believes federal review and approval authority should be limited to annual state plans and programs and not extend to individual projects. CCI further supports the passage of federal highway legislation that is in keeping with these principles. CCI supports the state transportation commission allocating the maximum allowable funds for “off system” bridges from the federal aid system.

STATE ROLE

CCI supports county input into the development of state transportation plans and programs through the use of transportation planning regions (TPRs) or similar mechanisms. CCI believes TPRs should have access to state and federal planning dollars. CCI supports development of transportation recommendations and allocation of state transportation funds by the state transportation commission in a manner balancing both urban and rural needs. CCI recognizes that Colorado’s existing transportation infrastructure is insufficient and encourages the state to create additional funding and make adequate provisions for an expanded and improved transportation network. CCI supports the re-creation of the state bridge fund.

CCI recognizes that tolling may be an appropriate method of meeting transportation revenue needs in some circumstances; however, CCI is concerned about the impacts of tolling and supports requiring consultation with affected local entities prior to authorizing tolls on highways, bridges, tunnels, or other transportation facilities. CCI opposes tolling of any existing facility when there is no reasonable alternative route available to the traveling public. CCI supports the faithful implementation of 2005’s Referendum C, which stipulates that a portion of the additional state revenue is to be used for “roads, bridges, and other strategic transportation projects.” CCI also supports the implementation of appropriate accountability mechanisms to assure that voter and statutory intent are honored.

LOCAL ROLE

CCI believes counties are a proper forum for transportation planning. All boards of county commissioners should have an enhanced role in prioritizing regional and statewide projects in their area. In addition, CCI supports opportunities for counties to design their own transportation finance mechanisms to respond to local and regional transportation needs.

REVENUE ENHANCEMENTS

CCI supports the use of moneys in the Highway Users Tax Fund (HUTF) solely for construction, maintenance and supervision of the highway system, which includes county roads and municipal streets, as provided in the state constitution, and the crediting of sales and use taxes attributable to motor vehicles and related items to the HUTF. CCI supports methodologies including but not limited to bonding, public private partnerships and the issuing of state tax credits as options for expediting transportation projects. CCI believes counties should have a role in the selection and approval of transportation projects, transportation priorities and proposed sources of repayment for

any transportation bonds that are issued. CCI supports using state general fund dollars for maintenance and construction of transportation projects. CCI supports extending transfers from the state general fund to transportation (enacted under SB09-228) and supports expanding the uses of these funds for maintenance, provided new funding for transportation construction projects is in place.

CCI supports efforts to generate increased transportation revenue to address state and local transportation infrastructure needs – including a referred ballot measure to increase transportation revenues – provided that any new revenues generated are shared among state, county and municipal governments in the same proportions as current HUTF payments.

CCI supports an equitable HUTF allocation formula and restrictions on the use of “off the top” diversions. CCI is committed to ensuring local shareback is provided for transportation projects from all transportation revenue sources and opposes funding mechanisms which eliminate or reduce local shareback for transportation projects.

CCI believes state funding for transportation should be limited to projects identified through the statewide transportation planning process. CCI supports giving the Regional Transportation District and Regional Transportation Authorities flexibility to develop revenue enhancements to meet the demands of their residents. CCI also supports maximum local flexibility in administering funds available for local transportation projects.

MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

CCI supports the development and financing of multi-modal transportation plans and ensuring the protection and improvement of air and water quality as vital components of such plans. CCI recognizes trails as recreational needs, commuter routes and a component of community transit needs. Public transit is essential for those communities that depend on a transient or non-local work force. CCI supports legislation and programs that address and financially support efforts to provide affordable, safe and efficient public transportation in tourist/resort communities.

CCI supports development of a high-speed rail network within Colorado and designation of a rocky mountain high speed rail corridor.

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT

CCI supports full recognition of the ability of counties to plan and coordinate aviation with other modes of transportation and to control land use for airport development and operation. CCI also supports increasing the federal contribution amount on airport development projects. CCI believes revenues from taxes on aviation fuel should be used exclusively for aviation-related expenditures and supports the concept of returning 65 percent of fuel tax proceeds to the airport that generated them. CCI believes the state should better coordinate state and federal funds provided to counties with airports. CCI supports allowing the Division of Aeronautics to bid and negotiate contracts for maintenance, construction and purchasing on behalf of local airports.

RAILROADS

CCI believes counties should be given the authority and ability to protect rail lines and rights-of-way important to county needs. CCI also believes counties should be given the authority and ability to install crossings that address county needs. In addition, CCI supports continuation of federal funds to be used for rail crossing protection improvements. CCI encourages the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Public Utilities Commission to work together to provide criteria for

identifying hazardous rail crossings. CCI supports rail maintenance, expansion or relocation with county input and involvement.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

CCI acknowledges that not all areas of the state benefit from the same level of telecommunications competition and broadband services. Further, county governments are major consumers of telecommunications and broadband services, and changes in rates and regulations should balance the impact on county taxpayers and the benefits of deregulation. Reform of telecommunications policy should reflect a partnership of federal, state and local government. CCI believes counties should be involved in the planning and development of telecommunications services, to enhance economic, health care, and educational opportunities, as well as county operations and service delivery. CCI opposes any state or federal regulations that restrict the ability of local governments to build, acquire or enter into partnerships for telecommunications infrastructure. CCI also believes public subsidy of separate telecommunications systems for government, education, libraries and health care should be discouraged when it will have a detrimental impact on the competitive marketplace. In many areas of the state, public-private partnerships are a critical component in the local provision of telecommunication and broadband infrastructure, and any reforms to telecommunications policy need to recognize and encourage these partnerships.

RIGHTS-OF-WAY

When permission for use has been granted by a county, CCI supports the ability to obtain full cost recovery for the use of public rights-of-way by the private sector. Counties should be authorized to assess a fee for the commercial use of a county road right-of-way. Further, counties should be able to ensure transportation is not disrupted and the useful life of the right-of-way is not diminished.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS

CCI supports the adoption of telecommunications policy that ensures equitable access to telecommunications services and broadband services in both urban and rural areas but does not unduly burden any single segment of the telecommunications market. CCI supports the development of federal resources and other mechanisms to assist providing telecommunications and broadband services, including data, video and voice transmission, to all areas. Universal service funds should be paid into by all communication service providers and should be used for the purpose of establishing and/or enhancing service in unserved and underserved areas of the state where costs are higher. CCI supports using these funds in a transparent manner.

PREEMPTION

CCI opposes federal or state preemption of local taxing authority as applied to sales, services, and other transactions that make use of telecommunications services, software or hardware. CCI also opposes federal or state preemption of local land use authority as applied to the siting of towers, antennae or other receivers or transmitters necessary for the provision of telecommunications services.