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NEW POLL SAYS 53 PERCENT OF TRIANGLE RESIDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO VOTE YES TO RAISE TAXES TO IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION

RALEIGH, NC – *NC Go!*, along with local transportation groups Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA) and Triangle Transit Authority (TTA) today said a new poll shows 53 percent of Triangle residents would be more likely to vote yes to raise taxes in their county to fund projects that improve transportation.

NC Go! Executive Committee member, Christie Barbee, discussed *NC Go!*'s interest in conducting this poll as a way to take the pulse of North Carolinians regarding transportation. A similar poll was commissioned by *NC Go!* in 2001. Barbee also noted that *NC Go!* partnered with RTA and TTA this to highlight the transportation needs specific to the Triangle.

“As an organization, *NC Go!* fights to increase funding to improve North Carolina’s overall transportation system,” said Barbee. “The results of this poll show just how troubled North Carolinians and in particular, citizens of the Triangle region, are about the current and future of transportation. We believe it is important that our work focus on the need to unclog roads, create better streams of revenue and support multimodal transportation.”

Barbee, along with Joe Milazzo, Executive Director of RTA, and Carter Worthy, TTA Chairman of the Board of Trustees, highlighted some of the key findings from the statewide and Triangle poll.

STATEWIDE POLL HIGHLIGHTS

- 54 percent of those polled said North Carolina needs to spend more to meet its transportation needs.
- 58 percent said the amount of traffic congestion in their area is worse than it was three to five years ago.
- 65 percent said in three to five years, traffic congestion in their area will be worse than it is now.
- 46 percent said the safety of traveling on roads in their areas has gotten worse over the last three to five years.
- 50 percent favor having some new roads be toll roads.
- 52 percent said the tax dollars generated by the state’s gas tax should only be spent on roads and other transportation projects.
- 80 percent said they would support North Carolina speeding up its environmental review process to match that of neighboring states so transportation projects such as roads or transit projects could be built faster and cheaper.

TRIANGLE POLL HIGHLIGHTS

- 54 percent said they thought the State of North Carolina needs to spend more to meet its transportation needs.
- 40 percent said they would prefer the State Legislature to increase taxes and dedicate all of the new money to transportation as a way to address traffic problems.

2nd page/New Transportation Poll

- 64 percent of Triangle residents polled said the amount of traffic congestion in their area is worse than it was three to five years ago.
- 70 percent said they think traffic congestion in their area three to five years from now will be worse than it is now.
- 72 percent said they would support allowing voters in their county to decide whether or not to raise taxes to fund transportation projects in their area.
- 53 percent said they would be more likely to vote YES to raise taxes in their county to fund projects that improve transportation in their area.
- 54 percent said they would favor having some new roads be toll roads so new roads can be built sooner and be paid for by the users of these roads.
- 60 percent said they would support having Value Express Lanes as an option for I-40 and other interstates in the Triangle.
- 75 percent said they would support expanding the public transportation system in the Triangle.
- 72 percent said they would support the building of a regional rail system.

“The Alliance has been leading the charge for *ValueExpress* lanes on I-40 and other freeways for almost six years, and we are happy to see that the public overwhelmingly supports this value-added mobility option as well,” said Joe Milazzo, Executive Director, RTA. “*ValueExpress* lanes would provide a new mobility choice with guaranteed travel times, and the toll revenues would allow the lanes to be built much sooner - a true win-win for motorists and express bus riders. These are one of a host of travel and funding options the Alliance is supporting to improve congestion in the Triangle.”

NC Go! was launched in 2001 with fewer than 10 members. Today, the coalition has more than 100 members representing more than 22,000 businesses and organizations and 1 million individuals across the state. It is the only diverse statewide organization fighting to relieve traffic congestion and increasing transportation funding. Since its inception, the organization has worked to protect dedicated Trust Fund money, expand Highway Trust Fund flexibility, maintain efficient cash management practices, terminate annual transfers from the Highway Trust Fund to the General Fund and increase multi-modal transportation funding.

In 2003, *NC Go!* called for a TIP Project Delivery Study, citing “effective business practices” as a means to enable timely delivery of transportation projects. Two weeks ago, *NC Go!* released its targeted recommendations to address project delivery and urged the state to adopt them as priorities.

The Regional Transportation Alliance is the Triangle's recognized business leadership organization for transportation. The Alliance identifies, facilitates, and promotes mobility solutions for the Triangle region -- in cooperation with our public and private partners -- to ensure economic vitality and sustain a world-class quality of life. The Alliance is a coalition of more than 80 businesses and 17 chambers of commerce in the greater Triangle area. For more information on the Regional Transportation Alliance, visit www.letsgetmoving.org or call 919-664-7062.

TTA is a regional public transportation provider, offering a wide variety of transit and vanpool services to North Carolina's greater Triangle Region and outlying counties. The Triangle Transit Authority also provides commuter resources and hosts GoTriangle.org, the new on-line resource for the public transportation information in the Triangle. TTA plans to implement a 28-mile rail transit system with 12 stations connecting Durham, RTP, Cary and Raleigh, with shuttles linking RDU International Airport and RTP. The rail transit system is expected to be operational in 2008. For more information, visit www.rideTTA.org or call (919) 549-9999.