





Editor's Note: As we have done for past elections, this week we are highlighting some of the ballot initiatives relating to transportation; while it was an "off year" election, there were still quite a few. The results are mixed but there doesn't seem to be a shortage of initiatives. I predict 2008 will be a big year for ballot measures as states and communities attempt to grapple with the increasingly difficult issue of transportation funding. TW

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Md. Gets Go-Ahead for Intercounty Connector

Baltimore Sun – November 8, 2007

Maryland - Construction on the \$2.4 billion Intercounty Connector in Maryland may begin as early as next week, after a federal judge dismissed environmentalists' challenges to the long-debated project. Judge Alexander Williams Jr. of the U.S. District Court in Greenbelt rejected the plaintiffs' request for an injunction, stating that state and federal officials had taken care of the environmental issues which impaired previous versions of the corridor.

The six-lane 18-mile tollway connecting I-95 with I-270 in Montgomery County has been a goal of state business leaders for more than 50 years. Judge Williams's decision cleared one of the final obstacles. In his 106-page opinion, Williams stated, "What seems abundantly clear to this court is that Defendants went back to the drawing board, recommenced their study for the proposed project, and thoroughly considered, examined, and most importantly, corrected the deficiencies from previous failed attempts."

The project has been twice blocked by the Environmental Protection Agency, which said it would be too destructive to the waterways and parks in its path. In Thursday's ruling, Judge Williams said the plaintiffs' did not successfully demonstrate that federal and state officials' actions had been "arbitrary or capricious in their decision to approve funding and construction of the ICC. Although defendants' actions, in some instances, may not have been a paragon of perfection, the court, nonetheless, cannot find anything that rises to the level of a meaningful violation."

2007 Ballot

California, San Francisco

Initiative: Proposition A aims to improve the Municipal Transit Agency by pumping an additional \$26 million to the system and expanding the decision-making authority of the MTA, rather than the Board of Supervisors. Competing with Proposition H, to create more parking spaces and contradicts the city's Transit First policy.

Amount: \$26 million, plus additional funding from the city's parking fees and fines and from parking lot taxes

Status: **APPROVED**

Colorado, Aspen

Initiative: Ballot measure would authorize two lanes of traffic plus bus lanes between the Maroon Creek roundabout and Buttermilk.

Status: **APPROVED 63% to 37%**

Colorado, Greeley

Initiative: Ballot Question 2B requests a .25% sales tax increase to fund improvements to the city bus system, because the city fears it will lose federal funding for bus operating costs after the 2010 census.

Status: **Defeated 41% to 59%**

Connecticut, Milford, Stratford

Initiative: ConnDOT proposed to eliminate the Stratford and Milford stops on the eastbound 4:42 p.m. Metro-North Commuter rail was rejected after rider protests.

Status: **Defeated**

Florida, Winter Park City (March 13 Ballot)

Initiative: Winter Park City commissioners approved two commuter rail questions for the March 13 ballot: Voters will be asked whether they want a commuter-rail stop built on city-owned property, and whether it should be built with city funds.

Status: **Rail Station on City Lane: Approved 52% to 48%**

City Money for Rail Station: Approved 53% to 47%

Michigan, Kalamazoo

Initiative: Renew Kalamazoo Metro Transit's millage for one more year in 2008, after which it will merge with the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority for one countywide transportation service.

Status: **Approved**

Michigan, Kent County (May 8, 2007 ballot)

Initiative: The total ballot request is for 1.12 mills. This includes a renewal of the current millage (0.95 mills) and a millage enhancement (0.17 mills) that is needed to improve/expand services and meet demands.

Amount: 1.12 mills costs the owner of a \$100,000 home \$56 per year or \$4.66 per month.

Status: **Approved**

Michigan, Lansing

Initiative: CATA asked property owners in the Lansing area to pay staggered increases each year, to equal 1 mill by 2010, so the agency could maintain existing service levels without boosting rider fees.

Amount: \$1 Million

Status: **Defeated**

Michigan, Saginaw

Initiative: 3-year tax renewal for Saginaw Transit Authority Services

Amount: \$3 Million
Status: **Approved**

North Carolina, Charlotte

Initiative: Mecklenburg County voters had the opportunity to save the future of mass transit by opposing the repeal of the existing half-cent sales tax for the region's public transit system.
Status: **Approved 70% to 30%**

Ohio, Lorraine

Initiative: 0.25% sales tax increase for transit
Status: **Defeated**

Ohio, Toledo

Initiative: Voters were asked for their continued approval of a 1.5-mill operating tax for the TARTA bus system. The existing 1.5-mill levy was approved in 1997
Status: **Approved**

Utah, Box Elder, Weber, and Davis Counties

Initiative: Citizens in 3 Northern Utah counties were asked to vote on a sales tax increase to go to about 35 various road and transit projects in the Davis and Weber counties, and would fund the expansion of commuter rail in Box Elder.
Amount: During its first year, the tax would raise \$12 million in Davis County, \$8.7 million in Weber County, and \$800,000 in Box Elder.
Status: **Davis: Defeated**
Weber: Approved
Box Elder: Approved

Virginia, Fairfax County

Initiative: Voters were asked to approve the county's borrowing of up to \$110 million to fund transportation projects. With majority voter approval, the county would be allowed to issue bonds to fund transportation projects, including roadway, bicycle, transit and pedestrian improvements.
Amount: Up to \$110 million
Status: **Approved**

Washington, Kitsap County

Initiative: Voters were asked to approve a three-tenths of 1% sales tax increase to pay for passenger-only ferries between Seattle and as many as four Kitsap locations.
Status: **Defeated**

Washington, King, Snohomish and Pierce Counties

Initiative: Proposition 1, known as "Roads & Transit," would increase sales and car-tab taxes to build 186 miles of road lanes, 50 miles of new tracks to Lynnwood, Tacoma and Overlake by 2027, and help fund a new Highway 520 floating bridge.
Amount: \$47.2 billion over the next 50 years
Status: **Defeated**

The links below are excellent resources for additional information on these initiatives:

The Center for Transportation Excellence <http://www.cfte.org>

The Light Rail Now Project <http://www.lightrailnow.org/>

We have checked numerous sources to verify information about the preceding ballot measures. If you have any changes or updated information, please send it to twreport@tomwarnereport.com.

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