



Business Leadership

The voice of the regional business community on transportation

March 20, 2018

Jim Trogdon  
Secretary  
NC Department of Transportation

Beau Memory  
Executive Director  
NC Turnpike Authority

Chris Lukasina  
Executive Director  
Capital Area MPO

Dear Jim, Beau, and Chris,

As you know, the regional business community's top transportation priority is accelerating the extension of the 540 / Triangle Expressway from Holly Springs to I-40 in southeastern Wake County.

The project will provide free-flow mobility across southern Wake County, and create a resilient, multimodal transportation network for commuting, freight, transit, commerce and more:

**Accelerating 540 provides a balanced approach for community development**

- The proposed 540 corridor has maintained broad community support since it was identified as a future freeway connection more than two decades ago.
- The preferred 540 route appropriately mitigates impacts to the human and natural environment, reduces costs, and aligns with adopted local land use plans.
- The creation of the new 540 freeway will create an effective local and regional pathway that will reduce the need to expand local roadways.

**Accelerating 540 enhances regional connectivity, mobility, and resiliency**

- The extension of 540 will complete a primary backbone of our regional freeway system that includes interconnectivity with five existing freeways in Wake and Johnston counties.
- The new roadway will provide a 70 mph, stoplight-free, rapid mobility option during both peak commuting times and throughout the day to relieve congestion.
- The turnpike will maintain a reliable, free-flow travel choice that saves time for users and contributes to system resiliency for the entire regional highway network

**Accelerating 540 creates a faster connection – for everyone**

- Building 540 as a turnpike provides a dedicated, user fee-based funding source that accelerates construction by a decade or more.
- 540 will create time savings for all travelers across the network, even those who do not directly utilize the freeway, as turnpike users will free-up space on existing roadways.
- The new freeway will enhance public transit by providing a new facility option for buses that will improve travel time and reliability—like the Triangle Expressway does today.

We are pleased to support your collective efforts to accelerate this vital project to construction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Milazzo II".

Joe Milazzo II, PE  
RTA Executive Director

Cc    Bruce Sargent, IBM, RTA chair  
      Pete Marino, RTA freeways chair  
      Maeve Gardner, RTA policy chair

SELC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working to protect the natural resources of the Southeast.

- I. Take the opportunity to speak about the extension of the 540 outerloop, or Complete 540. Offer these comments on behalf of not only SELC, but our clients Clean Air Carolina and Sound Rivers.
  - a. *We are asking all involved with the project—including CAMPO—to take a timeout and reassess the need and practicality of this \$2.3 billion project.* The project is outdated, not in line with changing technology and transportation trends, and fails to account for the Wake County Transit Plan.
- II. The project has been on the books since 1968—but the world and greater Raleigh area have changed drastically in the past 50 years.
  - a. Loop roads are no longer the preferred solution by urban planners seeking to grow vibrant sustainable non-car centric communities.
  - b. People no longer prefer suburban living and long commutes; instead, people—and businesses like Amazon—are looking for dense, urban, walkable and bikeable communities. The 540 loop would entrench old-fashioned trends rather than fostering desirable dense development.
- III. Beyond being outdated by today's standards, the 540 project also ignores the very near future of transportation.
  - a. State and federal agencies have failed entirely to consider the advent of autonomous vehicles, ride hailing and ride sharing services, and even delivery drones, all of which are expected to be common place within the project's study horizon.
  - b. Fewer people are projected to own their own cars, and traffic is anticipated to move more efficiently when human error is eliminated, which questions the alleged "need" for 540.
- IV. The state and federal agencies also failed to consider Wake County's recently-adopted Transit Plan and the corresponding projected increases in mass transit county-wide.
  - a. As you know, the plan will increase frequency of existing routes while also adding new routes. The plan also calls for a commuter rail line from Garner to Durham and many bus rapid transit projects.
  - b. These substantial increases in mass transit are expected to in turn spur greater ridership throughout the County and alter commuting behavior, thus reducing traffic and calling into question the supposed need for the 540 project.

The plans for complete 540 are outdated and fail to consider the impending transportation revolution posed by autonomous vehicles and other technological changes. As we detailed further in written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement, the project was inadequately studied and would be enormously destructive and expensive.

Now is the time to hit the pause button on the 540 project, not to fast forward an unnecessary and costly project.

# Wake County Mayors Association

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Chris Lukasina  
CAMPO Executive Director  
421 Fayetteville Street, Suite 203  
Raleigh, NC 27601



Mr. Lukasina:



As it relates to the issue of "Complete 540", the Mayors of Wake County all support the implementation and completion of this most important road project as soon as possible.



Not only is it an economic engine for southern Wake municipalities such as Fuquay-Varina, Garner, Holly Springs, Apex, and Cary – all of which have appropriately planned for the construction of 540 for decades – but also for many towns nearby including Knightdale, Wendell, Zebulon, and Clayton. We also feel it will have an impact on reducing traffic on Highway 1, I-40, 55 bypass, Highway 401, Highway 42, Ten Ten Road, and other internal roads in our area.



Existing I-540 in northern and western Wake has become an essential connector for Knightdale, Rolesville, Wake Forest, Raleigh, Morrisville, Cary, and Apex. Completing 540 will help our southern and eastern Wake communities – as well as nearby Johnston County – continue to prosper by providing a direct freeway connection to I-40 as well as to the Clayton and Knightdale bypasses.



Sincerely,



James A. Roberson, President  
Mayor of Knightdale

