

# INSTITUTE FOR RATIONAL URBAN MOBILITY, INC.

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Statement at June 9, 2016 Spring Meeting of the Metropolitan Area Planning Forum

The Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc. (IRUM) is a NYC-based non-profit concerned with reducing motor vehicular congestion and improving the livability of dense urban places.

IRUM commends efforts by the MAP Forum planning agencies to forge practical interagency agreements that will create, in effect, a unified metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the 22 million person NY-NJ-CT region. IRUM also applauds the USDOT for calling attention to the statutory requirement for a functioning metropolitan-wide MPO to carry out specific elements to secure Federal transport funding for this region. These would include development of a long range plan, a short range capital investment program and a transportation systems management plan that will reduce congestion and pollution. For these MPO tasks to be undertaken at the regional level, it is critical that adequate funding be made available. Also, the appropriate role for transportation authorities, like the MTA, NJ Transit and the PANYNJ must be spelled out in these agreements. For these authorities to be governed properly, adequate representation by state legislatures and local governments must be included. The MAP Forum should also include a formal citizen involvement process – beginning with the establishment of a Regional Citizens Advisory Committee.

IRUM urges that the unified MAP Forum that emerges from these agreements advance an ambitious agenda that would include:

1. The development and analysis of near term operational strategies for managing demand and dealing with roadway congestion, which are currently at legendary levels. This would include a coherent region-wide plan for road pricing that would reduce excess demand and direct some of these revenues to greatly increase the frequency and reduce the price of regional transit service.
2. Reducing excess demand for auto travel also results in improved regional freight movement that occurs by truck in the near term, before major new rail freight investments can be placed in service.
3. Remaking the region's three commuter rail lines into a coordinated *regional rail system* with frequent service, integrated fares and through-running at Penn Station should be a top near-term priority. This could then guide further investment in the longer term, including a new Hudson River passenger rail tunnel that would link Hoboken-Penn Station-Grand Central. This investment plan should also include ambitious regional rail freight elements.
4. Sustainable transit-oriented communities would benefit greatly from enhanced, affordable regional rail service - particularly for reverse-peak, off-peak and weekend service.
5. The MAP Forum should coordinate planning for an updated Regional Aviation System Plan.

The NY-NJ-CT region must plan more comprehensively for transportation and economic development if it is to meet the challenge of its growing competitors abroad.

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