



## CITY OF CONCORD 2018 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

**1. “Government closest to the people governs best”** – This adage is often attributed to a founding father, either as a direct quote or as symbolic of a philosophy upon which our nation was founded. The City of Concord (Concord) opposes laws that centralize authority in Raleigh and Washington to undermine the ability of local elected officials, those closest and most accessible to the people, to govern. We urge the General Assembly to use this adage as a yard stick when considering legislation that impacts municipalities and replace local governance with dictates from Raleigh.

**2. Funding and Control of Local Infrastructure** – Concord applauds the General Assembly’s enactment of HB 436 Local Government/Regulatory Fees in 2017 to clarify authority for these development related capacity fees, and to limit liability for municipalities charging existing fees. Concord will continue to support efforts in the Courts to reduce or eliminate liability for municipalities that have charged these fees in the past.

Concord continues to oppose any effort leading to the forced taking of local government infrastructure as it sets a dangerous precedent in the State of North Carolina, a precedent that will have a chilling effect on any local government investing in needed infrastructure in the future. As such Concord is opposed to legislation that forces the transfer of any municipal water system or other infrastructure to another entity. Where issues arise, a local solution arrived at by an open, collaborative process is preferable to a legislative directed disposition of local government assets.

**3. Local Government Revenues and Tax Reform**– If there are continued efforts regarding tax reform, Concord requests the General Assembly make sure any changes impacting local government are at least revenue neutral. There are too many infrastructure and customer service needs out there that are essential for the growth of the economy and jobs to further reduce revenues available to municipal governments.

**Concord supports efforts to provide municipalities with additional locally-controlled revenue options.** Changes in revenue options, such as the elimination of business license fees, have narrowed the ability of municipalities to respond to local needs beyond increasing property taxes. Other actions, such as providing homebuilders with tax exemptions on property, have eroded the property tax base. More local revenue options

are needed to reflect the differences within municipalities across the State to order to provide the flexibility to meet those needs and to replace lost revenues.

**Concord continues to oppose efforts to divert local and State revenues from urban counties and supports open dialogue to develop creative ways to help those areas in North Carolina with declining tax bases.** Concord urges the General Assembly to develop strategies to promote economic development activity throughout North Carolina rather than trying to divide the State. The idea that you assist areas that may be struggling economically by sending even more of the local revenues generated elsewhere disregards the formulas that already redistribute various types of revenues in North Carolina. Penalizing those areas that have growing economies to the point it undermines their ability to pay for basic services and infrastructure to support that growth and address issues of urban poverty within their own borders. It will also eventually compromise other State revenues benefiting from that growth, ultimately leading to reductions in State revenue sources. At the same time, Concord pledges to work with other local governments and State representatives to develop strategies to target improvements in those areas that are not growing and have specific needs.

Finally, Concord **opposes any legislation imposing mandated requirements** on municipalities unless full funding or adequate new revenue sources are provided for implementation.

**4. Economic Development** – Concord urges continued support and expansion of State economic development funding to spur job creation and revenue in low growth areas as well as the parts of the state where growth is already helping to produce jobs and revenues to support State services used by all.

**5. Planning and Providing Services for Urban Growth** – Cities and towns have historically been the economic engines of the state and should be permitted to grow in an orderly and reasonable fashion that does not diminish the quality of life of current and future residents. All North Carolina citizens have gained greatly from strong and healthy urban areas

Concord opposes state-wide or local bills that will further undermine local land use authority, such as tools within zoning ordinances, to impact development that is or will become urban in nature.

The state legislature enacted annexation reform in 2011 that declared “that sound urban development is essential to the continued economic development in North Carolina.” We agree.

**6. Surface Transportation** - The current methods of paying for transportation improvements in North Carolina are inadequate to meet future needs. However, it is important that proposed changes in legislation be monitored, local government input be solicited and considered and that parties work to improve the relationship between the N.C. Department of Transportation and local government.

For example, in the past state officials have discussed shifting more of that responsibility to funding State roads within cities to the respective municipalities. The fear is this responsibility would be shifted without adequate funding, as the State is already underfunding the maintenance of roads within Cabarrus County and the rest of North Carolina. Concord is opposed to this as this would put an undue burden by forcing localities to increase local taxes to take over this responsibility.

Finally, the gas tax is the North Carolina Department of Transportation's primary source of revenue for building and maintaining our transportation infrastructure across North Carolina and is the source for Powell Bill funding for municipalities. There are millions of dollars of unmet new construction needs in the State, and we are even more concerned about the State having the funds to take care of our investment in existing infrastructure through ongoing maintenance of our roads. Concord supports efforts to make sure North Carolina has revenue to support the schedule for the Concord related improvements outlined in the STIP and to add critical projects as proposed.

**7. Air Transportation** – For the first time in years, North Carolina provided a source of significant State funding in 2017 for support of capital projects at airports. Concord encourages the continuation of and growth in funding as airports are vitally important to economic development efforts in our State.

**8. Mental Health Needs and Opioid Abuse** – Concord supports and advocates for Federal, State and local efforts to bolster the State’s mental health treatment resources, including resources and solutions to lessen the strain on law enforcement officers when providing custody of individuals in crisis.

Concord supports and advocates for efforts at the Federal, State and local levels to develop and provide resources to break the cycle of opioid and heroin abuse that is devastating communities throughout the United States.

**9. Collective Bargaining** – Concord opposes any effort to change existing laws impacting public employee collective bargaining in North Carolina.

**10. Provide for annexation of “donut holes”** - In the 2012 annexation reform bill, some legislative leaders intended to allow cities to retain the authority to annex areas completely surrounded by municipal jurisdiction without utilizing the referendum process otherwise required for city-initiated annexations. However, this authority was not preserved in the final version of the bill. Annexation of these areas allows for a continuity of municipal services and eliminates the dangerous confusion between municipalities and the county over responsibility for providing essential services.

**11. 2018 NCLM and Metro Mayors Legislative Agendas** – In addition the Concord City Council supports those items listed on the agendas of the North Carolina League of Municipalities and the Metro Mayors not covered in the items above.