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[Home](#) > 73 Percent of Public Transportation Ballot Measures Pass

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At a rate of 73 percent, voters across the country in 14 states approved 22 measures out of 30 state and local public transportation-related ballot initiatives, authorizing nearly \$500 million over the next five years.

“People understand the importance of having a good public transportation system in their communities,” said American Public Transportation Association President William Millar. “That’s why, despite the impact of the economic downturn, Americans overwhelmingly voted to improve or initiate public transportation, even though it means additional local or state taxes.”

However, not all public transportation ballot initiatives involved raising new funds. Prop 22, a statewide California constitutional amendment that passed by 64 percent, prohibits the state from delaying distribution of local tax revenues for transportation and other services. This measure protects more than \$1.8 billion in state and local public transit funding.

Commenting on Prop 22, Millar said, “At a time when many public transportation systems are facing financial challenges, making sure that funds for public transportation are protected and not used for other purposes is very important.”

Another noteworthy referendum was passed yesterday by the voters of Clayton County, GA. Clayton County residents lost all public transportation services earlier this year when the county commission voted to shutter the public transit system. Showing strong support for the value of public transportation, Clayton County voters passed an advisory measure by 70 percent to join with the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) and to levy a one-cent sales tax to pay for the new service.

Voters in Rhode Island passed a statewide transportation measure by an overwhelming margin of 73 percent. This ballot initiative includes \$4.7 million in bonds to purchase and rehabilitate buses for the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority.

Residents in Hawaii’s city of Oahu voted by 63 percent to create an independent public transportation authority and to move forward with the proposed rail project on the island.

“Throughout the United States, from coast to coast and in the state of Hawaii, voters showed yesterday that they have their priorities straight when it comes to public transportation,” said Millar.

According to the Center for Transportation Excellence (CFTE), 21 measures for local public transportation systems were approved earlier this year. Adding yesterday’s election totals to this

earlier amount means that this year, 43 out of 56 public transportation ballot initiatives were approved at a rate of 77 percent for a total of more than \$1 billion.

For a complete list of 2010 transportation state and local ballot initiatives, go to the CFTE website at www.cfte.org

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The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is a nonprofit international association of more than 1,500 public and private member organizations, engaged in the areas of bus, paratransit, light rail, commuter rail, subways, waterborne passenger services, and high-speed rail. This includes: transit systems; planning, design, construction, and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions; transit associations and state departments of transportation. More than 90 percent of the people using public transportation in the United States and Canada are served by APTA member systems.

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