



## 2008 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

GNRC is the regional planning and economic development organization of the Region's 52 cities and 13 counties, and operates under the 1965 Tennessee Development District Act and 1988 Regional Authority State statutes. Mayors, county executives, minority representatives, and two members of the General Assembly make up the membership of the GNRC policy board which deals with many common regional planning, growth, economic development needs, programs and services in the multi-county region.

This is the 19<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that GNRC will adopt an Annual Legislative Agenda.

THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT REGIONAL ISSUES AND NEEDS HAVE BEEN ADOPTED 12/12/2007 BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AS THE GNRC LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE COMING YEAR:

- **EXTEND GOVERNMENTAL TORT LIABILITY COVERAGE TO RTA INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR AND PRECLUDES NON-GOVERNMENTAL RAIL LINE OWNERS from denying access to the RTA based on criteria attributable to tort liability.** Present law doesn't allow the RTA to extend its tort limits immunity to the independent contractor. This contractor is the operator of the commuter train and performs the necessary maintenance. Part of the contractual relationship between the RTA and the operator calls for the RTA to provide liability insurance. Such insurance is specialized and the cost has increased substantially. In order to contain operational cost and yet provide adequate protection for incidents that may occur, a reasonable tort limit must be found. GNRC supports allowing the independent contractor coverage under the Governmental Tort Liability Act and to increase the statutory tort limits to such an operation.
- **OPPOSE LEGISLATION ALLOWING STATEWIDE CABLE TV FRANCHISES** which would lessen local governments franchise fee (percentage of gross revenue) and local authority and which would not provide total jurisdictional broadband coverage.
- **SUPPORT INCREASED PROGRAM FUNDING IN THE TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON AGING AND DISABILITY STATE BUDGET.** These funds provide viable and necessary public guardianship services, home delivered meals, homemaker services, home-based services, and senior center activities.
- **SUPPORT FULL STATE FUNDING FOR GNRC FROM THE LEGISLATURE OF \$150,000 ANNUALLY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE FUNDING FORMULA SET FORTH IN THE TENNESSEE DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT ACT OF 1965, AS AMENDED.** These funds are allocated in the state budget process through the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development as the pass-thru funding agency for the State's nine Development Districts.
- **SUPPORT ADDITIONAL FUNDING AND ESTABLISHMENT OF DEDICATED SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR TRANSIT,** to further improve public transportation statewide, as encouraged and supported by local, regional and state public transportation organizations and agencies in Tennessee.

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- **SUPPORT INCREASED FUNDING FOR LOCAL AND STATE INFRASTRUCTURE.** Support and encourage the Governor and the General Assembly to increase funding for local road, bridge, water, wastewater, solid waste and other local public infrastructure projects and the continued building, rebuilding, and maintenance of the state's highway systems for the improved movement of people and goods in and through the state and adequate funding for other state operated and maintained facilities.
- **ENCOURAGE THE GOVERNOR TO DESIGNATE** an agency or commission to study water resources in Tennessee for the purpose of providing sustained potable water and for the General Assembly to fund such a study and its implementation.
- **SUPPORT THE CONTINUED FUNDING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SR-840 SOUTH and ENCOURAGE TDOT TO EXPEDITE THE FUNDING AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROJECTS TO BE BUILT TO LESSEN THE IMPACTS CREATED BY THE HOLD STATUS OF SR 840 NORTH.**
- **SUPPORT DEDICATED FUNDING FOR COMMUTER RAIL.** GNRC encourages legislation establishing a dedicated source of funding for both construction and operation of the commuter rail system.
- **SUPPORT THE STRENGTHENING OF THE STATEWIDE LOCAL PLANNING OFFICE, AND INCREASE PROFESSIONAL PLANNING STAFF POSITIONS,** in order to provide adequate level of local planning assistance services to area cities and counties, and provide competitive pay scales for attraction and retention of professional staff.
- **SUPPORT THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE PLANNING OFFICE** which would address statewide issues and policies and would assist in the coordination of state departments' actions and programs among the different departments and with local governments.
- **SUPPORT INCREASED FUNDING FOR STATE PRISONERS HELD IN LOCAL JAILS.** County sheriffs should strive for cost containment and effective utilization of monies received from local county commission for the housing of prisoners. At the same time, county jails house state prisoners at a time when jail space is limited, personnel cost increasing, gas prices at an all time high, and sharply increasing medical costs for prisoners. We urge the governor and general assembly to increase the state payment for state prisoners housed in county facilities, count as state prisoner people detained awaiting parole violation hearings, and assist in cost of medical treatment for these prisoners.
- **SUPPORT CHANGES TO PUBLIC CHAPTER 1101 GROWTH PLANNING LEGISLATION** that remove obsolete sections and clarify certain processes and requirements.
- **SUPPORT ADDITIONAL PLANNING ENABLING LEGISLATION.** Support adoption of enabling legislation for planning program tools that assist cities and counties in implementing their growth plans, comprehensive and general plans, subdivision regulation and zoning.

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- **OPPOSE CHANGES TO THE EXISTING LAW ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES.** Collective bargaining has its place in society and present state law allows cities and counties to bargain with local employee unions. The state and local governments of Tennessee provide necessary and vital public services that should be continuing, reliable and uninterrupted. These services should not be tied to any type of mandatory or enforceable memorandums of understandings subjecting them to possible interruption. The provision and financing of public services should be within the realm of elective legislative bodies answerable to the people of this state, city or county. Among these citizens are the public employees which provide the services. It is the duty of elected officials to be fair and equitable with public employees in their work place, in their compensation, in their safety and health, and in their profession as public servants.
- **INCREASE SINGLE ARTICLE CAP ON LOAL OPTION SALES TAX.** Local governments have limited sources of revenue. People purchasing these items should pay their share of taxes based upon the full locally adopted sales tax and not be allowed to reduce their tax burden due to the large priced item purchased.
- **SUPPORT A REVIEW OF THE “GRANDFATHER CLAUSE”** under Title 13 and revisions to this law to reduce the 30 month cessation of operation clause.
- **ENCOURAGE THE CONTINUED SUPPORT** of the Housing Trust Fund which is the source of the Emergency Home Repair program and other additional, flexible programs that provide housing for the people that need it the most. This money is over and above the HUD money that we use for HOME.
- **LEGISLATION OF REGIONAL CONCERN AS IDENTIFIED** by GNRC member city and county governments as it is filed for consideration by the second session of the 105<sup>th</sup> Tennessee General Assembly.