

Metro Mayors, Legislators Work Together During Short Session

Despite a number of issues and challenges before them, legislators came to Raleigh for the 2016 short session and completed their work on the budget on time.



Chapel Hill Mayor Pam Hemminger and Carrboro Mayor Lydia Lavelle meet with Sen. Tamara Barringer (Wake) during the short session.

This session, the Metro Mayors focused on a few key issues that directly impact our cities, our economy and transportation. Member mayors and city managers traveled to Raleigh to meet with legislators and were pleased they remained open and ready to listen to our concerns.

An issue of particular interest continues to be the proposal for sales tax redistribution, which would change the formula for how local sales tax dollars are distributed. This legislation was introduced but did not advance, indicating that legislators heard our concerns about the negative impact a loss of revenue would have on metro regions. We also played a role in minimizing other legislation that would negatively impact city revenues.

The Metro Mayors continued to advocate for data driven transportation investments that support accessibility, congestion and economic development. We worked to keep the Powell Bill appropriation at its adopted level, which will help maintain our local streets. In addition, we advocated for a full repeal of the light rail cap. The cap was repealed, but, unfortunately, language in the budget adds new requirements for passenger rail projects, which will continue to hinder the development of rail transportation options that North Carolina needs to attract and maintain jobs.

Our mayors and staff were, once again, visible and active during the short session, meeting with legislators regularly and sharing information. The Metro Mayors will now turn our focus to preparing for the long session and identifying ways we can best help our state.

An Interconnected State Economy

We don't have to look very far to understand that our world is getting smaller and more connected every day. World events unfold before our very eyes on Twitter and television. Tragedy in far-flung corners of the world feels closer than ever. And one must only think back a few months to Brexit to be reminded of the interconnected nature of our global financial markets. Information, goods and money move at the speed of light.

We are more connected than ever – and the same is true right here in North Carolina.

In our state, the economic growth and success of all our cities and counties are inextricably linked. An idea born in a classroom in Chapel Hill may find funding in Charlotte, be managed by a company in the Research Triangle Park, and be manufactured in Rocky Mount.

Jobs in our metro areas bring new families not only to the urban areas, but also to the suburbs and rural parts of our State as many choose to commute for work. Those who choose to commute from the suburbs and rural parts of our State will eat and shop near home. They will enjoy taking advantage of the main street revitalizations happening in large and small towns across our State. They will vacation on the coast and in the mountains, adding to our State's tourism economies. Our economy – both its opportunities and challenges – is not bound by county, city, state or national borders. Instead it is woven together through our urban centers, our suburbs, our farms, our mountains, and our coast. And as our economy becomes more globalized, our state will only become more interconnected.

That is why our Coalition – made up of 32 of the mayors of the state's larger cities – has advocated for economic development policies that strengthen opportunities throughout our state. We need policies that foster innovation, focus on our strengths and support smart investments. We need strategies that address the different challenges our urban, suburban, tourism and rural communities face. We need strategies that focus on building up all parts of our economy for the whole state.



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New Member Profile

The Town of Garner is the newest member of the N.C. Metropolitan Mayors Coalition. Garner has become a major growth area in the Research Triangle region because of its proximity to downtown Raleigh, Raleigh-Durham International Airport and Research Triangle Park. Garner is a suburban community known for its hometown character, historic downtown area, top-rated schools and quiet neighborhoods.

The town was named an All-America City in 2013 as a result of innovative, citizen-led projects that improve quality of life and expand educational and cultural opportunities for citizens of all ages.

Mayor Ronnie Williams said that being a part of the Metro Mayors is in line with the values of Garner. “In my 30 years of service to the citizens of Garner, I have sought to join an organization only when I thought it could somehow advance the interests of this town that I love so much,” he said. “I have admired the work and advocacy of the coalition for a long time, and I feel both the town and I can benefit from my membership in it. I am honored to belong to such a group of devoted and focused leaders who are working to make our state a better place.”

Town Manager Rodney Dickerson agreed and recognized the power of the coalition’s members working together to educate legislators. “Being a member of the Metro Mayor’s Coalition will benefit Garner through expanded discussion and exposure to our

legislative delegation,” he said. “We realize that urbanized areas have some of the same concerns regardless of size and that we can promote change by speaking with a unified voice. Interacting with my peers will provide me with insight on important issues, and I’ll be able to pass that information on to our elected officials and the community.”

New Mayor Profile



Mayor Ronnie Williams
Garner

Mayor Ronnie Williams was first elected mayor in 2005. Before that, he served on the Board of Aldermen (now the Town Council) for 20 years. Mayor Williams currently serves on the Executive Board of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO).

He has been married to his wife Betsy since 1972. They have two grown sons. Mayor Williams had a 36-year career in the U.S. Postal Service. He is a veteran of the Vietnam War.

North Carolina – Increasingly Urban, Persistently Rural

1920 marked the first year that more U.S. residents lived in urban areas than rural areas. In North Carolina, this transition did not occur until 1990, seventy years after the nation as a whole became majority urban. At this time, the nation was heavily urban (78%) and only five other states—South Dakota, Mississippi, Maine, West Virginia, and Vermont—had smaller shares of their population living in urban areas.

Today, more than two-thirds of North Carolina’s residents live in a Census-designated urban area. These urbanization trends will continue for the foreseeable future, for two reasons. First, the decline in agricultural and manufacturing employment has shifted jobs to larger metropolitan centers, which increasingly concentrates population growth in the state’s urban areas. Mecklenburg and Wake—two of the state’s most urbanized counties—have accounted for nearly half of the state’s population growth since 2010. At the same time, many predominantly rural counties have experienced population losses. Second, as urban areas expand, previously rural areas are often reclassified as urban.

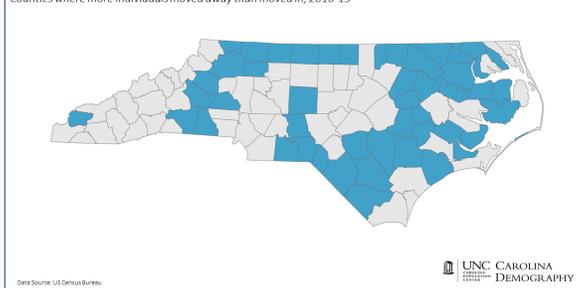
The growth of the state’s large urban areas is often the flipside of population decline in more rural counties. Between 2010 and 2015, nearly half of North Carolina counties experienced net out-migration, meaning more individuals moved away than moved in. Most of these counties are on the periphery of large metropolitan areas, are located in smaller metropolitan or micropolitan regions, or are rural counties. Compared to individuals who move from the state’s core urban counties, movers from the counties experiencing net out-migration are much more likely to stay in North Carolina.

Although North Carolina’s population is increasingly concentrated in urban areas, the state remains significantly more rural than peer states. In 2010, North Carolina had the second largest rural population (3.2 million) after Texas (3.8 million). And, among the ten most populous states in 2010, North Carolina had the largest share of its population residing in rural areas: 33%. Michigan and Georgia had the next highest population share rural—25%—while fewer than one in

ten residents in California (5%) and Florida (9%) lived in rural areas.

The nature of North Carolina’s urban spaces also varies significantly from what one may think of when hearing the term “urban.” North Carolina has some of the least dense urban areas of any state in the nation—a trait shared by other Southern states, such as Mississippi, South Carolina, and Alabama. And fewer North Carolinians live in mid-size or larger cities compared to the national average; only 45% of North Carolinians lived in cities with 10,000 or more residents in 2010, compared to 54% of individuals nationwide.

47 NC counties had net out migration between 2010-2015
Counties where more individuals moved away than moved in, 2010-15



In coming decades, North Carolina’s population will likely become increasingly urbanized, with growth occurring in and around the state’s major urban areas. Some rural communities will face population declines, while amenity-rich rural areas, such as those in the mountains or the coast, may see population growth and housing development driven by retirees and tourism. Each case brings its own unique challenges, and acknowledging the diversity within urban and rural experiences—and the interdependence between urban and rural communities in the state—is vital to planning for future growth.

Rebecca Tippett is the Director of Carolina Demography at the Carolina Population Center at UNC-Chapel Hill where she translates demographic and economic data into specific, usable information and knowledge to inform decision-making, evaluation, and policy.



Guest column by

Rebecca Tippett, Ph.D.

Metro Mayors In Action



Sanford Mayor Chet Mann took Apex Mayor Lance Olive on a walking tour of Sanford recently and snapped this photo in front of the Railroad House and the steam locomotive.



Goldsboro Mayor Chuck Allen and local officials broke ground on the new \$18 million Maxwell Agricultural and Convention Center.



Nearly one thousand community members and first responders from around the country attended the dedication of the Cornelius Lemley 9/11 Monument.



Metro Mayors member-city staffers met in September to discuss shared concerns and opportunities in the coming months.



NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Secretary Susan Kluttz and Sanford Mayor Chet Mann celebrate the ribbon cutting of the Sanford Buggy Company, the new one-stop shop for economic development in Sanford and Lee County.



Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer completes the 5th Annual Bowen CrossFit workout. The event honors the late Asheville Fire Department Captain Jeff Bowen, who lost his life in the line of duty.

City News

Construction Begins on Charlotte Airport Tower

Local, state and federal officials recently kicked off construction of a new airport tower in Charlotte which is expected to improve safety and save an estimated \$9 million a year. The new tower, scheduled to be operational by 2020, will be twice as tall as the current tower and feature new technology. Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT) served 44.9 million passengers last year and has an estimated annual economic impact of more than \$12 billion.

New Bern Receives Grant for Workforce Training

New Bern received a grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation for \$549,000 to create a City Market and Workforce Development Training Center. Working extensively with Craven Community College, New Bern Makers and other local businesses and organizations to create this concept, New Bern will revitalize an unused area of City property and provide workforce training opportunities to area students.

Greenville Under Construction

By 2020, millions of dollars in construction will change the way people live, work and play in Greenville. Upcoming projects in the city's downtown area include the \$8.4 million Greenville Transportation Activity Center, a \$54 million student housing and retail development, a \$30 million student and mixed-rate housing project, a \$32 million mixed-use development, and millions in improvements to the city's Town Common area along the Tar River to include boat rentals, zip lines and an all-inclusive playground.

Murals Bring Art to Carrboro

Matthew Wiley, an Asheville artist, is painting a mural of bees near Carrboro's Fire Station. Wiley is the founder of The Good of the Hive Initiative and has committed to painting 50,000 honeybees – the number necessary for a healthy, thriving hive – in murals around the world. Another mural, based on self-portraits from 160 Carrboro Elementary School third-graders, was painted by Michael Brown on the N.C. Highway 54 ramp off Jones Ferry Road.

Rocky Mount Selected for CSX Project

The Carolinas Gateway Partnership, in collaboration with Governor Pat McCrory and CSX, announced that Rocky Mount has been selected as the location for the Carolina Connector intermodal terminal (CCX). The state-of-the-art terminal to be located in Edgecombe County, will bring up to 300 construction jobs and 300 permanent terminal jobs to Rocky Mount, and more than 1,500 jobs statewide over time.

City of Concord Launches "Smart Community" Project

Concord's Smart Community Project will provide utility customers a system-wide upgrade of electric and water metering infrastructure, as well as the introduction of a new online portal with tools to help customers take better control of their energy and water use. Installation is underway, with the customer portal being offered in 2017.

Kannapolis Starts Work on Downtown Master Plan

The Kannapolis City Council has unanimously approved the Downtown Master Plan to guide the revitalization efforts of 50 acres of downtown properties. Preliminary estimates show that the City expects private investment in the downtown to be \$374 million over the next two decades. The city would invest \$113 million in infrastructure improvements and public facilities. The city estimates ultimately receiving \$2.3 million and the county \$2.6 million annually in tax revenues from the complete redevelopment of downtown Kannapolis.

High Point Fosters Homeownership

The Bank of North Carolina and The City of High Point recently held a ceremonial groundbreaking at a vacant lot where the bank will build a single-family home as part of a partnership to create homeownership in the Core City. The Core City Home Buyer Incentive (CCHBI) Program has been developed to help encourage homebuyers to move into the Core City by providing forgivable loans and homebuyer counseling for affordable homes.

Goldsboro Receives Transportation Grant

Goldsboro recently received a \$5 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) VIII grant. The funding will be used to continue work on the Goldsboro Main Street Revitalization Through Transportation Investment, fulfilling part of the City's Master Plan.

Salisbury Earns City Livability Award

The City of Salisbury received the U.S. Conference of Mayors 2015 City Livability Award for its annual Sculpture Show. The Livability Award recognizes mayoral leadership in developing and implementing programs that improve the quality of life in America's cities, focusing on leadership, creativity and innovation demonstrated by the mayors. Salisbury was one of five localities that won in the category of cities with populations of 100,000 or fewer.

Burlington Police Department Honored

The Burlington Police Department was recognized as the first runner up in the Department of Justice's VALOR Award Program, which includes recognition for General Officer Safety, Traffic Safety, Officer Wellness, and Comprehensive Officer Safety and Wellness. The winner of the award was the New York City Police Department.

Greensboro Selected as a What Works City

The City of Greensboro is one of 12 cities nationwide selected to participate in Bloomberg Philanthropies' What Works Cities (WWC) initiative, which is a philanthropic effort to enhance the use of data in the public sector. This innovative program, funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, supports cities' use of data to make government more transparent and effective.

Asheville Hosts Interfaith Gathering

Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer spoke at an Interfaith Gathering in July in downtown Asheville to acknowledge loss and the need for healing in the Asheville Community and for all people affected by violence.

15th Anniversary Dinner

DECEMBER 1, 2016



BAY 7

318 BLACKWELL STREET
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

Sponsorship inquiries can be submitted to jwhite@metromayors.com.

Mayors Preview Short Session

The Metro Mayors gathered in Raleigh this spring during the short session for a conversation on legislative issues affecting cities and the state.



Sen. Rick Gunn (Alamance) speaks to the Metro Mayors during their short session briefing.

The group received an update on legislation impacting economic development, transportation and other bills that impact metro regions. They received an overview of the state budget negotiations and proposed tax changes.

The mayors met with Rep. Stephen Ross, Sen. Rick Gunn and



Rep. Stephen Ross (Alamance) discusses the short session with the Metro Mayors.

Rep. “Skip” Stam to discuss the challenges of economic development in our State’s metro centers and hear about legislation designed to address those challenges.

In addition, the mayors received a briefing on a new report by graduate students in the Duke University Sanford School of Public Policy comparing state revenues and expenditures in rural and urban economies. The report found that, in general, metro regions create more in state revenue than they receive through state benefits, demonstrating that metropolitan economic growth benefits the entire state.



Speaker Pro Tem Paul “Skip” Stam discusses issues facing the General Assembly.

Finally, the members of the Metro Mayors reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining an active presence at the General Assembly in order to educate lawmakers on policy decisions that impact metropolitan regions and to encourage legislation that strengthens economic development across the state.

An Interconnected State Economy *continued from page 1*

A new study from Duke University confirms our understanding that strong metropolitan economies benefit the whole State. The study found that our State’s urban centers generate state taxes that flow out to all parts of North Carolina, often generating more in revenue for the state than they receive back in public benefits.

In fact, the study – conducted at the request of our Coalition – found that the metropolitan areas of North Carolina contribute 83 percent of state revenues but only receive 72 percent of the state’s public benefits.

The study found that only a quarter of North Carolina’s counties are net contributors to the state. Not surprisingly, the state’s two largest counties – Mecklenburg and Wake – are the strongest contributors to our state’s income tax revenue.

All nine counties that make up the top third of “donor” counties – contributing more than they receive – are represented by our members: Buncombe, Cabarrus, Durham, Forsyth, Iredell, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Union, and Wake. The 23 Coalition counties combined contribute 70 percent of state revenues and only receive 57 percent of the state’s public benefits.

That’s a lot of data and numbers, but it shows very clearly that the better our metropolitan regions fare, the better our whole state fares. It

shows that we are in this together and that we should work together to build our economy, create jobs and support infrastructure in all parts of our State.

You can read more about the study on our website – www.ncmetromayors.com. Our Coalition will use this data to advocate alongside business, state and local leaders for economic policies that advance all parts of our State. North Carolina is facing competition not only from other states but also from other countries around the world, and, to be successful, we must work together.

North Carolina has experienced tremendous change and economic upheaval over the past generation. We were dealt tough blows when manufacturing moved overseas, and many of our communities still haven’t fully recovered from the last recession. Yet throughout all of these changes one thing remains the same, the strength of our state is in our people – our resiliency, our work ethic and our diversity. Together, we have been able to overcome obstacles and seize new opportunities. Together, we can continue to grow and prosper for generations to come.

Co-authored by Chair Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer and Vice-Chair Cornelius Mayor Chuck Travis.

Accolades

Charlotte's Career Discovery Day, a partnership of the Mayor's Youth Empowerment Program and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, introduced more than 4,000 students to career opportunities.

"Only in Your State" website recognized **New Bern's** Riverwalk as one of the state's top ten boardwalks for exercise, recreation and scenery along the Neuse and Trent rivers.

Rocky Mount's Main Street has officially been recognized as a "Great Main Street In-the-Making" in the 2016 Great Places in North Carolina awards program, sponsored by the North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-NC).

The City of **Concord's** Rocky River Golf Club was the highest ranked public course in the Charlotte metro region, according to the NC Golf Panel.

The City of **High Point** has a new mobile app, allowing citizens to efficiently pay bills, view the transit schedule or review the next council agenda.

Goldsboro recently celebrated the groundbreaking for the \$18 million Maxwell Agricultural and Convention Center, when it was also announced that the project would receive \$1.5 million from the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission.

Burlington's downtown was reaccredited by the National Main Street Center for following the best-practice standards for historic preservation and community revitalization.

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