

## Connecting Our Future: Creating a Vision for Moving People and Goods Across the Upstate



We've all experienced it—slow traffic due to congestion or construction, or hitting a pothole on the highway at 60 mph, or feeling dwarfed and surrounded by tractor trailers on the highway. While those things may be frustrating, they're part of the growing pains the Upstate is experiencing as a region.

In order to make sure that, as a region, those issues are addressed efficiently and effectively, Ten at the Top is convening various stakeholders across the Upstate for a year-long initiative around transportation, mobility, and connectivity, called [Connecting Our Future](#). Those stakeholders include representatives from town and county governments, SCDOT, automotive and aviation groups, and healthcare, among others.



The last several years have seen tremendous growth in our area, and between now and 2040, future growth analysis projects that 300,000 additional residents will move to the Upstate, so it's important to start planning now for how that growth will be accommodated in terms of transportation—both individual and commercial.

“We hear all the time from Upstate residents that they don't want this region to be another Atlanta or another Charlotte related to traffic, pollution, and congestion,” says Ten at the Top Executive Director Dean Hybl. “However, most of our current plans and investments align with that sprawling growth pattern.

“Mobility, moving people and goods from place to place, is a critical component of how we grow, and Connecting Our Future is an attempt to connect the many individual efforts currently ongoing around

this issue so we can all move forward and make a positive impact on this critical regional issue,” Hybl adds.

A kick-off event will take place on October 18th at the TD Convention Center to talk about where we are as a region in terms of transportation needs, where we’re going, and how to best get there. After an overview of where we are currently with challenges, programs, and initiatives that are working, break-out sessions will cover such topics as land use, public health, and sustainability, as well as current and future trends in moving freight, moving people, and innovations and technology surrounding transportation.



Keynote speaker Carla Bailo, Assistant Vice President for Mobility Research & Business Development at The Ohio State University, is a leader in engineering and vehicle program management with 35 years of experience in the automotive industry. She helps coordinate Ohio State’s involvement as the primary research partner for Smart Columbus, a \$140 million program to transform central Ohio into the nation’s premier transportation innovation region.

Following the kick-off, a transportation consultant will gather stakeholder input about what we need and how to get it, and the resulting document will serve as a guide for local and regional efforts moving forward. The project is being funded by a consortium of stakeholders, and any business or organization with an interest in being part of this long-term effort is welcome to become a coalition partner.

By next summer, the consultant’s work will be wrapped up and unveiled during another regional event. Then, the real work of implementing the vision at the local and regional level will begin.

Photo credits: Top right—Nat Jehlen; Bottom left—provided by Carla Bailo

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