

Public Transit

Delivering people to work, saving travel costs, growing jobs, cleaning the air

THE ASK

Will you support the creation of a transit trust fund within the state transportation budget and make public transit funding a priority?

FACT SHEET

Background

Each weekday, more than 350,000 Ohioans rely on a transit bus to commute to work or school, visit the doctor, or travel to an important destination. Public transit delivers more than just a safe, convenient, and reliable commute. It also saves commuters money; stimulates jobs and local economic growth; offers mobility choices, especially to rural residents and the elderly and handicapped; reduces highway congestion; encourages efficient land use; and reduces gas consumption, lessening America's dependence on foreign oil and improving air quality.

Public transit is heavily used in the Buckeye State. More Ohioans travel on transit buses within our metro areas each day than fly in and out of Ohio's airports. More than 350,000 Ohioans each day use buses to reach jobs, medical appointments, grocery stores, day care, pharmacies, schools, job training and other services. For many people – including people with disabilities, seniors and low income individuals – public transit is the **only** way to get around.

The Problem

Public Transportation is a low-cost, environmentally friendly alternative to passenger-vehicle transportation, but the state of public transit in Ohio is lacking. Despite the need for public transportation, Ohio transit agencies have been forced to slash transit services and raise fares. A decade ago, elimination of federal operating funding for public transit systems serving communities of more than 250,000 people forced states and local governments to make up for the federal cut. Most states dramatically increased support for public transit. Ohio has cut funding by 75 percent since 2002.

Despite the fact that it is the seventh most populous state, Ohio ranks 40th in the nation for relative commitment to public transit (when considering state spending as a percentage for total transportation expenditures). Even Indiana spends three times more than Ohio (proportional to population); Pennsylvania spends 33 times as much. In Ohio, zero gas tax revenues or vehicle registration fees go towards public transit due to a constitutional prohibition. This prohibition creates a great divide between funding for highway spending and alternative modes of transportation. To bridge this divide, Ohio should create a Transit Trust Fund within Ohio's transportation budget to develop a 21st century public transportation program.

Solution

Make state funding for transit a priority. Create a transit trust fund within Ohio's transportation budget, and find a stable and dedicated funding source that adequately reflects the positive role public transit can play in Ohio's clean energy economy.

(over, please)

3C Passenger Rail

Small state investment = big return in jobs, economic development, travel options

THE ASK

Will you encourage the State Controlling Board to use \$25 million in no-obligation federal funds to obtain more precise cost and benefit estimates and answers to questions lawmakers have been asking about 3C rail?

FACT SHEET

Much attention has focused on the cost of connecting Cleveland, Columbus, Springfield, Dayton, and Cincinnati with 79MPH passenger trains. Lost in the debate is the robust return on that investment:

- **FACT:** The 3C is estimated to create an immediate 399 good-paying jobs plus thousands more spin-off jobs. (ODOT & U.S. Department of Commerce)
- **FACT:** Tax revenues from new jobs and increased consumer activity, plus cost-savings from truck traffic shifted to rails and public employees taking the train instead of driving can create fiscal benefit to the State of Ohio of at least \$20.5 million per year – in excess of 3C’s estimated annual operating cost. (AAO)
- **FACT:** ODOT planners have estimated average speeds to be about 45 mph, which would make the 3C the fastest, new-start, state-supported train service in the nation in the past 20 years. Other states have steadily improved train speeds. So can Ohio. (Amtrak)
- **FACT:** AECOM—not Amtrak—has estimated 478,000 riders in the first year of operation. AECOM is the world’s largest transportation engineering firm. Past estimates have been accurate to within a margin of error of only 4%. The 3C ridership is based on the initial, draft schedule which will change. (AECOM)
- **FACT:** No state or nation has gone from 0 to 100+ MPH without starting out at 79MPH. The \$400 million federal stimulus grant is a 25 percent down-payment on a higher-speed rail system in Ohio’s most densely populated travel corridor. (All Aboard Ohio)
- **FACT:** All transit agencies in communities scheduled to gain a 3C station have committed to provide local transit connections to help enable travelers reach their final destination. (ODOT)
- **FACT:** Giving back \$400 million out of concern for paying \$17 million per year – 0.005 of ODOT’s budget – to operate trains over company-owned tracks is like returning federal highway funds because the federal government won’t pay for the Highway Patrol, bond financing and other road subsidies of \$1.2 billion per year. (Federal Highway Administration)

For More Information Contact:

Amanda Woodrum
Policy Matters Ohio
300 East Broad Street
Suite 490
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 221-4505
awoodrum@policymattersohio.org
www.policymattersohio.org

Ken Prendergast
All Aboard Ohio
309 South 4th Street
Suite 304
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 228-6005
kenprendergast@allaboardohio.org
www.allaboardohio.org