



www.policymattersohio.org/SaveTransitNow.htm

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

Transportation is the backbone of Ohio's economy. Where goes transportation, so goes economic development. For decades, however, Ohio lacked a thoughtful approach to transportation projects and underinvested in public transportation. The old approach took an enormous toll on our cities and towns—spreading jobs, stores, child care, health care, schools, universities, and training centers all over the map, and **making it nearly impossible for Ohioans to get by without cars.**

1. *Cars are expensive to own, operate and maintain.* For middle-income families, transportation costs for ESSENTIAL trips represent up to 20 percent of basic family budgets, depending on location and family size. **Low-income workers spend an even larger share of their paychecks on transportation for essential purposes.**

Ex. A Cleveland-area single mother working full-time at minimum wage makes less than \$15,000 a year and spends 83 percent of pre-tax income on rent, utilities and food alone. That leaves her about \$166 a month for transportation, health care, child care, and everything else, making \$300 to own and operate a car, prohibitively expensive.

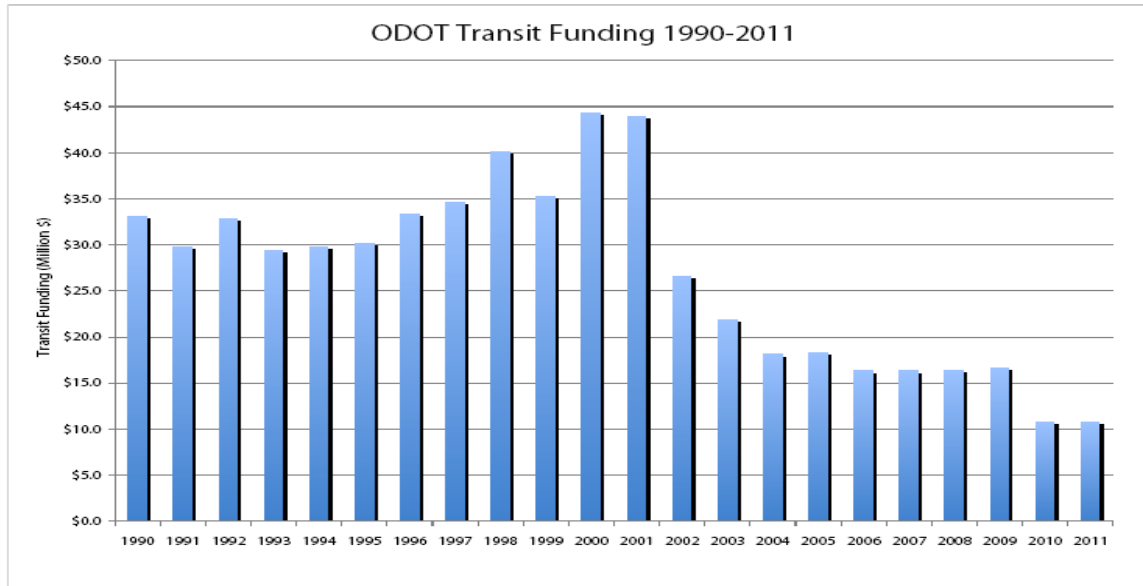
2. *For the elderly and those with disabilities, driving a car may not be an option at all.*
3. *Nearly 40 percent of those who use public transit depend on it as their only means of transportation.* Urban riders use transit primarily to get to work. Rural transit ridership is made up largely of the elderly and persons with disabilities.
4. *Cars run largely on fossil fuels, 98 percent of which Ohio imports.* In 2008, we spent nearly \$16 billion on motor gasoline in Ohio for transportation purposes.

Ohio needs a strategy to green our transportation sector and promote our energy independence, and that strategy must revolve around public transit. Currently, we spend billions of public dollars on transportation projects, largely on roads & highways. Less than one percent of our taxpayer dollars for transportation go toward mass transit.

1. Ohio ranks 40th in the nation for relative commitment to public transit.
2. In fact, All Aboard Ohio estimates that the state will pay more to mow grass along the highways, than it will spend on buses, light rail, and commuter trains combined.
3. Pennsylvania spends 33 times more. Even Indiana spends more.



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Because of the lack of state support, public transit is almost entirely funded by local sources, like sales taxes, which are volatile in nature and plummeting in this recession, putting transit in crisis and forcing service cuts, fare increases, layoffs, and wage concessions. Many Ohio workers are losing their rides to work.

It is no accident our public transit agencies are in crisis. It is the direct result of choices we Ohioans have made on how to spend state transportation dollars.

We can make better choices

Good public transit creates a more equitable, vibrant and sustainable Ohio. It spurs economic development, employs people, gives firms and workers a low-cost commuting option, reduces urban sprawl and congestion, and increases urban vitality. During this recession, transit projects can provide a much-needed economic infusion:

1. According to the American Public Transportation Association, every dollar invested in public transportation generates \$6 in economic returns.
2. Investments in public transportation projects create nearly 20 percent more jobs than equal investments in new roads and highways.

For public transportation to be a viable alternative, it must be reliable, getting people where they need to go, when they need to get there, in a timely fashion. That requires a state investment, which will help our economy, not just riders.