



*We support the Ohio Department of Transportation's program to make public transit funding a priority.*¹ Ohio needs a strategy to make our transportation sector more environmentally and economically sustainable. A 21st century transportation system includes not only roads and highways, but also a complete network of alternative transportation, including rail within our cities and across the state, hybrid buses (both new and retrofitted), streetcars, bikable, walkable neighborhoods, and complete streets.

Transportation is the backbone of Ohio's economy. Where goes transportation, so goes economic development. For the past few decades, however, Ohio lacked a smart 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.* In Ohio this group represents more than 2.4 million state residents.
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 polluting fossil fuels, 98 percent of which Ohio imports.* In 2008, we spent nearly \$16 billion on motor gasoline in Ohio for transportation purposes.
5. *Young professionals under 30, the cohort Ohio wants to attract and retain, are less likely to own cars and drive than their predecessors, instead preferring to travel by other modes.*

For public transportation to be a viable alternative in Ohio, 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 boost our economy and ridership.

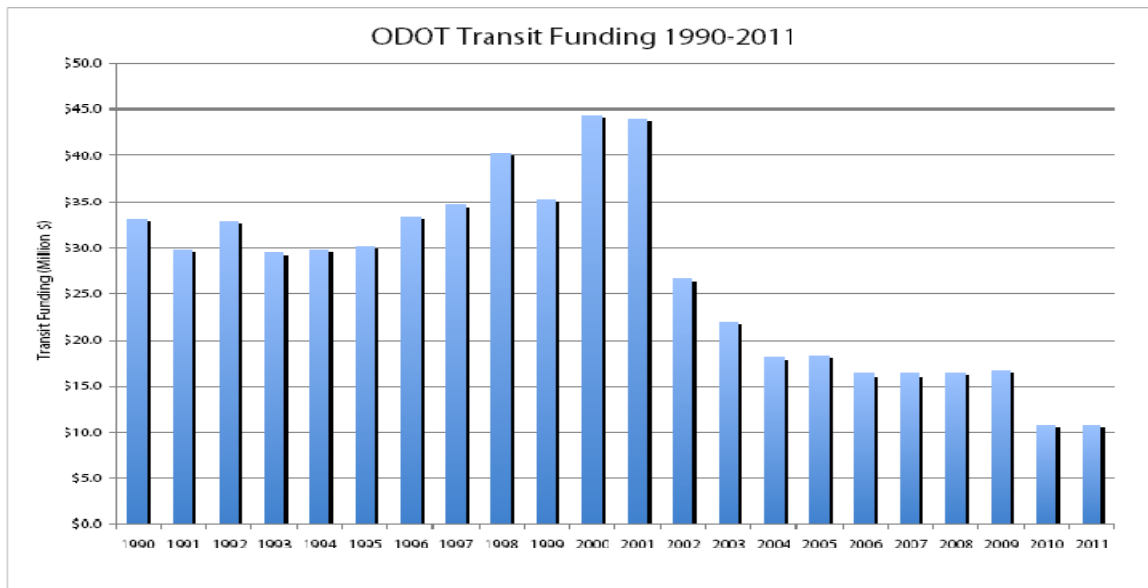
¹ Public transportation should be a top priority, but funding for new vehicles and projects should not come from resources currently dedicated to combating air pollution.



Currently, the state of public transit in Ohio is lacking

Ohio's public transit systems are in continual crisis. This is no accident. It is the direct result of choices we have made on how we spend our state's transportation dollars. We spend billions of public dollars on transportation projects, each year, largely on roads & highways. Less than one percent of those taxpayer dollars go toward mass transit.

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



Because of this current 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.

Going forward, we can and should make better choices

Good public transit creates a more equitable, vibrant and sustainable Ohio.² 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.

² Public transportation projects also provide an ideal opportunity to create green pathways out of poverty if on-the-job training opportunities are encouraged and 1/2 of 1% of project funds are set aside for skills development.



We represent a diverse group of interests, from faith-based leaders to environmental organizations and the cycling community, transit agencies, student groups, city and county councils, and representatives for the poor, persons with disabilities and Ohio's workforce. We are from all across Ohio, urban, suburban, and rural areas, and include:

Alliance for Regional Transit, Cincinnati!
Amalgamated Transit Union Local 268
All Aboard Ohio
Bike Walk Ohio!
The Center for Families and Children
City of Cleveland Heights
ClevelandBikes
Cuyahoga County Transportation Coalition
Community Research Partners
Earth Day Coalition
Elyria YWCA
Environment Ohio
Green City, Blue Lake Institute
Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA)
Greater Cleveland RTA Citizen Advisory Board
Laketran
Linking Employment, Abilities, and Potential (LEAP)
Lorain County Board of Commissioners
Lorain County Transit Coalition
Lorain YWCA
Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry
National Federation of the Blind
Northeast Ohio Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Campaign
Ohio Apollo Alliance
Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies
Ohio Environmental Council
Ohio Workforce Coalition
Ohio Student Environmental Coalition (OSEC)
Ohio Student Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG)
Organize! Ohio
Policy Matters Ohio
Sierra Club – Ohio Chapter
Simply Living
Slavic Village Development
Stark Area Regional Transit Authority
The People's Empowerment Coalition of Ohio
University of Cincinnati Planning Student Organization
WSOS Community Action Commission, Inc.