

Contact: Wendy Patton
wpatton@policymattersohio.org
614.221.4505

Public transit needs major boost

Ohio underfunds public transit and now faces a looming revenue cliff

Governor John Kasich fails to address two major problems for Ohio’s public transit agencies in his 2018-2019 budget: he doesn’t correct Ohio’s long-term underfunding of transit and doesn’t find a long-term solution to the loss of millions of dollars in sales tax revenue.

Today Policy Matters Ohio released the first in a series of “Budget Bites,” which summarize and analyze important components of the 2018-2019 budget. The Public Transit Budget Bite identifies the gap between what Ohio needs for public transit and what the executive budget provides.

“The Ohio Department of Transportation recommended that Ohio provide \$120 million a year for transit and the budget allocates \$40 million,” said Senior Project Director Wendy Patton. “The governor provides temporary aid to transit agencies that will lose money due to narrowing of the state sales tax base, but after 2018, funding for transit falls off a cliff.”

Patton said the state should flex more federal highway funds for public transit, as recommended by the state’s own Transit Needs study; provide additional general revenue to help small and rural agencies match federal dollars, and ensure the sales tax revenues public transit agencies will lose are replaced in a sustainable manner – possibly by closing some of the state’s unnecessary \$9 billion in tax breaks.

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*Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute
with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.*