



Sustainable Development

Testimony on public transit to Ohio's Road to Our Future Joint Legislative Study Committee

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Chairman Greenspan and Chairman McColley, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to the Joint Legislative Committee on Ohio's Road to Our Future. I am Amanda Woodrum, Senior Researcher for Policy Matters Ohio, a non-profit dedicated to promoting a more sustainable, equitable, inclusive and vibrant Ohio. For the past decade or so, I have also led a statewide network of diverse stakeholders, MOVE Ohio (Mobility and Opportunity for a Vibrant Ohio), calling on the state to adequately fund public transportation as well as safe pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure.

As many of you likely know, the state of Ohio has long underinvested in public transit, a more affordable, accessible and environmentally-friendly mode of transportation. Over the last several decades, nearly all our state's multi-billion dollar transportation budget has gone toward roads and highways, creating a transportation system that makes it very difficult to get by without a car. However, cars are expensive to own, expensive to operate and expensive to maintain. For low-income Ohioans, cars are often prohibitively expensive. For elderly people and people with disabilities, driving may not be an option at all. According to governing.com, 67% of Black commuters relied on public transit in Cincinnati and 70% in Cleveland.

Transportation barriers to jobs, education and training, health care, and retail stores foster a racial, health and economic divide in this state, by limiting access to employment, opportunity and good health. As legislative champions for the future of Ohio's transportation system, we implore this committee to recognize the value public transportation can play in promoting education and opportunity for all Ohioans, whether they are Black or White, rich or poor.

SOLUTION

Ensure all Ohioans can get to work, school, the doctor's office, and the grocery store by expanding funding for more accessible, affordable public transit and safe pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure. In the FY2020-FY2021 Transportation Budget, Ohio legislators made a solid step in the right direction, increasing funding levels to \$70 million per year. Thank you all for the role you played in recognizing investments in public transportation are critical to achieving equal opportunity for all, a basic tenet of American democracy. For that same reason, we recommend funding public transit at the level recommended by the Ohio Department of Transportation's [Transit Needs Study](#) (2015), which suggested that the state should support a full 10% of Ohio's \$1.84 billion annual public transportation need. This requires an annual appropriation for public transportation of roughly \$185 million in each fiscal year into the future, starting with the upcoming FY2022-FY2023 budget.