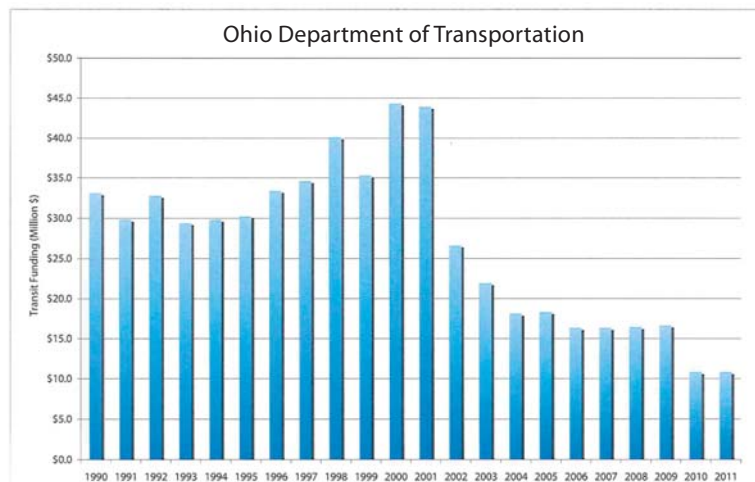


Ohio has no dedicated source of funding for transit

With the economic downturn the state of Ohio General Revenue Funding (GRF) for public transit in Ohio has decreased 75% since 2000 from \$44.32 million per year to \$10.87 million in 2010. This funding is spread over 59 local transit systems across Ohio. These systems are providing vital transportation for people to access jobs, healthcare, education, shopping and entertainment among other things. While the typical state in the nation contributes 23% of the operating funds for transit from their state budget Ohio contributes less than 3%. From time to time the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has flexed federal funds to transit which has been very helpful over the last few years but there remains no dedicated funding source for transit in Ohio.

State of Ohio General Revenue Funding For Public Transit



Funding cuts have resulted in service eliminations and fare increases

- Cleveland has eliminated 24.6% of its services and increased fares from \$1.25 to \$2.25, an increase of 80%, over the last 5 years.
- Dayton has eliminated 25% of its services and doubled fares in the past 5 years.
- The City of Newark depends on the ODOT Fare Assistance Program to keep their program afloat. This is currently the only source of funds used to cover the 'local' share of the program. With a significant reduction in that amount, the program would need to make cuts. The Cities of Newark and Heath are facing budget deficits and layoffs and are not in a position to begin spending general fund dollars on the public transportation program.

- ❖ The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) is financially better off than most transit systems in the state however, with the downturn in the economy COTA has been required to reduce its planned expansion from 60,000 vehicle hours per year it promised the community when it passed its last levy in 2006 to 30,000 hours per year.
- ❖ In Toledo paratransit service (TARPS) has increased by 65% due to higher demand over the last 2 years. In the same time span, service hours for fixed routes have had to decrease by 32%.
- ❖ Cincinnati has eliminated approximately 15% of fixed-route service and increased base fares from \$1.00 to \$1.75, a 75% increase, in the last three years. Access, Cincinnati's paratransit service for people with disabilities, has also seen significant service reductions and increases in fares.
- ❖ A significant portion of Ohio's current funding to transit allows Ohio transit systems to offer unlimited 50% discounts for Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities. Further state cuts would jeopardize this program.

Ohioans board a transit vehicle 500,000 times each workday.

- ❖ 60% of trips in urban areas are work related
- ❖ Over 60% of the trips in rural areas serve the elderly or people with disabilities
- ❖ In Cleveland, over 60% of the workers at the Steelyard Commons Mall use transit to commute to and from their jobs. Without transit, most would be unemployable.
- ❖ In Mount Vernon, Sadie Hunter of People First Ohio stated "This community has supported persons with disabilities in so many ways – enabling them to join organizations, employment and community involvement so they can have their voices heard and be an active part of their own community."
- ❖ In Columbus, over 11,000 city public school students have COTA bus passes to ride to and from school and related school events including internships.
- ❖ In Cincinnati, Metro partners with Cincinnati State and the University of Cincinnati to provide access to educational opportunities and job training programs to ensure that Ohio's workforce is prepared for the jobs of tomorrow.
- ❖ Of its total ridership for 2010, Newark-Heath Earthworks Transit is currently providing 22% of its rides for the MR/DD workshop, 12% medical, 12% work, 6% dialysis, and 4% for education. With a reduction of funding, access to essential services for those needing public transportation will be jeopardized.
- ❖ Melody Burba relies on Dayton's RTA for all her transportation needs due to a mobility impairment that requires use of a wheelchair. Less transit service could result in Melody losing her job at the Access Center for Independent Living and be forced to seek alternate means for travel for medical, employment and social needs.

- ❖ From Ashland comes this story as reported by Ellie Grubb, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor. I rode transit home in the evening from the fair. Our system provides a shuttle run for individuals attending the fair who need to use the public transportation. That particular evening we stopped at the local American Legion Chapter to pick up another rider. There were two people, one in a wheelchair and the other pushing the chair. Our destination turned out to be a local nursing home where the individual in the wheelchair resides. Her companion was her husband who had used transit to take her out for dinner for her birthday. The fish dinner at the American Legion was a favorite place for both of them but he could no longer transport his wife nor could he care for her at home, hence the nursing home. I was very touched by the fact that public transportation made it possible for this elderly couple to still experience something together they both enjoyed. With assistance from the transit driver, the husband took his wife "home". His car was parked outside where he would ultimately return to their "home". Returning to his home without his wife certainly isn't what they planned on for their future I'm sure, but, public transportation made it possible to still experience things together. The reality of change such as their situation does have some sadness to it, but not completely. The husband does what he can with the help of other services, in this case, public transportation. I felt privileged to witness the experience knowing we played a positive part.
- ❖ In many areas in Ohio, public transit is the primary method of transporting students to High and Junior High Schools, saving transportation dollars.

Services for people with disabilities

- ❖ Transit systems in Ohio provide special (door through door) service for people unable to access the traditional bus system.
- ❖ Much of this service provides access for medical treatments such as dialysis and other life essential needs of this population.
- ❖ The service also provides access to gainful employment for many Ohioans that allows them to avoid institutionalization.
- ❖ Without this lifeline these citizens would suffer a dramatic decline in the quality of their lives.

ODOT's 21st Century Transit Partnerships Program

- ❖ Provided \$25 million in assistance to preserve existing services in urban areas, or to add critically needed services. A portion of these funds may actually replace previous State commitments.
- ❖ Creates a competitive program of \$15 million to purchase Clean & Green transit vehicles. This is not a new program but a continuation of a program began in 2008.
- ❖ Creates a competitive program of \$10 million for innovative services targeted at efforts to connect people to new jobs and workforce retention.
- ❖ **Does not use any General Revenue Fund dollars!** Federal funds redirected from project savings and use of additional federal sources finance the program.

Transit funding is critical to job growth in Ohio

- ❖ Most new employment is in entry level jobs
- ❖ Investments in public transit infrastructure mean jobs and economic development. The \$200 million **HealthLine** BRT project in Cleveland is credited with over **\$4 billion** in related economic development.
- ❖ Transit is the only way many Ohioans can access these jobs.
- ❖ Transit is critical in revitalizing urban centers and downtowns.
- ❖ Transit is critical to get students to school, so that they can be ready to take the jobs of the future.
- ❖ Without continued support from the state of Ohio transit agencies will be forced to even further reduce services
- ❖ ODOT's 21st Century Transit Partnerships Program ***requires no General Revenue Fund dollars!***

Leverage Federal Dollars

- ❖ The transit systems in Ohio are eligible to receive over \$100 million annually in Federal capital funding. All too often these funds cannot be accessed due to the lack of the required matching dollars. This result is less jobs, fewer capital projects and lost economic activity. An adequate State funding program can address this issue.

Ohio's Transit Providers stand ready to be part of the solution:

- ❖ Providing the connection between workers and jobs
- ❖ Insuring mobility and access for all Ohio's citizens, especially to jobs and schools.
- ❖ Take a lead role in the coordination of Human Service transportation, which will control costs over a variety of state, funded programs. To begin we propose that Ohio designate its transit operators as the broker agency for all non-emergency medical transportation funded by the state to insure that transportation is provided for clients through the most cost efficient means.
- ❖ Be a model for Regionalization.
- ❖ Get Ohio on the move once again.