



## House Bill 53: Ohio Department of Transportation Budget, FY 2016-2017

### Interested Party Testimony

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Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Driehaus, and members of the House Finance Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to offer interested party testimony on House Bill 53.

My name is Alison Goebel and I am the Associate Director of the Greater Ohio Policy Center. Greater Ohio is a nonpartisan nonprofit that is valued for its data-driven research. Our mission is to champion revitalization in Ohio to create economically competitive communities. I was a Steering Committee member for the Statewide Transit Needs Study undertaken last year by ODOT and my organization has developed four policy recommendations that, if implemented, could help Ohio modernize and diversify its transportation system while remaining fiscally responsible. I share these recommendations for consideration in this Budget.

- 1. Establish performance metrics that ODOT staff and TRAC would use to evaluate and prioritize all transportation investments.** ODOT's planning documents, such as Access Ohio 2040, have identified the need for performance management strategies for each transportation mode.

To inform investment decisions, we recommend ODOT develop metrics that allow comparison across modes, and that consider the full spectrum of state strategic goals. Examples of system-wide performance metrics could include:

- Anticipated future and long-term costs of maintaining infrastructure in acceptable condition
- Economic impact in the short term (5 years ) and long term (30+ years), including impact on a region's future job retention and growth
- Motorist, bicyclist, and pedestrian counts and number of crashes by mode.

Evaluating proposed investments across all modes ensures that the state maximizes resources and fully leverages the potential of our multimodal transportation system.

- 2. Create a state-level task force to identify new financing options for transit and multimodal options.** We know that there are simply not enough resources for all the needs facing Ohio's transportation system. However, to ensure workers have access to jobs, elderly people can get to the grocery store and doctor, and millennials stay in Ohio, we must invest in public transportation.

Greater Ohio supports the creation of a Blue Ribbon Commission on Dedicated Funding, as proposed in ODOT's Statewide Transit Needs Study. A multi-sector task force focused on identifying funding strategies will ensure sustainable support is found for public transit.

On the topic of current funding levels, I would like to note that ODOT's Transit Needs Study makes the very modest recommendation of increasing General Revenue Funding by an additional \$2.5million in this biennium. ODOT has requested only an additional \$2 million. I urge you to allocate the recommended \$2.5 million. This would increase GRF funding for public transit from 13.5% to 13.9% of the total public transportation budget and have negligible impact on the overall ODOT budget, estimated at \$5.9 billion for the biennium.

To put this in context, public transportation makes up 2% of the total ODOT budget. Providing this additional half million dollars demonstrates leadership and commitment to increased support for this critical transportation asset.

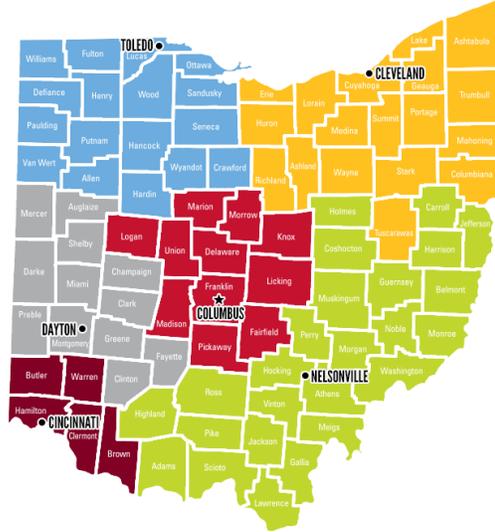
- 3. Enact a statewide policy that ensures that state roadways safely accommodate all types of users** (sometimes called a Complete Streets policy). This policy would ensure that ODOT-managed roads are sensitive to context and are appropriately designed for all users. For example, context-sensitive roads built or repaired in rural Seneca County could include wider shoulders for residents who bike or walk, while repaired or new urban roads could include a sidewalk, curb cuts for accessibility, and a bike lane.

Twenty seven states have adopted similar policies, including Michigan and Pennsylvania. In these states, communities have saved money by matching design to need, attracted new businesses that capture increased foot traffic, and improved safety. Such a policy in Ohio would enhance its economic competitiveness and position the state to fully leverage existing assets.

- 4. Adjust the 12 ODOT districts to align with the 6 JobsOhio regions to strengthen the tie between regional economic development and transportation investments.** Harmonizing boundaries could further facilitate collaboration among agencies, boost internal policy and procedure consistency across ODOT's districts, reduce equipment and facility inefficiencies,

and improve the ability of businesses, economic development agencies, and local governments to access ODOT district services.

### Maps of Ohio's 12 ODOT districts and 6 JobsOhio Regions



Maps courtesy of ODOT (left) and jobs-ohio.com/network (right)

To conclude, a transportation system supporting all modes will be essential to enhancing Ohio's draw as a place where businesses can thrive and where people want to live. We believe our four policy recommendations can assist the state in achieving these goals.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'd be pleased to answer any questions.

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