



# Community Action Wayne/Medina

Administrative Offices: 905 Pittsburgh Avenue, Wooster Ohio 44691 330.264.8677 FAX 330.264.5170

Medina Office: 799 North Court Street, Medina Ohio 44256

330.723.2229 FAX 330.723.5418

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## **OHIO HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE, Interested Party Testimony on HB 74, February 17th, 2021**

County-wide public transit is becoming a reality in Wayne County thanks to funding from the state. For the first time non-driving residents in rural areas will have the opportunity to regularly and easily access good paying jobs in Wooster and Orrville. Seniors and people with disabilities will finally have the opportunity to live more independently. People rebuilding their lives as they travel through the court system will be able to heal and work and contribute to their community.

This is a service that has been needed for decades and was only possible through funding from the Ohio Transit Partnership Program. Work transportation and medical transportation is desperately needed. Community Action Wayne/Medina has been filling the gaps where it can, but the limited grant funding that we receive is not enough.

We help people every day who can't drive due to a disability or age or lack of income to own a car; who are denied access to work, church, medical and dental help, shopping and attending to any of the other tasks of daily living that people with cars take for granted. To these people, public transit means equality and equity. It means independence to people who want only to take care of themselves and participate in our community. Investing in transportation is investing in the citizens of Wayne County and Ohio.

And this funding isn't going to just sit in someone's bank account. It will immediately go back into revitalizing our economy. People need and want to work, to be healthy, to shop. By fully investing in public transit, you are investing in rebuilding what has been lost due to the pandemic. Studies completed by the Transportation Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) suggest that every \$1 billion of investment in public transportation operations annually leads to an average of 41,100 jobs supported for a year, \$3.8 billion in business sales, and \$530 million in tax revenues.

Maintaining the discretionary \$70 million investment in the state's transit system will yield a high financial return on the State's investment. But it will yield an ever greater return for the people you represent who need and rely upon public transit on a daily basis in order to live and thrive in our fair state.

Sincerely,

Leslie Baus, Wayne County Mobility Manager  
Community Action Wayne/Medina  
[lbaus@cawm.org](mailto:lbaus@cawm.org)

