

March 3, 2021

Stephanie Kunze, Chair,
Transportation Committee
Ohio Senate
614.466.5981

RE: State Public Transit Budget

Dear Senator Kunze

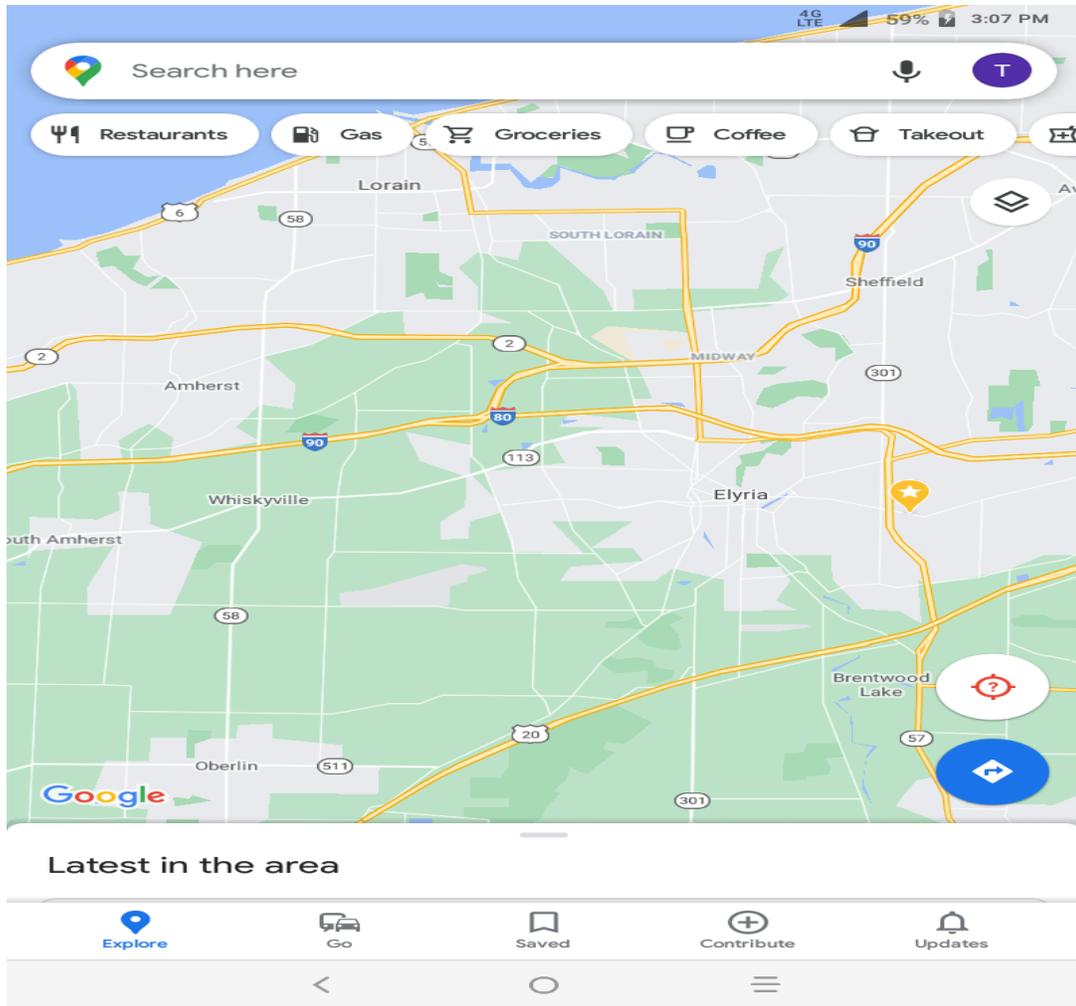
I am deeply concerned by the proposed 2022-2023 transportation budget, which would cut state funding for public transportation by 90%. To cut public transportation funding now would be devastating to our community's long-term economic recovery and growth.

Public transit systems generate \$3.6 billion in economic activity and create and support 180,000 private sector jobs.

It is with renewed hope that Sharon Pearson's, Lorain County Mobility Manager, efforts will result in some relief for the many residents of Lorain County with regard to our dire public transportation needs. I am very excited to learn that she is working to secure some form of consistent and reliable public transportation for those of us that work, attend school, and tend to our own personal needs. As previously explained, here are some of the most pressing needs for public transit.

Health and Safety It is so very important to understand that it has become very unsafe for women, children, and seniors to walk through neighborhoods. A simple walk to the nearest store has proven to be dangerous. Ohio unleashed dangerous dogs on us when it removed pit bulls and mixes from the "dangerous" dog list. German shepherds are also becoming more of a problem. ***I have personally been attacked once and charged twice while attempting to walk to the store; my son has been attacked twice, and another neighbors' daughter was attacked once.*** These attacks occurred within two blocks of each other, in the same neighborhood; and there are many more neighborhoods between work, school, and stores.

State and interstate routes surround and dissect Lorain County. Grocery stores, medical facilities, government offices, and other places are not easily accessible to pedestrians due to the existence of rural, state, and interstate routes. Many pedestrians and bikers are using the rural and state routes to commute; which is both dangerous and illegal. ***Additionally, pedestrian traffic along the state routes that intersect the cities creates garbage and trashes the connecting neighborhoods.*** It's costly and unsightly—simply bad for business and investment. Public transport is a must.



Employment and Education Public transport is necessary for gainful employment. Businesses will continue to divest in cities that lack public transportation systems. More importantly, a significant number of Millennials do not drive, nor do they own vehicles. They are spending a large amount of their income on ride share services, making it difficult to cover other living expenses. **(For example, my son spent over \$1000.00 last month on ride share services to and from work and school.)** Some are simply unemployed, underemployed, or forced to move away from their parents and grandparents; or completely out of the state of Ohio. This is very little growth for a significant number of younger people in Lorain County. Additionally, due to the lack of public transportation, many employers are moving eastward. The exodus of many employers creates a need for many to commute to locate employment, or maintain employment. Public transportation fills a transportation need for many that may have vehicles in need of repair, or for those that either don't own a vehicle or valid driver's licenses.

Reliable and consistent public transportation is beneficial to both high school and college students. Prior to the massive cuts, many students relied on public transport for

their transportation needs to and from school and classes. In prior years, two of my sons were able to utilize the public transit system on a daily basis for their transportation needs to and from school. This allowed me to be able to continue to work in my field, and pay for reliable transportation for my teens to and from school. Many students don't own cars, and the lack of public transit severely limits their ability to access educational facilities both inside and outside of the county.

Overall, the absence of public transport limits the ability for residents to reach business in adjacent areas and is required for continued growth.

I implore you to work with your colleagues to restore the biennial transportation budget to the previous \$70 million.

Thank you for your consideration and support

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Cc: State Senator Nathan Manning

State Representative Gayle Manning

State Representative Joe Miller

State Representative Dick Stein

Lorain County Commissioners

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