



February 25, 2021

The Honorable Mike DeWine  
 Governor, State of Ohio  
 77 S. High Street, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Columbus, OH 43209

**Re: Supporting Northeast Ohio Public Transit / GCRTA**

Dear Governor DeWine;

As Northeast Ohio business and community leaders, we write to express our strong support for public transit and the need for the State of Ohio to prioritize transit funding in the biennial budget bill now under consideration.

Public transportation is central to our region’s economic and cultural vitality. The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) is a strategic asset, providing mobility for thousands of daily trips to work, and school, to the grocery store, to the doctor, and to enjoy Cleveland and its surrounding communities have to offer.

We were pleased to read your Administration’s recent COVID-19 Minority Health Strike Force Blueprint recommendation to “improve access to public transportation to better connect communities of color to health care, jobs, and education.” We share this perspective and urge you and the Legislature to ensure the state budget reflects this important commitment.

Ohio's existing budget funds public transit at \$70 million per year statewide. We would request the state not reduce funding below this current level (as has been suggested) and take us backward. In fact, we believe an increase should be considered.

In addition, Cleveland is uniquely blessed with a rail car system that is now extending beyond its useful life. We urge the State to contribute to funding the rail car replacement program, including through clarifying rail cars are eligible for Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) resources.

The listed organizations are beneficiaries of the tremendous value public transit brings to our community, among countless others.

Thank you for your consideration and continued leadership of our state. We look forward to continuing to advocate throughout the budget process.

Sincerely,

India L. Birdsong  
General Manager/CEO  
Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority  
Cleveland, Ohio

Grace Gallucci  
Executive Director & CEO  
Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency  
Cleveland, Ohio

Joe Marinucci  
President & CEO  
Downtown Cleveland Alliance  
Cleveland, Ohio

Eric Morse  
President & CEO  
The Centers for Families and Children  
Cleveland, Ohio

Marsha A. Mockabee  
President & CEO  
Urban League of Greater Cleveland  
Cleveland, Ohio

Chris Ronayne  
President  
University Circle Inc.  
Cleveland, OH

Jeffery K. Patterson  
Chief Executive Office  
Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority  
Cleveland, Ohio

Marty McGann  
Executive Vice President,  
Advocacy & Strategic Initiatives  
Greater Cleveland Partnership  
Cleveland, Ohio

Alison D. Goebel, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Greater Ohio Policy Center  
Columbus, Ohio

Christopher Stocking  
Chair  
Clevelanders for Public Transit  
Cleveland, Ohio

Jeff Epstein  
Executive Director  
MidTown Cleveland, Inc.  
Cleveland, Ohio

Dr. Alex Johnson  
President  
Cuyahoga Community College  
Cleveland, Ohio

Felton Thomas, Jr.  
Executive Director/CEO  
Cleveland Public Library  
Cleveland, Ohio

Ronald B. Richard  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Cleveland Foundation

Armond Budish  
Cuyahoga County Executive  
Cleveland, Ohio

Brian M. Zimmerman  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cleveland Metroparks  
Cleveland, Ohio

Gina Vernaci  
President & CEO  
Playhouse Square Foundation  
Cleveland, Ohio

Harlan M. Sands  
President  
Cleveland State University  
Cleveland, Ohio

Mitchell Balk  
President  
Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation  
Cleveland, Ohio

Jeanine Gergel  
President  
Healthy Lakewood Foundation  
Lakewood, Ohio

Gary Wolske  
President  
FOP of Ohio  
Columbus Ohio

Scott Cowen  
Interim President  
Case Western Reserve University  
Cleveland, Ohio

Len Komoroski  
CEO  
Cleveland Cavaliers / Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse  
Cleveland, Ohio

Joseph F. Frolik  
Senior Vice President, Communication, Community  
and Government Relations  
The MetroHealth System  
Cleveland, Ohio

Susanna H. Krey  
President  
Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland  
Cleveland, Ohio

William H. Nix, Sr.  
President/Business Agent  
ATU Local 268  
Cleveland, Ohio

Ronald B. Richard  
President & CEO  
The Cleveland Foundation  
Cleveland, Ohio

The Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund