



Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments

# Transportation Legislative Agenda of the Toledo Region

2023-2024



**[www.tmacog.org/transportation/legislative-agenda](http://www.tmacog.org/transportation/legislative-agenda)**

# Endorsements



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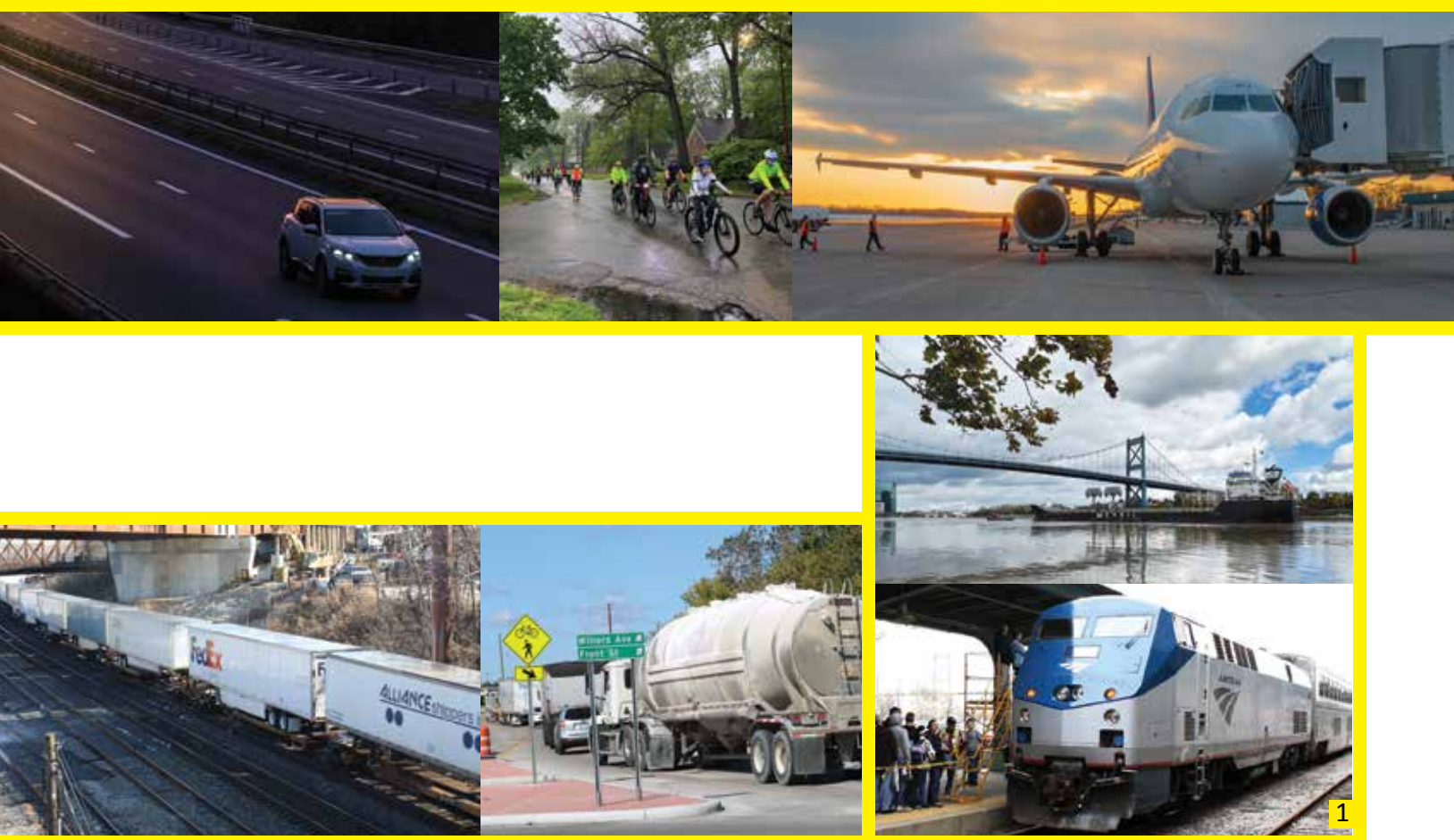
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# Overview

The Transportation Legislative Agenda of the Toledo Region (Legislative Agenda) is developed collaboratively by the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) committees and Transportation Coalition members. The Transportation Coalition is comprised of regional stakeholders from the public and private sectors. Since 2001, the coalition has advanced many initiatives and policies that were identified in the Legislative Agenda. These accomplishments produced facilities that enabled growth and provided safety for residents and visitors in the region. By updating the document every two years, coalition members can adjust the agenda depending on the economic climate and the current allocation of transportation funding. The agenda identifies multimodal funding and policy recommendations at the federal, state, and local levels.

A safe, efficient, and connected multimodal transportation network allows people to access jobs, healthcare, and social/recreational activities. In addition to connecting people, a connected transportation system helps improve regional economic prosperity. Regional consensus on needed funding opportunities and policies is essential to a successful transportation network. This agenda calls on policymakers to make prudent investments of transportation resources across all modes and to increase the number of resources available.

TMACOG presents this agenda on behalf of the region. The strategies and recommendations included in the Legislative Agenda are the consensus view of a broad coalition of partners and stakeholders. Information on the creation of the Legislative Agenda and ways it can be used as an effective advocacy tool can be found at <http://www.tmacog.org/transportation/legislative-agenda>





# Federal Funding Policy Brief

As the infrastructure funding gap continues to grow, prudent investments are needed now to prevent further deterioration of our streets, highways, bridges, rail and transit systems, pedestrian and bikeway systems, airports, seaports, and waterways. The public sector has a responsibility to act to improve safety, support quality of life, increase employment opportunities, and enhance economic competitiveness.

## FEDERAL Priorities

- Appropriate full funding for all transportation programs at the amounts authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. A complete list of programs is available at <https://bit.ly/3G2tAA1>
- After 25 years of stagnation, increase the gas tax or pursue other reforms to ensure long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund. Support the ability of state and local governments to plan, fund, and construct the projects that will rebuild our infrastructure and strengthen our economy.
- Prefer user taxes and fees such as the motor fuel tax and other fuels taxes, vehicle miles traveled fee, freight waybill tax, shipping container fees, impact fees, tolling, and similar strategies. Design these fees with attention to the fee per unit, the means to adjust the fee over time (such as linking to Consumer Price Index), administrative costs, and privacy safeguards.
- Where appropriate, attract private-investment via public-private partnerships that feature transparent agreements and accountability through tightly monitored performance standards.
- Support changes to federal tax law to enable individuals and corporations to contribute to construction and maintenance of public infrastructure on a tax-deductible basis. Retain the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds (such as, governmental bonds and private activity bonds) in order to lower borrowing costs for local infrastructure projects.
- Leverage public funds and encourage private co-investment via credit assistance programs such as infrastructure banks, the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, the Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing program, etc. Improve and broaden the feasibility of these and other innovative financing mechanisms by streamlining application timelines and requirements.
- Support funding for Intelligent Transportation Systems to improve safety and efficiency, such as connected and autonomous vehicle infrastructure and technology.
- Implement a national strategic freight plan and improve flexibility to expend funds on airport, seaport, rail, intermodal, roads, highways, and other key freight investments.
- Promote and encourage investments in water and wastewater infrastructure through applications to Bipartisan Infrastructure Law programs. Maintain a regular process of authorizing projects and activities related to the key missions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- Support full use of the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) revenue solutions and use HMT funds for intended purposes. Provide an exemption from the HMT for domestic and U.S. Canadian movements for non-bulk cargo within the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway System.
- Equitably fund all modes of transportation including increasing the share allocated to public transportation (Mass Transit Account), active transportation (the Transportation Alternatives Program), and passenger rail.
- Continue subsidizing transportation out of general Treasury funds until a permanent solution to the infrastructure funding gap is implemented.
- Support continuation of the U.S. Maritime Administration's Port Infrastructure Development Program.
- Establish and provide initial funding for a national infrastructure bank to provide direct loans for qualifying infrastructure projects across the nation.

# State and Local Funding Policy Brief

## STATE Priorities

- In the absence of increased federal funding, Ohio must take state-level action to deliver locally identified projects by increasing existing revenue and developing new revenue. Equitably fund all modes of transportation including increasing the share allocated to public transportation, railways, seaports, airports, and active transportation.
- Support maintenance and full collection of the statewide gas tax.
- To prevent further erosion in purchasing power of the revenue from Ohio's flat rate per gallon motor fuel excise tax, consider indexing some or all the tax. Among the options for indexing are the Consumer Price Index, the average wholesale price of fuel, and the Producer Price Index.
- Due to increasing vehicle fuel efficiency and the growing use of alternative fuels, Ohio should consider implementing a vehicle miles traveled user fee to counteract declining revenue from traditional sources.
- Continue to allow localities to impose local option taxes, by supporting the indexing of Ohio's base vehicle license plate fee and allowing counties and municipalities to enact and index permissive use plate fees.
- Regarding the Ohio Turnpike, keep toll rate increases to a minimum. Use toll-generated revenue primarily to preserve and expand the turnpike itself. Distributions of bonds backed by toll revenue should stay within jurisdictions closest in geographic proximity to the turnpike, should produce a net gain in transportation dollars for those jurisdictions, and should be limited to infrastructure projects with a lifespan consistent with the terms of funding.
- Implement the recommendations of ODOT's Ohio Airports Focus Study.
- Support continuation of the ODOT Maritime Assistance Program, which provides infrastructure grants to eligible Ohio port authorities.
- Support the new JobsOhio program to continue to help Ohio's airports to attract new flights to unserved or underserved markets.
- Continue programs such as the Ohio Bridge Partnership Program, the Clean Ohio Program, the State Capital Improvements Program, and Local Transportation Improvements Program.
- Assist municipalities with full funding for resurfacing and reconstruction on U.S. and state routes within their jurisdiction by expanding ODOT's Urban Paving Program and creating other funding options.
- Support funding for Intelligent Transportation Systems to improve the safety and efficiency of transport, such as connected and autonomous vehicle infrastructure and technology.
- Support the governor's highway safety funding initiative and advocate for full funding of the Highway State Improvement Program rather than the current 10 percent local match requirement.
- Continue to enhance programs under the Ohio Public Works Commission including the Local Transportation Improvement Program and the State Capital Improvement Program.

## LOCAL Priorities

- Leverage Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to address local needs and funding gaps and continue to improve and expand regional infrastructure and competitiveness. A current list of available funding opportunities is available at <https://bit.ly/3BLvpik>
- Explore expanding the use and funding of specially designated Transportation Improvement Districts, such as those in Wood and Lucas counties.
- Local communities should consider utilizing all funding opportunities including the permissive license plate fees.
- Support an increase in funds to local governments to address safety on local and municipal roads.

# Air Transportation Policy Brief

## REGIONAL Viewpoint

Aviation is critical to a balanced cargo and passenger system. Successful air transportation depends greatly upon reliable connectivity to regional road and railways and upon preserving and maintaining airport infrastructure. The airport division of the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority operates the City of Toledo's two airports, Eugene F. Kranz Toledo Express Airport and Toledo Executive Airport. These airports support five major areas of aviation operations: passenger, cargo, general aviation, military, and aviation education and training. Each operational area is important to the economic vitality of the airports and the northwest Ohio region.

## FEDERAL Priorities

- Support with funding, regulatory clearances, etc., the recommendations of the airport master plan for Eugene F. Kranz Toledo Express Airport as updated by the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority.
- Support efforts to preserve and modernize the infrastructure assets of the Ohio Air National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing. Continue to invest in the Air Guard Ready Alert Mission to continue to build permanent hangars.
- Support establishment of low-cost wetlands banking for public projects to allow mitigation of wetlands on a watershed basis rather than parcel by parcel.
- Promote the safe use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), commonly known as drones.
- Support continuation of the Small Communities Air Service Development Program Grant.
- Create protections for traveler mobility devices, such as wheelchairs, during flights.
- Support requiring airlines to improve bathrooms on airplanes to meet ADA requirements.

## STATE Priorities

- Implement the recommendations of ODOT's Ohio Airports Focus Study.
- Improve connectivity of airports to surface transportation and highways, including I-475 via U.S. 20A.
- Promote consistency between federal and state regulation of UAS. Prohibit drone use near critical infrastructure and balance surveillance and privacy issues with opportunities for UAS economic development.
- Reinvest a higher percentage of aviation-related tax revenue back into the Ohio Airport Grant Program.
- Revise Ohio's legislation to make all airports within the Ohio Airport System Plan eligible for grant funding.
- Support funding for airfield infrastructure upgrades to maintain and enhance capabilities for passenger and cargo operations.
- Develop grant and low-interest loan programs to support training for students at Ohio universities and community colleges who plan to pursue aviation-related careers.
- Support the new JobsOhio program to continue to help Ohio's airports to attract new flights to unserved or underserved markets.

## LOCAL Priorities

- Support efforts to increase leisure and business travel and attract more airlines to operate at Toledo Express Airport.
- Support current air freight operations and work to attract new air freight service.



# Freight Rail Policy Brief

## FEDERAL Priorities

- As authorized in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, continue the Railway-Highway Crossings Program, which provides funds for safety improvements at public at-grade crossings, and can include the installation of protective devices, replacement of obsolete warning devices, and projects to improve pedestrian safety at grade crossings.
- Continue to fund federal grant programs such as the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program that provide funding to improve freight railroad safety, efficiency, or reliability.
- Support rail-oriented public-private partnerships to access available funding when addressing rail bottlenecks, modal conflicts, bridge rehabilitation, and other infrastructure needs. Create a rail infrastructure trust fund for the public portion of partnerships.

## STATE Priorities

- Invest in rail corridor improvements that eliminate freight and passenger conflicts and result in more efficient traffic flow for both freight and passenger rail.
- Support maintaining and expanding short line and regional railroads by providing access to grants, loans, and other assistance through the Ohio Rail Development Commission.
- Support funding to preserve the right-of-way of abandoned rail lines for future uses, including recreational use or future freight or passenger rail operations.
- Continue rail crossing diagnostic reviews at problem crossings to identify safety issues and decide the best course of action to ensure vehicle and pedestrian safety.
- Continue to improve the safety of rural at-grade rail crossings with the addition of better lighting, signals, and gates where needed.
- Support policies, communication, and coordination between railroads and public agencies to ensure the timely completion of infrastructure projects on or adjacent to railroad property.
- Follow the guidance of the State of Ohio Rail Plan and use the plan as a tool for identifying freight and passenger rail investment opportunities and needed improvements, and coordinating rail planning across the state.

## LOCAL Priorities

- Maintain and improve intermodal access and promote industrial development at the Norfolk Southern Toledo Intermodal Terminal, the CSX Northwest Ohio Terminal, and other regional rail facilities.
- Improve infrastructure where needed to increase connectivity between railroads and the Toledo Seaport.
- Recognize the importance of short-line and regional railroads and maintain and improve their connections to industrial sites, intermodal sites, and Class 1 railroad interchanges.
- Address rail/highway crossing conflicts with advance warning signs, signed alternate routes, GPS navigation warnings, and grade separations where feasible. Work with railroads and local jurisdictions to address re-occurring blockages of at-grade crossings.
- Address safety issues at problem rail/highway at-grade crossings with safety measures such as four-quadrant gate systems, closing of redundant at-grade crossings, and grade separations where feasible.
- Prevent vehicular traffic backups at busy urban rail crossings by using sensors and signal timing to control the flow of vehicles near crossings with stopped traffic.
- Work with railroads and communities to establish quiet zones where horns will not be sounded along track sections with one or more public at-grade crossings within the community.
- Work to resolve conflicts between railroads and adjacent landowners caused by rail yard expansion, noise, bright lights, air quality issues, cross-track accessibility, and safety issues.
- Ensure the reliability of the aging Norfolk Southern, Wheeling & Lake Erie, and CSX rail swing bridges over the Maumee River to prevent disruptions in the flow of both rail and marine freight.

# Logistics Transportation Policy Brief

## FEDERAL Priorities

- Appropriate full funding for freight-related programs at the amounts authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including both formula apportionment programs and competitive grant programs.
- Continue funding the National Highway Freight Program to improve the efficient movement of freight on the National Highway Freight Network.
- Address the ongoing supply chain delays by working with shippers, ports, railroads, and the trucking industry to implement short term solutions and develop long term resolutions that will increase efficiency.
- Support short-term relief and long-term incentives that address workforce needs across the supply chain including reasonable and safe hours of service and other regulations affecting the trucking industry.

## STATE Priorities

- Promote design standards on truck routes that improve the safe flow of freight which includes truck-friendly intersections, ramps, turning width, turning radius, signal timing, and highly visible unobstructed signage.
- Encourage cities to plan for non-constrictive truck access for urban freight delivery and to designate truck-friendly routes connecting highways to the urban core.
- To facilitate the free flow of freight between Toledo and Columbus, improve U.S. 23 north of I-270 by implementing significant long-term solutions.
- Expand commercial truck parking initiatives to provide adequate, legal, convenient, and safe parking areas for drivers with limited hours of service, overnight parking needs, or those waiting to deliver or pick up loads.
- Encourage the allocation of additional funding sources to improve the availability of commercial vehicle parking across the state. Revise state laws to allow unused parking areas to be used for truck parking.
- Support more parity between the gasoline tax and diesel tax. Currently, the Ohio motor fuel excise tax rate on diesel is 8.5 cents more per gallon than gasoline.
- Review existing state laws and regulations for impediments to the safe testing and deployment of connected and automated vehicles, including truck platooning. Work to standardize laws and regulations across all states.
- Support the development and use of alternative fuels and clean, high-efficiency power plants in the trucking industry and support the research and development of long-range battery power.
- Follow the guidance within the 2021 Freight Electrification Study and work to develop a network of charging stations across Ohio. Encourage the shift to commercial electric power beginning with local delivery vehicles.
- Follow the guidance and implement the projects included in the 2022 Transport Ohio statewide freight plan and use the new data dashboard to develop planning strategies to address future freight needs.

## LOCAL Priorities

- Address rail/highway conflicts with advance warning signs, signed alternate routes, GPS navigation warnings, and grade separations where feasible. Work with railroads and local jurisdictions to address re-occurring at-grade crossing blockages and continue efforts to improve rail crossing safety.
- Continue to plan for the 2025 opening of the Gordie Howe International Bridge that will provide a direct and efficient highway connection between the U.S. and Canada. Monitor any changes in freight volumes or truck flow patterns once the bridge opens and address any local highway deficiencies.
- Provide efficient and reliable connections for manufacturing, distribution, and intermodal facilities to the national highway system by maintaining and improving last-mile connectors and addressing congestion and safety issues.
- Address the need for an efficient truck route that would connect the City of Fostoria to I-75 while avoiding rail crossings and village streets.
- Support development at Express Industrial Park by continuing to improve U.S. 20A as an important freight corridor connecting the industrial park entrance to the new I-475 interchange currently under construction.
- Use the region's strategic location as an asset to develop facilities for trans-loading oil and gas products in a safe and efficient manner to support oil and gas production and refinement and energy independence.
- Address labor needs in the logistics industry through recruiting and training of commercial vehicle drivers, mechanics, and technicians through high school and community college programs.

# Marine Transportation Policy Brief

## REGIONAL Viewpoint

The Port of Toledo is a critical economic force. According to a 2018 study, Toledo's port generated \$669 million in economic activity, \$513 million in personal income and local consumption expenditures, and \$180 million in federal and state tax revenue.

## FEDERAL Priorities

- Support and implement America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2020. Maintain a regular, biannual process of authorizing projects and activities related to the key missions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- Congress should require that all Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) revenue is spent for its intended purpose. The legislation should ensure that Great Lakes ports receive no less than 10 percent of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' operation and maintenance funds each year.
- Support HMT revenue solutions and use HMT funds for intended purposes. Provide an exemption from the HMT for domestic and U.S.-Canadian movements for non-bulk cargo within the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway System.
- Congress should provide adequate funds in the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill to ensure continuation of the Soo Lock Asset Renewal Program and the flow of vital marine freight such as iron ore. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began a multi-year Asset Renewal Program to rehabilitate and modernize the Soo Locks infrastructure at a total estimated cost of \$181 million.
- Support seaport-specific funding to modernize U.S. seaports including investments in technology and upgrades to the locks in the Saint Lawrence Seaway System.
- Support the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' budget to appropriate funds for upland placement of dredge materials.
- Establish a single federal ballast water rule by adopting standards put forth by the International Maritime Organization's Convention for the Control and Management of Ship's Ballast Water and Sediments.
- Support continued funding for the Port Infrastructure Development Grant Program.

## STATE Priorities

- Support environmentally acceptable and financially feasible policies that enable short- and long-term management of dredged material including beneficial reuse, new capacity in existing confined disposal facilities, and/or safe disposal via policies previously identified.
- Continue support for the Great Lakes Dredged Material Center for Innovation.
- Provide reliable, long-term funding of Ohio's maritime ports. Within the state's biennial budget: allow for tax abatements for operating terminals located within harbors recognized by the state, offer state grants for port infrastructure with no local match, and continue to fund multimodal initiatives.
- Support the ODOT Maritime Assistance Program.

## LOCAL Priorities

- Support the dredging of the navigational channel in the Maumee River as well as protection of the channel.
- Support the developing Great Lakes cruise industry and promote Toledo as a potential destination for Great Lakes cruise vessels.
- Support efforts to develop major north/south and east/west maritime corridors for the City of Toledo.
- Leverage the region's strategic location for trans-loading oil, gas, and liquid bulk products in a safe and efficient manner to support oil and gas productions and refinement and energy independence.
- Ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place to support maritime, rail, and trucking operations, including local roadways and heavy-haul routes.
- Coordinate with the railroads to ensure the functionality and maintenance of aging swing bridge rail crossings over the Maumee River.

# Passenger Rail Policy Brief

## FEDERAL Priorities

- Appropriate full funding for passenger rail programs at the amounts authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including both formula apportionment programs and competitive grant programs.
- Support and provide funding for Amtrak's vision for expansion, a 15-year plan that could connect 160 communities throughout the United States by building new or improved rail corridors in over 25 states.
- Implement components of the Federal Railroad Administration's Midwest Regional Rail Plan.
- Ensure ADA compliance on all passenger trains, platforms, and stations, and stress the importance of accessibility for all travelers when funding passenger rail infrastructure projects.
- Support the development and the use of clean diesel technology, diesel hybrid innovations, and battery-electric locomotives.
- Work with freight railroads to ensure that passenger trains have access to and can operate without interruption or delay on freight rails along corridors that are vital to connecting population centers.

## STATE Priorities

- Enable Ohio's eligibility to receive federal infrastructure funding to improve and expand passenger rail service that will connect population centers for business, industry, and tourism and create new economic opportunities while reducing congestion and emissions.
- Develop a new statewide plan for implementing a passenger rail system that would connect major cities and regions across Ohio, providing another mode of public transit for all travelers.
- Support Amtrak's five corridor expansion plan for Ohio, which for northwest Ohio includes three daily round trips connecting Cleveland-Toledo-Detroit-Pontiac.
- Find a solution to the freight rail conflicts that cause congestion and delays along the east-west Amtrak corridor in northern Ohio and make improvements to rail infrastructure, including bridges, to ensure efficient and uninterrupted service along this vital corridor.
- Reconnect Toledo and Detroit by passenger rail. A Toledo-Detroit route would also provide a vital link between Cleveland and Detroit.
- Study the feasibility of a Toledo connection to Columbus, providing travelers an alternate mode that would bypass busy highways such as U.S. 23. A Toledo connection would offer Columbus rail links to Chicago, Cleveland and the East Coast.
- Support funding to preserve the right-of-way of abandoned rail lines for future uses, including recreational use and future freight or passenger rail operations.

## LOCAL Priorities

- Continue to work with regional partners in Ohio and Michigan and with Amtrak to reconnect the Toledo and Detroit metropolitan areas by passenger rail.
- Working with regional partners and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, study the feasibility of connecting Toledo by passenger rail south to Bowling Green, Findlay, and on to Columbus, and consider a connection to Fort Wayne, Indiana.
- Address safety issues at problem rail/highway at-grade crossings with safety measures such as four-quadrant gate systems, closing of redundant at-grade crossings, and with grade separations where feasible.
- As a part of an overall study of the Amtrak east-west corridor, evaluate the limitations and vulnerability of the aging Maumee River swing bridge used by both passenger and freight trains.
- Maintain and upgrade as needed the Toledo train station, including intermodal connections, to ensure reliable accessibility to rail and bus services for all passengers, including those with disabilities.
- Support development of the Toledo train station area by improving multimodal connections to downtown Toledo, as well as other districts and neighborhoods.
- Support the development of light rail and street cars as additional choices for connecting outlying areas to downtown Toledo.

## REGIONAL Viewpoint

A full range of mobility choices characterizes successful regions. Walking and bicycling are two methods of non-motorized transportation that require infrastructure in the same way that automobiles require a network of roads, signs, and signals. Investments in sidewalks and on- and off-road bicycle facilities provide safe transport and support the same trip purposes as automobiles and transit. A safe, reliable, accessible, and multimodal network links employees to their places of employment and connects people of all abilities and ages to centers of commerce, medical, educational, and recreational activities.

## FEDERAL Priorities

- Support increased funding for the Transportation Alternatives (TA) program that addresses bikeways, pedestrian facilities, vegetation management, historic transportation facilities, environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity, and the Safe Routes to School program.
- Continue and increase funding for Safe Routes to School programs and projects.

## STATE Priorities

- Support creation and implementation of a statewide Complete Streets policy.
- Increase enforcement of the recently passed legislation requiring that Ohio motorists pass bicyclists while leaving at least 3 feet of clearance. This should be accomplished with a multi-faceted education campaign targeting law enforcement, motorists, and bicyclists.
- Support renewed and increased funding in the Clean Ohio Fund program including the Trails Fund.
- Support funding to plan and construct a signed network of bicycle-friendly street routes and multi-purpose paths that enable people to use bicycles as a practical means of transportation.
- Support the following state plans: Active Transportation Safety Plan; Walk.Bike.Ohio Policy Plan; and Ohio Trails Vision.
- Modify the license plate code under Ohio Revised Code (ORC )4503.21 to include language to allow for an attachment to the rear of the vehicle of a tow ball, bicycle rack, removable hitch, or any other device designed to carry an object on the rear of a vehicle.
- Revise the language in the ORC to clarify the rights of bicyclists in crosswalks.

## LOCAL Priorities

- Support implementation of the regional Complete Streets Policy and toolkit, which includes the addition of pedestrian and bicycle facilities (bike lanes or paths) in roadway construction projects.
- Encourage jurisdictions to adopt their own Complete Streets policies, resolutions, and ordinances.
- Support implementation of the Regional Sidewalk Policy. Enforce maintenance and snow removal policies on existing facilities and develop new facilities that address major barriers created by expressways, railroad tracks, and rivers.
- Pursue Safe Routes to School initiatives to encourage lifelong health and safe personal mobility habits.
- Support the usage and expansion of the Veo bikeshare and scooter share program.

# Public Transportation Policy Brief

## REGIONAL Viewpoint

Mobility should be available to all Ohioans regardless of ability, age, economic status, or federally protected class. Successful regions are characterized by a full range of safe, reliable, accessible, and reasonably priced transit services. Transit services link employees to their places of employment and centers of commerce. Transit connects people to healthy food options, and to medical, educational, religious, and recreational activities. Transit services require viable, regional solutions, without which our region will be left behind.

## FEDERAL Priorities

- Appropriate full funding for public transportation programs at the amounts authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
- Retain the federal Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund and increase its revenues.
- Incentivize cleaner, greener fleets and fund the replacement of existing diesel buses with environmentally sustainable, alternatively fueled vehicles.
- Retain the transit commuter tax benefit at the same level as the parking tax benefit.
- Retain the alternative fuels tax credit.
- The Federal Transit Authority (FTA) should expedite the current federal grant approval process to speed project delivery and reduce costs.

## STATE Priorities

- Support stabilization of state funding for public transportation. Currently, the State of Ohio dedicates General Revenue Funding (GRF) for transit every two years. Public transit is the only public good without set funding amounts.
- Double the GRF contribution to ODOT Transit Funding.
- Support the statewide long range plan, Access Ohio 2045.
- Encourage ODOT to update the 2015 ODOT Ohio Statewide Transit Needs Study.
- Increase ODOT budget to fund half of the 20 percent local match required for transit capital projects. This will ensure that critical capital projects are completed and available federal funds are being spent in Ohio.
- Expand the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Medicaid, and other funding sources for on-demand rides to address the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes.
- Support the continuation of state funding programs to assist with capital and operational costs.

## LOCAL Priorities

- Support the initiatives identified in TARTA Next.
- Support countywide accessible transportation through coordination of social service agencies and private transportation providers.
- Support implementation of locally developed Coordinated Public Transportation and Human Service Transportation plans in Lucas and Wood counties.
- Extend hours of service, strengthen regional connections, and offer faster, more direct routes.
- Improve productivity in service delivery by implementing one-call/one-click information for users.
- Continue adding mechanisms to coordinate unserved and underserved areas in Wood County.
- Identify more multimodal transportation options to local airports and train stations.
- Encourage public entities to prioritize transit-oriented improvements during development and redevelopment of properties.
- Encourage collaboration between local transportation providers and the private sector. Identify connections to major economic development centers and employers.
- Support the addition of electric and hydrogen fueled transit vehicles.



# Smart Transportation & Innovative Mobility Policy Brief

## REGIONAL Viewpoint

Transportation technology is rapidly evolving, from electric vehicle fleets and charging station networks to Hyperloop and advanced air mobility. The future of personal mobility and goods movement is changing rapidly.

## FEDERAL Priorities

- Create a standards committee comprised of industry, technology, education, and government partners to develop codes and guidelines for interoperability and secure data communication.
- Develop standards for cybersecurity and regulate the data collected by autonomous vehicles to preserve the privacy of vehicle owners and users (such as location data that could reveal protected health information).
- Adopt the standardized naming for advanced driver assistance technology created and updated by AAA, Consumer Reports, J.D. Power, and the National Safety Council.
- Engage stakeholders to develop legislative policies for autonomous vehicles related to certification, licensing, training, and tort liability.
- Establish Federal Transit Administration policies and procedures that permit the use of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding to support connected and/or autonomous vehicle projects.
- Develop standards and guidelines to ensure public autonomous vehicles are ADA compliant.
- Ensure Hyperloop technology is developed with ADA accessibility considerations.

## STATE Priorities

- Establish a source of grant funds to support local autonomous and connected vehicle projects.
- Encourage infrastructure improvements that support increased adoption and deployment of alternative fuel vehicles, including electric, compressed natural gas, and hydrogen fuel cell technologies.
- Utilize highway right-of-way assets to improve digital communication infrastructure, particularly in rural areas of Ohio and Michigan, to close broadband and cellular infrastructure gaps.
- Improve technology supporting transportation infrastructure across Ohio and Michigan including clear pavement markings and roadside communication units that support the deployment and testing of vehicle technologies.
- Ensure that if states require a license to operate an automated vehicle, people with disabilities cannot be excluded from getting a license based on their disability.
- Follow the guidance within the 2021 Freight Electrification Study and work to develop a network of charging stations across Ohio. Encourage the shift to commercial electric power beginning with local delivery vehicles.

## LOCAL Priorities

- Advocate and encourage that, if developed, the Hyperloop stops in Toledo in order for the region to receive some of the economic benefits and provide additional public transportation options.
- Work with DriveOhio, FlyOhio, and local entities to support Ohio's Advanced Air Mobility Framework and the Advanced Air Mobility industry, and position the region for future research and implementation opportunities.
- Utilize Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to establish a network of Level 2 and DC Fast Charge stations to facilitate the broader deployment of all-electric and hybrid vehicles.
- Develop local policies for the operation of slow-moving autonomous vehicles in urban areas, prioritizing ease of movement for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Support ongoing and future efforts in Ohio and Michigan to create a seamless transportation technology deployment strategy between states.
- Identify potential candidates for a smart corridor.

# Streets, Highways, and Bridges Policy Brief

## FEDERAL Priorities

- Support a sustainable approach to infrastructure funding that provides a long-term solution and addresses the growing backlog of necessary infrastructure investments.
- Enable local flexibility to use federal funds according to locally-identified needs. Permit municipalities to use innovative financial techniques to manage projects.

## STATE Priorities

- Support an increase in Ohio's base vehicle license plate fee and allow counties and municipalities to enact permissive-use plate fees.
- Continue to enable Transportation Improvement District programs as a vital tool to finance transportation projects.
- Assist municipalities with full funding for resurfacing and reconstruction on U.S. and state routes within their jurisdiction, such as expanding ODOT's Urban Paving Program.
- Support the continuation of the Municipal Bridge Program and the 80/20 funding split.
- Support the continuation of the Large Bridge Program.
- Maintain the Jobs & Commerce division grant funding program and the Ohio Development Services Agency Roadwork Development (629) program.
- Continue the State Capital Improvements Program and Local Transportation Improvements Program administered by the Ohio Public Works Commission and the Ohio Bridge Partnership Program.
- Establish a free-flow connection between Toledo and Columbus by implementing significant long-term solutions.
- Support the study and future investments for the Great Lakes Mid-Atlantic Corridor (formerly the I-73/I-74/I-75 corridor) from northwest Ohio to central Ohio.

## LOCAL Priorities

- Build a free-flow connection between Toledo and Columbus.
- I-475 and Airport Highway interchange improvements.
- I-75 and U.S. 20 interchange improvements.
- Identify potential locations for grade separation projects.
- Complete Craig Bridge improvements.
- Widen I-475 between U.S. 23 and Douglas Road to six lanes.
- Maintain and preserve current infrastructure.
- Invest in Intelligent Transportation Systems to support connected and automated vehicles.



photo credit: ODOT

# Transportation Safety Policy Brief

## REGIONAL Viewpoint

Despite commitment at the federal, state, and local levels to move toward zero transportation deaths, fatal and serious injury crashes are trending upward. An increase in speeding and distracted driving are just two of the many driving behaviors contributing to the increase in fatal and serious injury crashes. Members and stakeholders in the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) region agree that safety legislation at all levels needs to be improved. The points included below support the Vision Zero/Towards Zero Deaths initiatives.

## FEDERAL Priorities

- Support data-driven safety analysis that uses advanced methods to improve performance-based safety planning, programming, and design processes.

## STATE Priorities

- Support the governor's highway safety funding initiative and advocate for full funding of the Highway State Improvement Program (HSIP) at 100 percent instead of the current 10 percent local match requirement.
- Encourage lawmakers to move the younger driver nighttime driving curfew from midnight to 10 p.m.
- Support initiatives related to increased student driver education in order to reduce young driver severe and fatal crashes, such as increasing the student driver learning period from 6 months to 12 months.
- Increase awareness and education related to distracted driving initiatives, such as expanding the number of distracted driving corridors in the state.
- Support efforts to curb distracted driving by backing a Hands-Free Ohio bill making any use of a mobile device while operating a motor vehicle a primary offense.
- Encourage ODOT to streamline the project delivery process for safety countermeasures (TMACOG Safety Plan).
- Increase enforcement, education, and awareness of the Move Over law, which mandates drivers to move over or slow down when passing working crews, emergency vehicles, tow trucks, and other vehicles parked on the shoulder.

## LOCAL Priorities

- Identify high accident locations and potential countermeasures.
- Encourage local governments to apply for HSIP funds.
- Maintain a current regional local road safety plan with defined emphasis areas and strategies for lowering crashes, and support plans at a jurisdictional level.
- Promote the implementation of proven safety countermeasures throughout the region.
- Identify locations of rail/highway crossing safety issues in the region, such as lack of or insufficient crossing gates, lack of pedestrian access, insufficient lighting or signage, traffic bottlenecks and backups, or consistently blocked crossings. Work with ODOT, the Ohio Rail Development Commission, railroads, and local jurisdictions to find the best ways to address those issues.









**This Transportation Legislative Agenda is endorsed by a broad coalition of partners and stakeholders. We invite you to visit the Transportation pages at [tmacog.org](http://www.tmacog.org) to read more about the creation of this agenda and learn how you can use it to advocate for effective regional transportation policies.**

**[www.tmacog.org/transportation/legislative-agenda](http://www.tmacog.org/transportation/legislative-agenda)**

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## **our vision**



**Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments will be the governmental partner of choice to coordinate regional assets, opportunities, and challenges.**

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