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Director Jerry Wray  
Ohio Department of Transportation  
1980 West Broad St  
Columbus, OH 43223

Via e-mail to: [Transit.Needs@dot.state.oh.us](mailto:Transit.Needs@dot.state.oh.us)

**Re: Comments Concerning the Ohio Statewide Transit Needs Survey**

Dear Director Jerry Wray:

Disability Rights Ohio (DRO) is a non-profit corporation and the federally and state designated protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities in Ohio. The mission of DRO is to advocate for the human, civil and legal rights of people with disabilities. DRO appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Ohio Statewide Transit Needs Study.

The lack of genuine transportation options across the state, especially public transit options, remains a barrier for people with disabilities and prohibits them from being fully integrated in our communities. Transportation is essential not only for connecting Ohioans with disabilities to health care and social services, but also to employment, education and community life. The Ohio Transit Needs Survey presented findings which highlight the reality that many individuals with disabilities experience every day – that there is a funding gap between transit needs and funding that is currently available for accessible public transportation. This need is especially profound in rural areas and for transit that connects regions or different states. We appreciate that the Ohio Statewide Transit Needs survey was able to collect and summarize data to support these realities.

DRO supports the proposed short-term preliminary recommendation of setting performance measures and guidelines. DRO encourages DOT to ensure that accessibility considerations are included in performance measurement and performance guidelines to ensure that people with disabilities have access to public transportation options. By insuring that accessibility is a consideration in performance measurement and management, transportation authorities will not be tempted to decrease accessibility in order to meet other priorities.

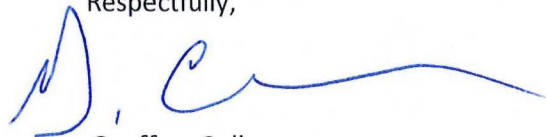
DRO also supports the strategy and opportunity to improve coordination with human services organizations. Many people with disabilities need affordable public transit so they can get to medical appointments, job training, or social service appointments. Increasing communication, coordination, collaboration and consolidation among social service agencies and transportation authorities has the potential to increase service availability for these specific services and supports. Although, DRO suggests every effort should be made to ensure that funding is not simply being transferred from the

Ohio Department of Medicaid, which already provides transportation for medical purposes, unless there is clear evidence that transit services can be enhanced or improved. DRO recommends that the Human Services Transportation Coordinating Committee have representation from consumer groups of individuals with disabilities. While we support the creation of more accessible transportation opportunities for people with disabilities as they access the health and human service system, DRO also encourages the consideration of people with disabilities when meeting general public transit needs. People with disabilities do not only access health and human services; but also need transportation to get to work, go shopping, run errands, visit friends and family, vote, and participate in community life.

The long-term recommendation of developing public information and technology will also be helpful in ensuring that people with disabilities have access to public transit information. DRO recommends that public transit technologies be developed using principles of universal design, which means that the technologies are designed to be able to be used by anyone, without needing many additional accommodations for a person with a disability.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Ohio Transit Needs Survey. The results of this survey reflect the impact of an underfunded public transit system. Our clients and other community partners would greatly benefit from increased opportunity for community employment, civic participation, housing and healthier communities that would be a result of more equitable funding for accessible transportation options. If you have any questions or would like further clarifications concerning our comments, please contact Kevin Truitt at [ktruitt@disabilityrightsohio.org](mailto:ktruitt@disabilityrightsohio.org) or 614-466-7264 x 122.

Respectfully,



Geoffrey Collver  
Director of Policy and Communications