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Shapiro Administration, Local Leaders Highlight How Governor’s Proposal to Invest in Public Transit Would Help Westmoreland County, Public Comment Encouraged on Local Transit Development

Pennsylvanian’s lives and economic opportunity require reliable, safe, clean public transit, which is why Governor Shapiro’s 2024-25 budget proposes \$282 million for the public transit systems that Pennsylvanians rely on.

Greensburg, PA – At an event today in Greensburg, **Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Secretary Mike Carroll** with officials from the **Westmoreland County Transit Authority (WCTA)** and **Westmoreland County Chamber of Commerce** highlighted how Governor Shapiro’s budget proposal to invest in transit agencies is a commonsense way to create good-paying jobs, spur economic development, and help Pennsylvanians reach their destinations safely.

The Governor’s Budget proposes an additional \$282 million investment for transit – the first of its kind in over a decade. This would be achieved with an additional 1.75 percent of the Pennsylvania Sales Tax being deposited into the Public Transportation Trust Fund. The proposal would invest an additional \$955,084 in WCTA in the 2024-25 fiscal year.

The officials also encouraged the public to share feedback on the authority’s draft [Transit Development Plan](#) – a strategic blueprint for improvements to transit service for Westmoreland County – through March 22, 2024.

“More investment in public transit is long overdue, which is why Governor Shapiro proposed the first major new investment in public transit in over 10 years,” **Carroll** said. “This is an investment in reliable public transit that can meet our residents’ current and future needs. With nearly one million Pennsylvanians using public transit daily, we have an obligation and opportunity to invest in them and our communities’ futures.”

On average, 64 percent of the people who use fixed-route services say that they have no alternate means of transportation. Nearly 38 percent of WCTA’s riders have no other option.

The investments proposed by the Governor would secure the county’s transit services while making it possible to act on proposals from [WCTA’s development plan](#). The draft plan describes the state of the county’s current transit service and various improvement options grouped into improved, enhanced, and aspirational categories. The improved network options are based on

the current WCTA budget while enhanced and aspirational network enhancements would require additional funding.

“The additional funding included in the Governor’s proposal would not only allow the WCTA to implement the changes included in the improved network, but we could also focus on some of the recommendations included in the enhanced network,” said **WCTA Executive Director Alan Blahovec**. “Specifically, the enhanced network included extended service hours on weekdays and Saturdays which was a priority from the public input.”

The plan is available for public comment [online](#) and in person, at the Westmoreland Transit facility in Greensburg, and at local public libraries. Comment forms completed on paper are due by March 22, 2024, and can be returned or mailed to Westmoreland Transit, 41 Bell Way, Greensburg, PA 15601 or dropped off at:

- Greensburg Hempfield Area Library.
- Jeannette Public Library.
- Adams Memorial Library in Latrobe.
- Peoples Library in New Kensington.
- Youngwood Area Public Library.

For questions, including language assistance, contact the WCTA at 724-834-9282 or customerservice@westmorelandtransit.com.

Public transportation services are available in every county in Pennsylvania, including:

- Shared ride service in all 67 counties;
- Fixed route bus service in 49 counties; and
- Fixed route rail service in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

The public is encouraged to learn about public transit options and apply for transportation assistance programs through the Commonwealth’s [Find My Ride](#) (FMR) tool. FMR includes [FMR Apply](#), an online tool which was developed collaboratively with transit agencies and streamlines the application process for transportation assistance programs in the state, including the [Senior Shared Ride program](#), the [Medical Assistance Transportation Program \(MATP\)](#), ADA complementary paratransit, the Persons with Disabilities program; the Free Transit Program; and fixed route half/reduced fare for persons with disabilities. In counties where they’re available, eligible residents can apply for Area Agency on Aging funded trips for people 60-64 and discounted shared ride service for veterans.

Additionally, FMR Apply allows third parties – such as a family member or healthcare provider – to apply for services on behalf of a rider.

More information on public transit and alternative transportation options like ridesharing, biking, and walking, is available [on PennDOT’s website](#).

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