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Shapiro Administration, Transit and Medical Professionals Highlight How Governor’s Proposal to Invest in Public Transit Supports Pennsylvania’s Workforce and Health Care Access

Governor Shapiro’s budget proposal acknowledges public transit’s critical role in Pennsylvanians’ quality of life and would stabilize connections to medical appointments, jobs, and communities.

Berwick, PA – At an event today in Berwick, **Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Secretary Mike Carroll** was joined by officials from rabbitransit and Fresenius Kidney Care to highlight how Governor Shapiro’s budget proposal would improve Pennsylvanians’ quality of life. Investing in public transit would not just ensure Pennsylvanians can safely reach their jobs and communities but would also support their health.

The Governor’s Budget proposes an additional \$282.8 million investment for transit – the first of its kind in over a decade. Approximately \$37 million of the investment could help stabilize shared-ride (scheduled, curb-to-curb) service and help attract and retain drivers. This would be achieved with an additional 1.75 percent of the Pennsylvania Sales Tax being deposited into the Public Transportation Trust Fund.

“Governor Shapiro’s budget proposal is an opportunity to support Pennsylvanians in every corner of the commonwealth,” **Carroll** said. “Clean, safe, reliable public transit is especially critical for residents who rely on transit for medical access. Adequate transit service directly impacts health care for many, no matter where they live.”

Shared-ride service is available in all of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties and provided 4.5 million trips in the state 2022-23 fiscal year. Of those trips, 2.6 million were taken by seniors and persons with disabilities through funding from PennDOT’s shared-ride programs. Of the 2.6 million PennDOT-funded trips, approximately 44 percent were medical trips and 11 percent were work trips.

On average, 64 percent of fixed-route riders and nearly 54 percent of shared-ride users say that they have no alternate means of transportation. In the counties served by rabbitransit, nearly 50 percent of shared ride and 69.4 percent of fixed-route users have no other transportation option.

“As we strive to address the social determinants of care, we must recognize transportation as a fundamental factor,” said **rabbitransit Executive Director Richard Farr**. “Transit serves as

the conduit that connects access to food, healthcare, employment, socialization, and housing together, particularly in rural areas where these resources are more likely to be scarce.”

Rabbittransit provides shared-ride service in Columbia County and connects residents to the care they need at medical facilities such as Fresenius Kidney Care.

“Our mission is to deliver superior care that improves the quality of life of every patient, every day. Ultimately, patient care is at the heart of everything we do, which is why we support initiatives such as this one that can make a real difference in our patients' lives,” said **Fresenius Kidney Care Regional Vice President Mark Sciorilli**. “We know that there are many factors that impact a person’s health, and perhaps none more than access to transportation. This proposed funding would make public transportation services more widely available in rural areas where access to transportation is especially strained, helping to address an increasingly common barrier our patients face in getting life-sustaining dialysis care.”

In addition to shared-ride service in all counties, Pennsylvania’s public transit services include:

- 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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