



Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

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Shapiro Administration, Local Leaders Outline How Governor's Public Transit Proposal Would Help Washington County

Pennsylvanians' lives and economic opportunity require reliable, safe, clean public transit, which is why Governor Shapiro's 2025-26 budget proposes \$292.5 million for the public transit systems that Pennsylvanians rely on.

Nearly 60 percent of Freedom Transit riders have no other transportation option.

Washington, PA – Following a public transit stakeholder meeting today in Washington, **Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Secretary Mike Carroll** and officials from **Freedom Transit** and **UPMC Washington** outlined how Governor Josh Shapiro's public transit budget proposal is a commonsense way to create good-paying jobs, spur economic development, and help Pennsylvanians reach their destinations safely.

After securing \$80.5 million in additional public transit funding in the 2024-25 budget, the Governor's Budget proposes an additional \$292.5 million investment for transit this year – 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 nearly \$470,000 more in Freedom Transit in the 2025-26 fiscal year.

"To grow our economy and our communities, our infrastructure and public transit systems must both be properly funded, which is why Governor Shapiro proposed the first major new investment in public transit in a decade," **Carroll** said. "The Governor's proposal has advanced three times in the House without Senate action. We need our legislature to meet Pennsylvanians' current and future public transit needs just like we improve roads and bridges in every community."

On average, nearly 65 percent of the people who use fixed-route services in Pennsylvania say that they have no alternate means of transportation. Nearly 60 percent of Freedom Transit's riders have no other option.

The investments proposed by the Governor would help stabilize shared-ride services and provide additional investment in fixed-route service. Freedom Transit is updating its

Transit Development Plan (TDP) – a five-year blueprint for improving Freedom Transit services – and aims to increase ridership and eliminate inefficiencies. Today's stakeholder session began the community input phase of updating the TDP, identifying the county's top transit needs and gathering feedback on current service.

"Strong public transportation isn't just a big-city issue – it's a lifeline for many of our residents here in Washington County," said **Sheila Gombita, executive director of Freedom Transit**. "From helping seniors stay independent to connecting workers with jobs, transit keeps our community moving forward. Today we heard about a range of unmet transit needs that we can't address with current funding. Without increased state investment in public transit and changes to the funding structure for Shared Ride service, we face major service cuts and fare increases that will hurt those who rely on us most."

In the coming weeks, Freedom Transit will incorporate stakeholder feedback into the TDP and will then seek public input on impacts to local transit service under various funding scenarios. After the TDP is finalized, Freedom Transit will start modifying services. Whether service will be enhanced to meet residents' needs or be reduced will depend on state investment levels.

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

- Shared ride service in all 67 counties;
- Fixed route bus service in 46 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 is available [on PennDOT's website](#).

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