

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

United We Stand: to solve our transportation funding crisis, we must all get on the bus... to Harrisburg

Pittsburgh, PA: Allegheny County's public transportation crisis threatens the entire region. For many, transit is their lifeline to work, the doctor, church, and family. At the state's request, we have jumped through a lot of hoops over the past three years to try and keep our system whole – we've cut service, reorganized that which was left, laid people off, and hoped that new funding would materialize from a formula that doesn't work for Allegheny County anyway. Yet here we are – having done nearly everything we could and still facing unacceptable cuts. With parking garages overflowing, gas prices spiraling upward, and overburdened and underfunded roads being asked to do more, our entire region suffers as transit funding dries up. People are angry, and some are rightfully scared.

We've spent the past several weeks fighting among ourselves here about who's to blame. County Councilman Burn's resolution last week may have been controversial, but it has shone a huge spotlight on the funding issue just when it seemed to be fading away. PCRG, its members, and stakeholders appreciate this renewed visibility and look forward to working with our local leadership, but the question to all is: how will we respond? The looming cuts have us all pointing fingers, but isn't it time that we focus our energy where the real issue lies – which is Harrisburg?

Since 1988, PCRG has brought numerous groups together to solve problems destabilizing neighborhoods. From equitable bank lending practices to vacant and blighted land reclamation to public safety, PCRG has led our neighborhood renaissance by bringing factions together for the bigger cause – even when they're fighting each other. This is no different. With all the attention we now have, it's time to work together and get the reforms and resources we need – transit funding that stabilizes and grows service and a funding formula that no longer penalizes Allegheny County. We look forward to working with our partners, but the first thing we must all do is unite – unite for change in Harrisburg and stop fighting each other over a small and shrinking pie from which everyone needs something. More of the same will just get us more of the same.

For all the hoops that everyone here has gone through – the drink tax, the system shrinkage, the loss of jobs, the pain of employers and employees alike – it's pretty clear we all have had enough with this crisis. Transit touches all of us – even those who drive. We need quality transit, we're willing to work for it, and we look forward to solving this crisis together.

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