

## Keep Metro running

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In his Jan. 16 letter opposing the 0.25 percent tax-rate increase for Metro RTA on the March 4 ballot as Issue 8 ("Think outside the box"), Frank Lancianese told us this is an example of the mind-set of agencies and politicians that solve all problems by increasing taxes.

He also stated that transportation should be "primarily a user-fee-based service to the public."

Lancianese should do his homework before speaking. Metro RTA has cut service by 30 percent, cut 58 employees, frozen wages for three of the past four years, increased fares for its regular and curb-to-curb bus service (SCAT) by 60 percent, and reduced the purchases of new buses. It has not had a new local tax increase since 1990 — hardly an agency jumping immediately to increase taxes.

It is easy for those who have private transportation to lose sight of the vital service that Metro RTA provides to the many who are trying desperately to keep their heads above water financially and who need Metro to get to work, to medical appointments, to school, and even to buy groceries.

Metro held a series of public hearings, and the stories that came out of those hearings are heart-rending. Take the woman who rides a bus from downtown Akron to Macedonia. She has to arrive four hours early and then wait an hour after work to catch the bus because of reduced service.

Or consider the student taking technical training in Stow who must take a bus from Akron to Kent and then catch a Kent bus into Stow because there no longer is direct service to Stow. This means that it takes him three hours both to and from class.

And yet these people, and many more like them, persist with this form of transportation because they are committed to working or getting trained so that they can be productive members of society, and this is their only affordable way to get there.

I hope Lancianese and all of us remember these stories when we go to the polls and vote yes on Issue 8.

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