

**Agenda**

1. Call to Order Oral  
Roll Call
2. Meeting Minutes Attachment 2a  
Minutes from December 17, 2020 Meeting (Motion Required)
3. Guest Communications (Not required due to COVID-19) Oral
4. General Manager's Report Attachment 4
5. Committee Reports Scheduled to Meet 1/28/2021
  - a. Administration Did Not Meet
  - b. Finance Did Not Meet
  - c. Operations Did Not Meet
  - d. Personnel Did Not Meet
6. Old Business
7. New Business
8. Resolution - Roll Call Approval Required  
  
**#2021-01-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE TERMS OF AN AGREEMENT OR AN AMENDMENT TO THE EXISTING LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE KENT CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (KCHD) TO LEASE, ON A TRIAL BASIS, THE FORMER CUTLER REALTY/GROUP TEN GALLERY GROUND LEVEL RETAIL SPACES OF THE KENT CENTRAL GATEWAY (KCG) AT 201 EAST ERIE STREET, KENT, OHIO.**
9. Executive Session (if needed) – Roll Call Approval Required
10. Adjournment

**Next Regular Meeting:**  
**February 25, 2021 @ 7 p.m.**

**PARTA**  
**PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES**

**Held Remotely Via Zoom**

**December 17, 2020**

**Board Members Participating:**

Karen Beck  
Marge Bjerregaard  
Richard Brockett  
Jeff Childers

Debbie Davison  
David Gynn, President  
Michael Lewis, Vice President  
R. T. Mansfield

Jack Murphy  
Morgan Tipton  
Karen Wise, TPO  
Marvin Woods

**Staff Participating:**

Claudia Amrhein  
Denise Baba  
Marcia Fletcher

Kelly Jurisch  
Justin Markey, Legal Counsel

Clayton Popik  
Rebecca Schrader

**Board Members Not Participating:**

Virginia Harris (3<sup>rd</sup> excused absence)

Frank Vitale (2<sup>nd</sup> excused absence)

**Guests Participating:**

None.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice President Michael Lewis welcomed everyone to the December 17, 2020, Board of Trustees meeting and called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. He asked Ms. Marcia Fletcher to call the roll.

Ms. Fletcher then called the roll, and **a quorum was participating.**

Mr. Lewis entertained a motion to adopt the minutes from the November 19, 2020, Board meeting. Mr. R. T. Mansfield made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Ms. Karen Beck. Mr. Lewis asked if there was any further discussion. Hearing none, he asked all those in favor to respond by saying aye. He asked if anyone opposed. Hearing none, he said the **motion to approve the minutes, as presented, passed unanimously.**

**GUEST COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Lewis said Guest Communications is not required due to COVID-19 and moved on to the General Manager's report.

## **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

Ms. Claudia Amrhein thanked everyone for joining the meeting tonight. She said she doesn't have anything to report other than what's in her Board report. One new item is that PARTA learned today that it received a Connecting Communities grant through AMATS to study transit, pedestrian, and safety improvements along the portion of S. R. 59 between Horning Road and S. R. 261. Those Board members who were on the Board a year ago will remember that PARTA applied for this grant and then it got delayed due to COVID-19. AMATS has since picked that process back up.

Ms. Marge Bjerregaard asked how long that study will take.

Ms. Amrhein said the study will be done in 2021, which will then position PARTA to be able to work with Franklin Township to apply for funds for those improvements, which will take years to complete. She asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Karen Beck said Ms. Amrhein's report is always so well done that it's hard to come up with questions.

Ms. Amrhein thanked Ms. Beck and said she tries to be clear and keep it to the high points.

Mr. Lewis thanked Ms. Amrhein and agreed with Ms. Beck. He said Ms. Amrhein always puts a lot of time into her report and conveys well what's going on within PARTA, which is appreciated. He then moved on to the committee reports.

## **ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Lewis said the Administration Committee did not meet.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Lewis said the Finance Committee met via Zoom. Last month, the budget was discussed; this month, October and November were discussed, focusing on November. There weren't many changes between October and November. Some of the highlights, looking at Finance Report A, KSU Revenues exceeded budget this month; however, year-to-date it's \$520,522 short of budget. The future will depend on how the new year rolls out. The last part of the CARES Act money was used in the amount of \$465,353, which brought the total for the year to \$4,097,737. Federal Capital Maintenance. A discussion occurred about what's going to happen next year and if any of that money will be available. There are no answers at this point. Revenues did well against budget. Expenses. The only thing that's a little bit high is Employee Health Insurance, which can't be controlled. PARTA did a great job with expenses on salaries and maintenance. The total operating for the current period is \$721,726 against the Monthly Budget of \$66,587. Year-to-date Actual is about \$5.6 million. It has been a strong month. There were not a lot of adjustments on the Capital Finance Report. There was a drawdown of \$363,840 to cover expenses on the Bus Storage Facility (5339) from the previous month. Restricted showed there were Four (4) Diesel Transit Buses scheduled for 2020, but those have been delayed until May 2021. However, five (5) LTV buses arrived last week. Restricted funds will help replace some buses that are coming up in the future because those will be big expenses. PARTA is continuing strong considering everything that's going on.

Moving on to the Kent Central Gateway (KCG), Mr. Lewis said there have been some difficulties. Year-to-date is 49% below when looking back at parking numbers. The parking deck isn't being used. The hotel has not been open, and Kent State University (KSU) students are not using the deck as much. There was a small profit this month but it's still behind for the year, which is a direct correlation to what's going on with the numbers. Year-to-date Actual is down \$127,066. Ms. Schrader projected out a deficit of \$139,640 for the year even though adjustments have been made. There are some expenses that PARTA is not able to recover or revenue that it is not able to replace. The Finance Committee did talk about the three (3) resolutions, which were all recommended for advancing to the Board for approval.

Ms. Wise asked what caused the uptick or positive margin.

Mr. Lewis said there was an increase in traffic that stabilized at least for those months, although that may or may not continue, and an adjustment was made.

Ms. Schrader said there was a \$10,769 invoice in August for a software upgrade. After a review and an audit, it was determined that it should have been booked as a fixed asset and not an operating expense. As a result, \$10,769 was deducted from operating expenses and booked on the Statement of Net Position.

Mr. Lewis noted that it's listed under Parking Control Equipment under Variance on the Statement of Net Position, which is report C. He said that was reversed and shows as income now in a better category. He asked if there were any other questions on finance. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Schrader and her team for all their time.

### **OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Lewis said the Operations Committee did not meet.

### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Lewis said the Personnel Committee did not meet.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Lewis asked if there was any Old Business that needed to be brought to the Board. Hearing none, he moved on to New Business.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Lewis said there is a presentation on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Ms. Denise Baba provided a PowerPoint presentation on ADA, which is attached. She then asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Wise asked if services were currently being provided to the 184 individuals who have evaluations pending and if testing was still available.

Ms. Baba said they're still receiving services until they get a letter from PARTA telling them that they need to have that evaluation. Testing is still available and is done through Western Reserve Hospital in Cuyahoga Falls.

Ms. Jurisch said there have been around 14 assessments a month.

Ms. Baba said the assessments are continuing. A letter goes out that indicates the individual needs to schedule the appointment themselves at Western Reserve Hospital. If they need a ride to Western Reserve Hospital, PARTA will provide them with that ride to ensure they're able to get to the hospital and back home again. PARTA pays the fees for the assessment. The only thing that the person applying for eligibility needs to do is make an appointment that fits into their schedule.

Mr. Lewis asked if there were any other questions for Ms. Baba. He said it has been a big effort to try to get everybody through the process. He thanked everyone for their continued work on this. He asked if there was anything else to add under New Business. Hearing none, he said the last thing on the agenda was the three (3) resolutions.

**Resolutions**

Mr. Lewis started with Resolution #2020-12-01.

**#2020-12-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PARTICIPATE IN AND CONTRIBUTE TO RISK POOLING WITH THE OHIO TRANSIT RISK POOL.**

Ms. Amrhein said this is an annual resolution authorizing participation in the Ohio Transit Risk Pool (OTRP). This is where PARTA pools its risk with other transit authorities to cover all liability, accidents, collisions, etc. Because it is more than \$100,000, a Board Resolution is needed to authorize that expenditure.

Mr. Lewis thanked Ms. Amrhein and asked for a motion.

**Motion: Marge Bjerregaard**

**Second: R. T. Mansfield**

Mr. Lewis asked if there was any further discussion on the resolution. Hearing none, he asked all those in favor to signify by saying aye; any opposed, say no. He asked if there were any abstentions. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Fletcher for a roll call.

<b>Roll Call:</b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>		<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Jeff Childers	<u>X</u>	_____	<b>Frank Vitale</b>	<b><u>EXCUSED</u></b>	
Richard Brockett	<u>X</u>	_____	Morgan Tipton	<u>X</u>	_____
Marge Bjerregaard	<u>X</u>	_____	Jack Murphy	<u>X</u>	_____
Karen Beck	<u>X</u>	_____	Mike Lewis	<u>X</u>	_____
R. T. Mansfield	<u>X</u>	_____	<b>Virginia Harris</b>	<b><u>EXCUSED</u></b>	
Marvin Woods	<u>X</u>	_____	Debbie Davison	<u>X</u>	_____
Karen Wise	<u>X</u>	_____	David Gynn	<u>X</u>	_____

Mr. Lewis said the resolution passed and the next item is Resolution #2020-12-02.

**#2020-12-02: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVING EXPENDITURES FOR LICENSING AND MAINTENANCE WITH TRAPEZE SOFTWARE GROUP.**

Mr. Lewis asked Ms. Amrhein if she had anything she would like to add.

Ms. Amrhein said this is another large purchase. Trapeze Software Group is the backbone of all the systems that run PARTA. Every electronic device is somehow tied to Trapeze Software Group for all PARTA's transit services. This annual resolution authorizes PARTA to pay the fees to keep all of that running.

Mr. Lewis thanked Ms. Amrhein and asked for a motion to approve.

**Motion: Karen Beck**

**Second: Debbie Davison**

Mr. Lewis asked for a roll call, and Ms. Fletcher called the roll.

<b>Roll Call:</b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>		<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Karen Beck	<u>X</u>	_____	Mike Lewis	<u>X</u>	_____
R. T. Mansfield	<u>X</u>	_____	Virginia Harris	<b>EXCUSED</b>	_____
Marvin Woods	<u>X</u>	_____	Debbie Davison	<u>X</u>	_____
Karen Wise	<u>X</u>	_____	Jeff Childers	<u>X</u>	_____
Frank Vitale	<b>EXCUSED</b>	_____	Richard Brockett	<u>X</u>	_____
Morgan Tipton	<u>X</u>	_____	Marge Bjerregaard	<u>X</u>	_____
Jack Murphy	<u>X</u>	_____	David Gynn	<u>X</u>	_____

Mr. Lewis said Resolution #2020-12-02 is approved and the last one is #2020-12-03.

**#2020-12-03: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO GLADIEUX TRADING AND MARKETING CO LP TO PROVIDE DIESEL AND GASOLINE FUEL FOR 2021 AND AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO SIGN A FEDERAL EXCISE TAX EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE ON BEHALF OF PARTA. THIS IS A JOINT PURCHASING VENTURE WITH AKRON METRO RTA, WESTERN RESERVE RTA AND STARK AREA RTA, ET AL.**

Mr. Lewis then called on Ms. Amrhein.

Ms. Amrhein thanked Mr. Lewis and said this is another large purchase but slightly different from the others. Because PARTA is doing a joint procurement for fuel and it is a low bid process, those bids are opened on a specific day and time and the contract must be awarded sometime that afternoon. The Board preauthorized PARTA to execute that contract in June and now this resolution will ratify the award of that contract. The great news is PARTA will be saving some money next year.

Mr. Lewis thanked Ms. Amrhein and asked for a motion to approve Resolution #2020-12-03.

**Motion: Morgan Tipton**

**Second: Marvin Woods**

Mr. Lewis then asked for a roll call, and Ms. Fletcher called the roll.

<b>Roll Call:</b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>		<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Marge Bjerregaard	<u>X</u>	_____	Jack Murphy	<u>X</u>	_____
Karen Beck	<u>X</u>	_____	Mike Lewis	<u>X</u>	_____
R. T. Mansfield	<u>X</u>	_____	Virginia Harris	<b>EXCUSED</b>	_____
Marvin Woods	<u>X</u>	_____	Debbie Davison	<u>X</u>	_____
Karen Wise	<u>X</u>	_____	Jeff Childers	<u>X</u>	_____
Frank Vitale	<b>EXCUSED</b>	_____	Richard Brockett	<u>X</u>	_____
Morgan Tipton	<u>X</u>	_____	David Gynn	<u>X</u>	_____

Mr. Lewis thanked Ms. Fletcher and said Resolution #2020-12-03 is approved.

Mr. Lewis said there's no need for an Executive Session and asked for a motion to adjourn.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Marge Bjerregaard made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Debbie Davison. Mr. Lewis asked all those in favor to say aye and opposed the same sign. The **motion to adjourn passed unanimously.**

REVIEWED BY SENIOR STAFF

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Marcia Fletcher  
Executive Assistant




**PARTA**  
**2000 Summit Road**  
**Kent, Ohio 44240**

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**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

**TO:** **PARTA Board of Trustees**

**FROM:** **Claudia B. Amrhein, General Manager** 

**DATE:** **January 2021**

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***Committee Meetings and Resolution.*** Happy New Year and thank you for your willingness to serve on the PARTA Board of Trustees again this year. The January meeting agenda includes a resolution to authorize negotiating an agreement with the Kent City Health Department to lease the former Cutler Realty retail space on a trial basis for use as a vaccination clinic site.

**Please note that the finance committee does not meet in January. The administration committee will meet on Thursday, January 28, at 6:30 p.m. to review Resolution #2021-01-01.**

**#2021-01-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE TERMS OF AN AGREEMENT OR AN AMENDMENT TO THE EXISTING LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE KENT CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (KCHD) TO LEASE, ON A TRIAL BASIS, THE FORMER CUTLER REALTY/GROUP TEN GALLERY GROUND LEVEL RETAIL SPACES OF THE KENT CENTRAL GATEWAY (KCG) AT 201 EAST ERIE STREET, KENT, OHIO.**

**Exploring Short Term Lease with Kent City Health Department.** Resolution #2021-01-01 requests authority to negotiate a short-term agreement with the Kent City Health Department (KCHD) to lease the former Cutler Realty and Group Ten Gallery retail spaces on a trial basis for COVID-19 vaccine distribution.

My December board report included an overview of the status of the master tenant lease agreement with RLB Phoenix Group, the entity responsible for leasing out the ground-level retail spaces in the Gateway. In sum, following the death of Ron Burbick, RLB is requesting to amend the agreement to reduce their leasing responsibilities and payment amounts.

Concurrently, KCHD is interested in leasing the now-vacant former Cutler space for use as a vaccination clinic. The space is located at the eastern end of the Gateway near the Veterans Memorial. It is a fully built-out open space of 2,200 square feet with movable walls, a kitchenette, and two (2) restrooms. The remaining ground-level spaces are fully occupied by the Kent Visitors' Centre, Kent Chamber of Commerce, Warehouse Salon, and Get Pretty Salon.

I am requesting authority to establish a temporary lease with KCHD for use of the space as a vaccine clinic site and potentially for other public health purposes. The value of approaching this scenario on a trial basis is two-fold: it enables PARTA to explore options for filling the space with a long-term tenant post-pandemic and it allows KCHD and the city of Kent time to determine whether they want or need the space beyond the current health emergency.

**Investigating Cyber Data Breach.** On December 30, we became aware of a cyber data breach that compromised some employees' personal information. We immediately informed all employees and began a formal investigation with Quality IP, our IT managed services provider. We filed reports and complaints with the FBI, financial institutions, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio Attorney General's Office and researched the breaches employees reported to us. By January 5,



we had secured credit and identity monitoring services for employees free of charge for one-year and engaged a cyber forensics firm to fully assess the breach and recommend methods for preventing future criminal intrusions. The expenses for these services, as well as the time and labor of Quality IP personnel working on the breach and a cyber attorney assigned by Ohio Transit Risk Pool (OTRP), are covered up to \$500,000 per year for cyber theft and losses. Like a vehicle collision, our coverage is subject to paying a \$1,000 deductible.

As of this writing, we have not received a full report from the forensics investigation. We do know that the intrusion resulted from an e-mail phishing scheme and not from a firewall breach. Cyber criminals are using sophisticated schemes to file phony unemployment claims to gain access to COVID-19 unemployment relief benefits, as recently reported widely following Governor DeWine's Thursday, January 21, press conference.

**Connecting Communities Study Underway.** I am pleased to report that AMATS selected *PARTA* to receive a \$40,000 Connecting Communities planning grant. The grant will equip us to study potential options for improving pedestrian safety infrastructure along the corridor of State Route 59 from Horning Road to S.R. 261. In coordination with AMATS, Franklin Township, ODOT, and the City of Kent, the study will evaluate the one-mile corridor that currently presents numerous obstacles for pedestrians walking, bicycling, and/or riding public transit to access groceries, medical facilities, retail and other basic necessities. Once completed, the findings will provide the basis for planning and programming and seek funding to support future transportation safety infrastructure improvements.

**Service Reports.** (*Coronavirus closures began March 2020*) *Ridership.* Total county fixed route and DART ridership decreased by 47.13% through December, as compared to December 2019 with total county service performing 228,234 trips as compared to 431,701 trips performed through December 2019.

County fixed route service has decreased by approximately 47.56% as compared to last year, with 188,359 trips completed through December as compared to 359,166 trips completed through December 2019.

DART service has decreased by 45.03% through December as compared to December 2019, with 39,875 trips completed as compared to 72,535 trips completed through December 2019.

Overall ridership, including campus service, decreased by 62.11%, with campus down by 70.97%. Total system ridership totaled 438,028 as compared to 1,155,993 through December 2019.

*On-Time Compliance. ADA Complementary Paratransit Service.* ADA on-time compliance was 98.04% in December as compared to 95.79% in November. Of 613 trips, 12 were performed late, with the latest running 18 minutes behind due to the driver arriving late to the scheduled pickup. *General Public (non-ADA) DART.* On-time performance for general public, non-ADA trips remained steady at 86.95% for December, as compared to 84.18% in November 2020.

*Vehicle Preventative Maintenance (PM).* On-time compliance, with established PM inspection schedules, was 100% in December as compared to 100% in November 2020. A total of 56,961 cars parked in the deck in 2020 as compared to 115,131 in 2019.

**Parking Deck.** Parking in the deck in 2020 decreased by 50% as compared to 2019. Monthly parking revenue remained stable throughout the year. Transient and hotel usage dropped substantially due to the COVID-19 closures and bans on large public gatherings.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. If you have any questions prior to the Board meeting, please feel free to contact me by calling (330) 676-6315, or by e-mail at [Amrhein.c16@partaonline.org](mailto:Amrhein.c16@partaonline.org).

# More than half of Ohio's Pandemic Unemployment Assistance claims have been flagged for fraud

Updated Jan 21, 2021; Posted Jan 21, 2021



About 796,000 of the 1.4 million claims made in Ohio for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance have been flagged as potentially fraudulent, Lt. Gov. Jon Husted (seen above) said Thursday. (Ohio Channel)

By [Jeremy Pelzer, cleveland.com](#)

COLUMBUS, Ohio—More than half of the 1.4 million Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits claims made in Ohio to date have been flagged as potentially fraudulent, Lt. Gov. Jon Husted said Thursday.

The shocking disclosure by Husted during a televised briefing comes as state officials are warning Ohioans to [be on the lookout for identity thieves](#), many of whom use stolen information to apply for jobless benefits.

About 796,000 PUA claims in Ohio have been suspected as fraudulent, Husted said during a televised briefing. As of last week, more than \$7.8 billion in PUA payments have been made to more than 827,000 Ohioans, according to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

However, Husted said, only 44,000 or so of the 1.7 million filings for traditional unemployment benefits in the state have been flagged.

Scammers have particularly sought to use people's identities to receive PUA benefits because, until recently, less documentation was required than for traditional unemployment benefits, said ODJFS Director Kimberly Henderson last week. However, she said, the latest coronavirus relief package, passed late last month, now requires additional employment documentation to get PUA benefits, making it harder for crooks to exploit the program.

ODJFS spokesman Tom Betti wasn't immediately able to say Thursday how many cases of actual fraud have been found among the suspected claims. In an email, Betti said state officials report flagged claims to the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of the Inspector General, or OIG.

"We have received no feedback from the OIG on whether they are tracking down the source of these schemes or making any arrests," Betti stated, though he added the Labor Department plans to release a report at the end of January with more information.

The penalty for unemployment benefits fraud depends on the circumstances of each case, said Bethany McCorkle, a spokeswoman for Attorney General Dave Yost's office.

The state's efforts to detect fraud have also been hindered by ODJFS' ongoing work to update their 17-year-old computer systems, Husted said during the briefing.

ODJFS has been working for a couple of years to update its circa-2004 computer system, [which was overwhelmed last year](#) as Ohioans flooded the state with benefits claims after being laid off or furloughed as businesses were ordered close during the initial phase of the coronavirus crisis.

Husted, a Columbus-area Republican, said the computer systems update won't be completed until next year, making it "a little bit more difficult" to combat fraud.

A lot of Ohioans are just now finding out that they've become the victim of identity theft, as they receive a 1099 tax form from ODJFS for jobless benefits dishonestly filed for in their name.

State officials recently reached an agreement with the Internal Revenue Service for the IRS not to issue 1099s for about 168,000 claims that were at the "final determination" stage for identity theft, according to Henderson. Of those, about 166,000 were for PUA benefits, she said.

Scammers employ a variety of techniques to obtain people's identities and exploit them to wrongly get unemployment benefits, Betti said. In rare cases, he said, thieves even file for benefits using the identities of dead Ohioans, so they can snatch debit cards sent to the mailboxes of the deceased.

Anyone who finds that their name has been used to obtain unemployment benefits should take three steps, Betti said.

First, Betti said, victims should follow directions enclosed with the 1099 and report the identity theft to ODJFS via [a big red button on the department's website](#) as soon as possible. That will allow the state to conduct investigations and, if necessary, issue a corrected 1099 to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

ODJFS also has a fraud phone line (1-800-686-1555), though when a reporter called Tuesday afternoon, a recording said the wait time to speak with someone was about half an hour. Another caller [said](#) that when she called, another recording said to call back later.

Second, Betti continued, victims should file their taxes as they normally would, without factoring in the scam – though they should follow up with ODJFS if they don't get a corrected 1099.

Finally, Betti said, Ohioans who are scammed should take steps to protect their identity, including those listed [on the Ohio attorney general's website](#). People who want to see whether they've been victimized can [receive a free credit report online](#), he said.

The problem with unemployment benefits fraud has become so widespread, even Gov. Mike DeWine, First Lady Fran DeWine and Lt. Gov. Jon Husted each had claims falsely filed in their names.

“We weren’t sure exactly what anyone is trying to accomplish there, with us, but we know that there’s a been a lot of those (scams),” DeWine, a Greene County Republican, said Tuesday.





## New connections on the horizon for Franklin Township, Stow

The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) and the city of Stow are about to join a growing cast of players that are pursuing connectivity throughout the Greater Akron area. In its last virtual meeting of 2020, the AMATS Policy Committee unanimously approved on Dec. 17 two separate \$40,000 grants to study livability issues in Franklin Township and the city of Stow.



AMATS offers annual grants through its Connecting Communities Program to assist in the development of plans that promote vibrant, livable communities. Over the last several years, the program has funded studies by Akron, Barberton, Boston Heights, Green, Hudson, Kent, METRO of Summit County, Montrose-area communities, Ravenna, Richfield, and Twinsburg.

PARTA and Stow are the latest recipients of these grants. New pedestrian and cycling facilities and trail networks may be on the horizon for Franklin Township and Stow, according to AMATS Mobility Planner Heather Davis Reidl.

PARTA will use its grant to identify transit, pedestrian and bicycle improvements along state Route 59, between Horning Road and state Route 261, in Franklin Township. Due to the lack of sidewalks, crosswalks and signage, it is difficult for pedestrians who live, work, and travel this area to navigate it amongst the higher speed single-occupancy automobiles.

The PARTA study will identify areas where sidewalks could be extended, crosswalks installed, crossing signals implemented, mid-block crossing areas highlighted, and better transit passenger amenities

added. This study will determine what strategies and improvements are feasible to make the roadway safer and more navigable for alternative modes of transportation such as walking and cycling.

Stow will use its grant to establish a framework for a city-wide, multi-modal trail network to accommodate all users. This network will not only serve Stow's various populations, businesses and visitors, but will connect the city to adjacent and regional destinations and multi-modal networks.

The Stow study will explore the potential of shared-use paths and sidepaths as the primary facilities for the city's trail network. The study will also determine the viability of placing trails within one-quarter mile of every resident and business. Among Stow's goals is to construct its trail network over the next 20 years.

Reidl says that, despite ongoing challenges, 2020 marked a solid year of progress for the AMATS Connecting Communities Program. Agency officials were pleasantly surprised by the number and quality of grant applicants for this year's round of funding. "We think that active transportation options such as walking and cycling are becoming more important to the public, especially in light of recent quality of life concerns," she adds.

# Transit Trends

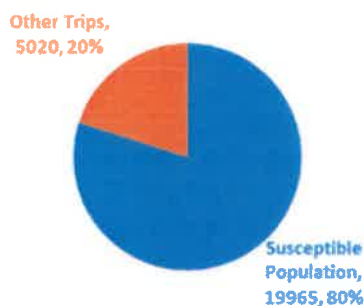


## COVID-19 Vaccination Priority: Essential Workers Removed from Phase IB

In early December, the COVID-19 vaccine advisory group for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended that essential workers be included in the second priority group after health care workers, known as Phase IB. County health departments across the state began planning for vaccine distribution to include public transit workers.

However, in mid-January, the state of Ohio departed from the CDC recommendations by removing essential workers from Phase IB priority.

PARTA TOTAL DR TRIPS DURING PANDEMIC, 24,985



As a result, most transit workers and other front-line essential employees who have worked continually during the pandemic are not eligible for a vaccination by virtue of their essential worker status. A fact sheet from Ohio Department of Health is included in this packet.

OPTA is working with transit authorities throughout Ohio to communicate the value of including essential transit workers as part of Governor DeWine’s strategy for saving lives. Letters sent in December and January are included in this packet.

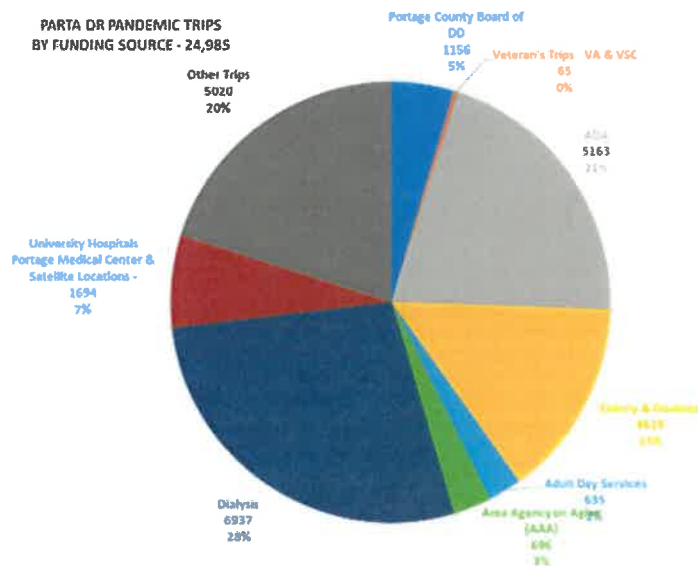
The data we compiled is striking – since March 22, 2020:

- 80% of all demand response trips have transported individuals identified as most susceptible and vulnerable to the virus.

The majority of these trips can be identified via funding source or destination:

- ADA paratransit & countywide elderly and disabled trips = 35%
- Life-sustaining dialysis trips = 28%

My hope is that vaccine distribution will improve dramatically in the coming weeks to enable the early phases to proceed as quickly as possible, while we continue to urge consideration for including the essential employees who have worked continually throughout this pandemic.



Such an approach would help our employees remain healthy and able to continue to provide the transportation our vulnerable populations are relying on more than ever during this pandemic.



# COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet

## Priority Populations and Vaccine Distribution

Ohio has started distributing safe, effective COVID-19 vaccines statewide to those who choose to be vaccinated. The COVID-19 vaccine development process included steps comparable with those used to develop previous vaccines, such as the flu or measles vaccine. As COVID-19 vaccines progressed through the thorough process to obtain emergency use authorization (EUA) from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the state began strategically and thoughtfully distributing the vaccines to Ohioans most at risk. This distribution is being guided by recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM).

### Ohio's Phased Approach

Ohio's goals are clear: to save lives and get students back in schools. While vaccine supply is limited, Ohio will follow a phased approach to vaccine administration. In the first vaccination phase, priority will be given to individuals at the highest risk, as well as essential healthcare workers and personnel caring for COVID-19 patients. The speed at which Ohio will move through the phases is largely dependent upon the number of vaccine doses available. As supply increases, COVID-19 vaccines will be available to all Ohioans who choose to be vaccinated.

- **Phase 1 (Supply Limited)** – Vaccine is available in limited supply and will be available only for specific critical populations. Ohio will focus on vaccinating those most at risk, as well as essential healthcare workers and personnel caring for COVID-19 patients.
- **Phase 2 (Supply Increasing)** – Vaccine availability is increasing and can be offered to a larger group of specific critical populations who choose to be vaccinated.
- **Phases 3-4 (Widely Available)** – Once the vaccine is widely available, Ohio will continue to strategically vaccinate Ohioans if they choose to receive vaccine.

### Phase 1A

During Phase 1A, which began December 14, 2020, priority was given to vulnerable individuals who live in close proximity and those who care for them:

- Healthcare workers and personnel who are routinely involved in the care of COVID-19 patients.
- Residents and staff in nursing homes.
- Residents and staff in assisted living facilities.
- Patients and staff at state psychiatric hospitals.
- People with developmental disabilities and those with mental health disorders, including substance use disorders, who live in group homes, residential facilities, or centers, and staff at those locations.
- Residents and staff at our two state-run homes for Ohio veterans.
- EMS responders.

### Phase 1B

During Phase 1B, the focus will continue to offer protection to those at high risk and have K-12 students back in the classroom by March 1. This phase will specifically include:

- Ohioans, age 65 and up.
- Individuals with severe congenital, developmental, or early-onset medical disorders that make them particularly vulnerable.
  - This includes cerebral palsy; spina bifida; congenital heart disease; type 1 diabetes; inherited metabolic disorders; severe neurological disorders, including epilepsy; severe genetic disorders, including Down syndrome, fragile X syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, and Turner syndrome; severe lung disease, including cystic fibrosis and severe asthma; sickle cell anemia; and alpha and beta thalassemia.
- Adults/employees in K-12 schools that want to go back to, or to remain with, in-person or hybrid learning models.

Tentative dates to start vaccinating these Phase 1B populations are:

- The week of Jan. 19, 2021 – Ohioans 80 years of age and older.
- The week of Jan. 25, 2021 – Ohioans 75 years of age and older; those with severe congenital or developmental disorders.
- The week of Feb. 1, 2021 – Ohioans 70 years of age and older; employees of K-12 schools that wish to remain or return to in-person or hybrid models.
- The week of Feb. 8, 2021 – Ohioans 65 years of age and older.

When a new age range opens, vaccinations will not be complete for the previous age range. It will take a number of weeks to administer all of the vaccine given the limited doses available. In order for K-12 school staff to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, schools are required to return to an in-person or hybrid learning model by March 1, 2021, and should submit the [K-12 Notice of Intent form](#) no later than Jan. 18, 2021.

### **How To Find a Vaccine Provider**

A provider search will be available at [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov) beginning Thursday, January 14, 2021, allowing Ohioans to search by county, ZIP code, and Phase 1B population to find a provider in their area. Groups defined by age will receive the vaccine from local health departments, hospitals, federally-qualified health centers, as well as some retail pharmacies. Providers for other audiences are yet to be announced.

### **Future Phases**

The vaccine distribution plan for future priority populations are still under development and will be shared publicly once finalized. As more information becomes available on who can receive the vaccine and when they can receive the vaccine, we will communicate this information publicly through the news media and share information at [coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine).

The vaccine has been shown to prevent COVID-19 and to decrease the severity of illness in people who catch the virus that causes the disease. Vaccinating a significant portion of Ohioans will help prevent serious hospitalizations and deaths.

Using all the tools available to help prevent the spread of the virus continues to be critical until a substantial number of Ohioans can be vaccinated. Continuing to wear masks that cover the mouth and nose and social distance will reduce your chance of being exposed to or spreading the virus. Proper prevention measures, coupled with the vaccine will provide the best protection from COVID-19.

*Updated Jan. 12, 2021.*

For additional information, visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

**Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.**

For more information, visit: [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov)



**Administrative Offices**  
(330) 678-7745 PH  
(330) 676-6310 FAX

**Customer Service**  
(330) 676-6701

**TTY (Hearing Impaired)**  
(330) 676-5100

**Scheduling & Operations**  
(330) 678-1287 or 1 (877) RIDE RTA  
(330) 678-7751 FAX



Honorable Mike DeWine  
State of Ohio  
77 South High Street – 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

December 29, 2020

Dear Governor DeWine:

On behalf of the Ohio Public Transit Association (OPTA) and transit systems across Ohio, we thank you for all your efforts to help contain the spread of coronavirus and keep Ohio communities safe and healthy. Like you, we are heartened by the news of a vaccine and urge you to include public transportation workers in an early phase of the vaccine distribution plan.

During this pandemic, public transportation has played a critical role in transporting essential frontline workers to their jobs in health care, education, utilities and grocery stores. In addition, in rural portions of Portage County where fixed route service is impractical, *PARTA* continues to provide lifeline services to ensure that people have access to dialysis appointments, grocery stores, and emergency medical facilities. Finally, transit employees across Ohio, have worked continually throughout the pandemic helping our local economies recover.

Transit workers have been designated by the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (DHS/CISA) as Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers, whose performance of critical functions places them at higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 infection. In early December, the advisory group for the Centers for Disease Control recommended that essential workers be included in the second priority group after health care workers.

It is with this in mind that we respectfully request that public transportation workers be included in an early phase of vaccination priority. Our employees have not been spared exposure to the virus and cannot work when they fall ill or must quarantine due to family exposure. This threatens our ability to ensure continued mobility for the individuals who rely on us every day.

OPTA and Ohio transit systems are ready to assist in efforts to facilitate the vaccine distribution and get residents to vaccination sites. Thank you for your consideration of this matter. If you have any questions, please contact either of us at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Claudia B. Amrhein  
General Manager/CEO, *PARTA*  
President, OPTA

Matt Carle  
Partner, CHW Advisors  
Executive Director, OPTA



**PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL  
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**  
2000 Summit Road, Kent, Ohio 44240

**Administrative Offices**

(330) 678-7745 PH  
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State of Ohio  
77 South High Street – 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

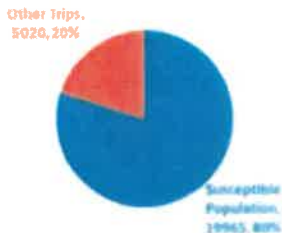
January 13, 2021

Dear Governor DeWine:

I am writing to thank you for your continued diligence and focus on preventing the spread of COVID-19 and saving lives now that we have vaccines. I write to you for a second time because I believe that including front line public transit workers in phase 1b distribution is a vital component of successfully fulfilling your mission of saving lives.

In early December, the advisory group for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended that essential workers be included in the second priority group after health care workers. Across the state, public transit interacts thousands of times daily with the populations you have identified as most vulnerable – the elderly, the disabled, and the medically fragile. PARTA continues to provide county-wide demand response service (“DR” - scheduled in advance, shared ride), focusing on rural portions of Portage County where fixed route service is impractical to provide.

PARTA TOTAL DR TRIPS DURING PANDEMIC, 24,985

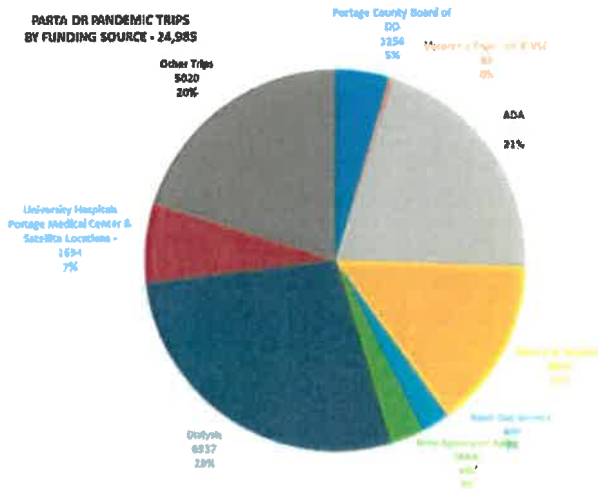


Since March 22, 2020, 80% of the nearly 25,000 individual, demand response trips were provided to people who are part of vulnerable and susceptible populations.

I call attention to the chart at right – ADA paratransit and countywide elderly and disabled trips have comprised 35% of total demand response service. Life-sustaining dialysis trips make up 28% of PARTA's demand response service since the early days of the pandemic. As you can see, numerous human service agencies rely on PARTA's transit services, including Direction Home/Area Agency on Aging, Portage County Board of DD, adult day services, and

ADA paratransit and countywide elderly and disabled trips have comprised 35% of total demand response service. Life-sustaining dialysis trips make up 28% of PARTA's demand response service since the early days of the pandemic. As you can see, numerous human service agencies rely on PARTA's transit services, including Direction Home/Area Agency on Aging, Portage County Board of DD, adult day services, and

PARTA DR PANDEMIC TRIPS BY FUNDING SOURCE - 24,985



non-emergency transportation for individuals released from the hospital who do not have transportation home.

By vaccinating public transit workers, you will “add another layer of swiss cheese” into your strategy, by removing an unnecessary risk from the exposure equation. Bus operators and other front line essential workers may be asymptomatic and simply not know it. We provide PPE and have barriers installed in all PARTA buses, but it is impossible to socially distance when securing a wheelchair or physically assisting a person to board and alight from the vehicle and walk or mobilize to and from their door.

Our fixed route operators (pre-determined route, schedule, and stop locations) who service Kent, Ravenna, the villages of Windham/Garrettsville/Hiram, Akron, Cleveland, and Kent State University, on average may interact with up to 105 riders each per day, based on 2019 ridership data. Disabled and otherwise vulnerable persons ride fixed route buses too, and operators exit their plexiglass-enclosed cabins to safely secure wheelchairs, breaching the social distancing protocol that becomes impossible to maintain.

Ohioans rely on public transit every day. I respectfully suggest that a strategy for saving lives should include vaccinating transit workers who interact with vulnerable populations every day. In addition, including transit in an early vaccine phase will help to ensure our employees remain healthy and able to continue to provide the transportation our vulnerable populations are relying on more than ever during this pandemic.

On behalf of PARTA and the Ohio Public Transit Association (OPTA), I thank you for your time and your dedicated service as our Governor. I appreciate having the opportunity to communicate with you over this critical issue. Please feel free to contact me if I may be of any assistance in this ongoing effort to battle COVID-19.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Claudia B. Amrhein". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Claudia B. Amrhein  
General Manager/CEO, PARTA  
President, Ohio Public Transit Association (OPTA)





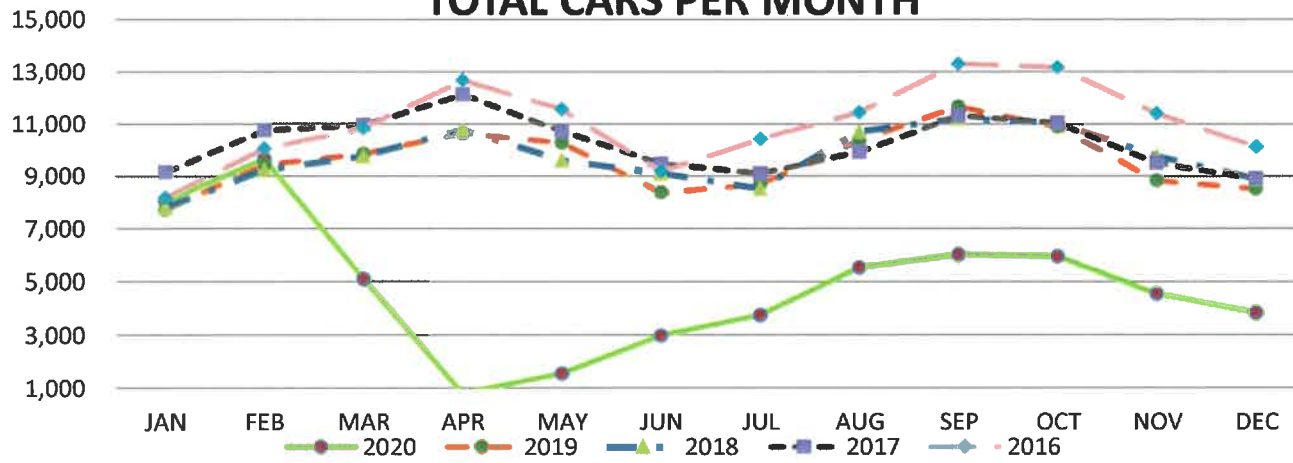
# KENT CENTRAL GATEWAY PARKING SUMMARY - December 2020

6 Month Lookback						
	Monthly	Transient	Total	Cars/Day	Last	Last Year
Jul-20	2,328	1,402	3,730	120	26%	-57%
Aug-20	3,204	2,298	5,502	177	48%	-47%
Sep-20	3,962	2,034	5,996	200	9%	-49%
Oct-20	3,876	2,062	5,938	198	-1%	-45%
Nov-20	3,093	1,445	4,538	151	-24%	-49%
Dec-20	2,565	1,263	3,828	128	-16%	-55%

## Annual Comparison

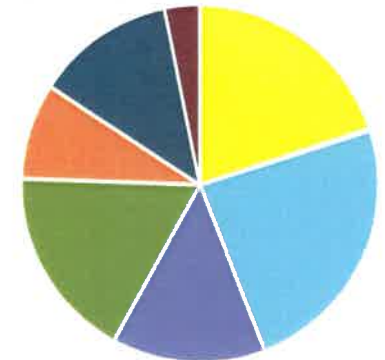
	2020	2019	2018
JAN	8,024	7,707	7,790
FEB	9,642	9,424	9,236
MAR	5,082	9,836	9,753
APR	785	10,639	10,775
MAY	1,535	10,268	9,592
JUN	2,961	8,371	9,098
JUL	3,730	8,672	8,510
AUG	5,502	10,352	10,702
SEP	5,996	11,657	11,197
OCT	5,938	10,888	11,039
NOV	4,538	8,812	9,759
DEC	3,228	8,505	8,886
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56,961</b>	<b>115,131</b>	<b>118,373</b>
	-50.5%	-1.0%	

## TOTAL CARS PER MONTH

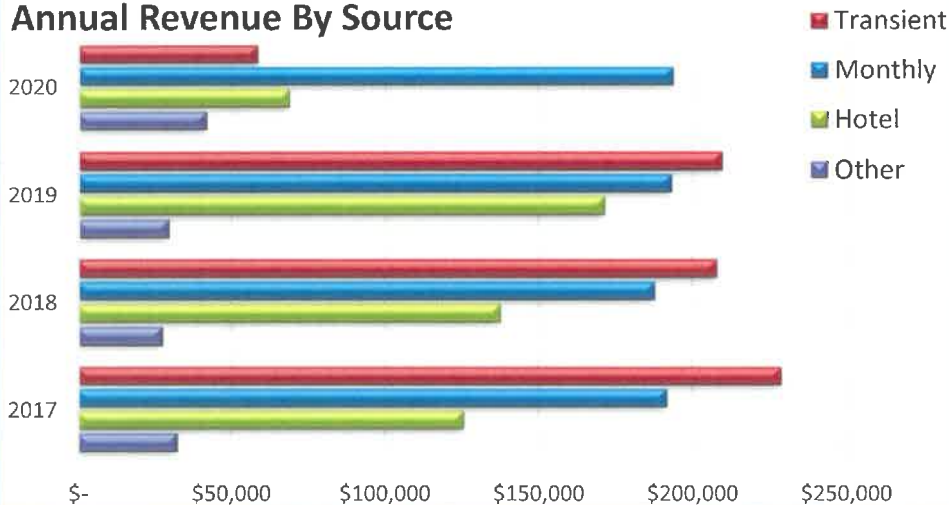


## # Rate Types Collected

- \$1.00
- \$2.00
- \$3.00
- \$4.00
- \$5.00
- \$6 - \$9
- \$10 - \$15
- >15

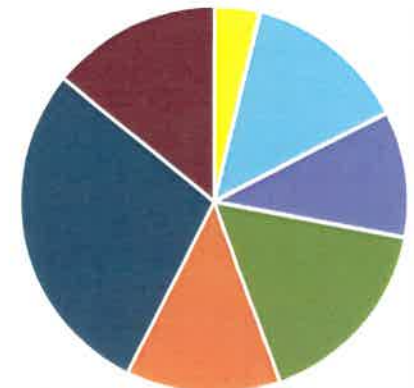


## Annual Revenue By Source



## \$ Rate Types Collected

- \$1.00
- \$2.00
- \$3.00
- \$4.00
- \$5.00
- \$6 - \$9
- \$10 - \$15
- >15



**RESOLUTION #2021-01-01**

**A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE TERMS OF AN AGREEMENT OR AN AMENDMENT TO THE EXISTING LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE KENT CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (KCHD) TO LEASE, ON A TRIAL BASIS, THE FORMER CUTLER REALTY/GROUP TEN GALLERY GROUND LEVEL RETAIL SPACES OF THE KENT CENTRAL GATEWAY (KCG) AT 201 EAST ERIE STREET, KENT, OHIO.**

**WHEREAS**, the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) constructed, owns, and operates the Kent Central Gateway (KCG) Multimodal Facility at 201 East Erie Street, Kent, Ohio; and

**WHEREAS**, PARTA established a 10-year agreement with the Kent City Health Department (KCHD) in August 2020 for leasing the second floor of the KCG facility as office space; and

**WHEREAS**, KCHD is in need of additional space to support COVID-19 vaccination clinic space in 2021 and potentially for a longer term; and

**WHEREAS**, the ground level retail spaces formerly occupied by Cutler Realty/Group Ten Gallery are vacant and provide 2,200 square feet of usable space for public health clinics; and

**WHEREAS**, leasing the vacant space on a trial basis during the immediate public health crisis will enable PARTA to explore other options for leasing the space post-pandemic, if determined it is in PARTA's best interest to do so; and

**WHEREAS**, consistent with PARTA's mission, this lease agreement will enhance access to KCHD's public health programs and services it offers to residents of Kent and Portage County and will generate stable and predictable revenue during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to support transit services and KCG operations; and

**WHEREAS**, consistent with FTA regulations, this lease agreement will not disrupt PARTA's public transportation services, will not interfere with the intended purpose of the multimodal facility, and will ensure that PARTA, as lessor, shall maintain satisfactory continuing control of the property during the term of use by KCHD; and

**WHEREAS**, PARTA deems it necessary and proper for the General Manager, or her designee, to work with legal counsel and risk pool advisors to negotiate the terms of an agreement with KCHD to lease, on a temporary basis, the former Cutler Realty/Group Ten Gallery ground level retail spaces.

**NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED** by the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) Board of Trustees that:



The General Manager, or her designee, is hereby authorized to work with legal counsel and risk pool advisors to negotiate the final terms of a temporary agreement with KCHD to lease, on a temporary basis, the former Cutler Realty/Group Ten Gallery ground level retail spaces.

**CERTIFICATION:**

The undersigned duly qualified Board President, acting on behalf of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (*PARTA*), certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Board of Trustees held on January 28, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Gynn, President  
Board of Trustees

\_\_\_\_\_  
Attested



**Media Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Denise Baba

**Phone:** 330.678.7745, EXT. 113

**Email:** [dbaba@partaonline.org](mailto:dbaba@partaonline.org)

***PARTA* awarded \$40,000 grant**

**Kent, Ohio – Thursday, December 17, 2020** – PARTA has been awarded a \$40,000 grant to study needed improvements along State Route 59 in Franklin Township, between Horning Road and State Route 261, to benefit transit, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic.

The grant was unanimously approved by the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) Policy Committee during its last virtual meeting of the year on December 17.

“It’s difficult for pedestrians who live, work, and travel this area to navigate it due to the lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and signage,” said PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein. “We’re excited about the opportunity to identify strategies to make that stretch of the roadway safer and easier to traverse for our riders, those on foot, and bicyclists.”

AMATS is providing the grant through its Connecting Communities Program, which is designed to assist in the development of plans that promote vibrant, livable communities. The PARTA study will identify areas where sidewalks could be extended, crosswalks installed, crossing signals implemented, mid-block crossing areas highlighted, and better transit passenger amenities added.

Organized in 1975 under Section 306.32 of the Ohio Revised Code, PARTA provides fixed-route, ADA Complementary Paratransit and Demand Response service throughout Portage County. PARTA also operates the Kent Central Gateway Transit Center and parking deck in downtown Kent. In 2018, PARTA constructed the first Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling station in Portage County.

For more information contact PARTA Communications and Public Advocacy Advisor Denise Baba at 330.678.7745 or email [dbaba@partaonline.org](mailto:dbaba@partaonline.org).

###

# The Portager

*News briefs*

## **Route 59 in Kent needs some attention. PARTA's on it.**

PARTA received a \$40,000 grant from the **Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study** to find ways to improve the stretch of state Route 59 between Horning Road and state Route 261.

"It's difficult for pedestrians who live, work, and travel this area to navigate it due to the lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and signage," **PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein** said. "We're excited about the opportunity to identify strategies to make that stretch of the roadway safer and easier to traverse for our riders, those on foot and bicyclists."

The PARTA study will look for ways to expand sidewalk access, install crosswalks and make the area more accessible for public transportation.