

Agenda

1. Call to Order
Roll Call Oral
2. Meeting Minutes
Minutes from April 22, 2021, Meeting (Motion Required) Attachment 2a
3. Guest Communications (Not required due to COVID-19) Oral
4. General Manager's Report Attachment 4
5. Committee Reports
 - a. Administration Did Not Meet
 - b. Finance Scheduled to Meet 5/25 via Zoom
 - c. Operations Did Not Meet
 - d. Personnel Did Not Meet
6. Old Business
7. New Business
 - Presentation on the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) by Curtis Baker, Director.
8. Resolutions - Roll Call Approval Required

#2021-05-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, ENTER INTO, AND SIGN A CONTRACT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND PURCHASE OF URBAN TRANSIT BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS WITH GILLIG FOR FIVE (5) YEARS BEGINNING IN 2021 THROUGH 2026.

#2021-05-02: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, ENTER INTO, AND SIGN A CONTRACT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND PURCHASE OF TROLLEY BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS WITH TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO) FOR FIVE (5) YEARS BEGINNING IN 2021 THROUGH 2026.

#2021-05-03: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, ENTER INTO, AND SIGN A CONTRACT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND PURCHASE OF THREE (3) CNG TROLLEY BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS WITH TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO).

9. Executive Session (if needed) – Roll Call Approval Required
10. Adjournment

Next Regular Meeting:
June 24, 2021 @ 7 p.m.
Via Zoom

PARTA
PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Held Remotely Via Zoom

April 22, 2021

Board Members Participating:

Marge Bjerregaard
Richard Brockett
Jeff Childers
Debbie Davison

David Gynn, President
Virginia Harris (arrived at 7:05 p.m.)
Michael Lewis, Vice President
Jack Murphy

Morgan Tipton
Frank Vitale
Karen Wise, TPO
Marvin Woods

Staff Participating:

Claudia Amrhein
Denise Baba
Marcia Fletcher

Kelly Jurisch
Justin Markey, Legal Counsel
Clayton Popik

Rebecca Schrader
Brian Trautman

Board Members Not Participating:

Karen Beck (1st excused absence)

R. T. Mansfield (1st unexcused absence)

Guests Participating:

None.

CALL TO ORDER

President David Gynn called the PARTA Board of Trustees 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. Gynn thanked everyone for coming and said the first item was the minutes from the March 25, 2021, meeting. He asked for a motion for approval. Ms. Marge Bjerregaard made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Mr. Mike Lewis. Mr. Gynn asked if there were any questions on the minutes. Hearing none, he asked all those in favor to say yes. He asked those who disapproved to say no. Hearing no opposition, he said the **motion to approve the minutes, as presented, passed unanimously.**

GUEST COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Gynn said there were no Guest Communications because of COVID-19.

Mr. Gynn said the General Manager's Report was next, and he asked Ms. Claudia Amrhein if she had anything to add. He said Ms. Amrhein and her staff have been very busy this last month with the Triennial Review and everything else going on.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Amrhein said yes, it has been very busy, and everyone is looking forward to taking some time off in the next few weeks as this gears down a little bit. The Triennial Review went well this week, and a very good report is expected. She expressed her appreciation to the Board and Administration Committee for adding the two (2) resolutions to the agenda. She said that will help resolve some potential findings. Although they are minor, they are the recommendations that were presented.

As a side note, Ms. Amrhein said it is hopeful that Board meetings will go live in July. As of right now, that is when the current law change will expire in terms of permitting the online convening of public meetings. If it does not get extended, *PARTA* will have to comply, which means the annual meeting would be back here in the Board room. She asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Karen Wise asked Ms. Amrhein if she would consider the option of participating remotely, i.e., hosting a meeting on two (2) platforms.

Ms. Amrhein said unless the state changes the Ohio Revised Code, *PARTA* would not be able to do that. She deferred to Mr. Justin Markey but said the online provision is an exception because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the health emergency, and the inability to gather. Prior to this, only in person gatherings were permitted for public votes.

Mr. Markey said Ms. Amrhein was correct and there is some discussion about extending those indefinitely but there is no final decision yet.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any other questions. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Amrhein and her staff for all the work they have done. Moving on, he said there were two (2) committees that met. He asked Ms. Wise to report on the Administration Committee.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Wise said she met with Mr. Frank Vitale and Mr. Richard Brockett, representing the Administration Committee, as well as some other Board members who attended. The matter of Board officer positions being open was discussed. As a reminder, the Board has three (3) nominated positions: President, which Mr. Gynn is serving as; Vice President, which Mr. Mike Lewis is serving as; and Temporary Presiding Officer, which she is serving as. They are one-year annual appointments that began in July 2020. The first year of service is ending and nominations or requests to be considered for any of the three (3) officer positions are officially open. If anyone has an interest in nominating someone, including one of the three (3) existing officers, or would like to be considered themselves, she asked that they put that in writing and send it to Ms. Fletcher. She said nominations will remain open until the evening of the July Board meeting, as stated in the By-laws, at which time the three (3) officer positions will be voted on. She asked if there were any comments or questions.

Hearing none, Ms. Wise said the rest of the meeting was devoted to the four (4) resolutions, which were all approved by the Administration Committee for forwarding to the *PARTA* Board for consideration. Those four (4) resolutions are on the Board agenda this evening. There was no other business and the meeting concluded at 6:54 p.m.

Mr. Gynn noted that Ms. Virginia Harris joined the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Moving on, Mr. Gynn said the Finance Committee met on Tuesday and he asked Mr. Lewis to present the report.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Lewis thanked Mr. Gynn and said the Finance Committee meeting was quick because March was a little quiet on the accounting side. Some really good information was in the numbers. On the income statement, the two (2) big items were KSU Revenues, which was about \$51,000 over budget, and Sales Tax Revenues, which continued to be strong and well above projected budget at about \$111,000. All the expenses were in line. There were a couple things that were paid that will show a higher percentage, but they were paid upfront and are good for the year. That percentage will come down over the next eight (8) months, give or take. For the month, there was a Gross Operating Surplus of \$227,773, which was \$133,988 over budget. Year-to-date had a Gross Operating Surplus of \$614,197, which was \$399,964 over budget. Everything is looking strong and in line for a good start to 2021. There was a brief discussion about CRRSAA (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act), which will bring roughly around \$3.7 million to PARTA for 2021. That is this year's equivalent to the CARES Act for transportation and other industries and will be discussed more in the next couple months when it starts hitting the numbers. The Capital Finance side was quiet. The final payment was made on the last LTV of \$85,800 and \$1 million was moved to Restricted funds for future use. Overall, PARTA was looking pretty good.

Moving on to the Kent Central Gateway (KCG), Mr. Lewis said the number of parkers was up for the month at 6,738, which was 35% higher than last month. The income statement was in line on the revenue side. The expenses were managed well, which helped with the Gross Operating Surplus of \$2,342 for the year-to-date budget. That does not sound like a lot, but it is good to see after the last year. He asked if anybody had any questions on the finances.

Mr. Vitale asked if the \$3.7 million under CRRSAA had any restrictions and what that money would be used for.

Ms. Amrhein said operating expenses, like for the CARES Act, can be drawn down that are not already covered by another funding source, less any preventative maintenance or farebox that is already being drawn down.

Ms. Schrader said Ms. Amrhein is correct and at least half of it will be to reimburse PARTA for wages every month.

Mr. Vitale asked if PARTA would have a surplus at the end of the year since some of it is going for wages.

Ms. Amrhein said it could because PARTA would not have to rely solely on sales tax for all operating expenses. It is meant to help carry transit authorities through unknown, uncertain economic times. PARTA has been very fortunate that sales tax has remained steady and surprisingly went up a little bit last year. She does not know what the future will bring and thinks that is the force behind why this was passed, which is to make sure that transit can continue operating no matter what happens. For the first time, PARTA will have some money in the bank beyond one (1) to two (2) months of operating expenses. PARTA is fortunate to have this funding and it will be spent in accordance with FTA regulations, which is what was done with the CARES Act funding. As part of the Triennial Review that just finished, the reviewers looked at the CARES Act expenses that were drawn down and went through them with a fine-tooth comb. They expressed no concern, which showed that PARTA spent its CARES Act funding in accordance with FTA regulations.

Mr. Gynn said the Finance Committee was aware that PARTA has been operating close to the budget without much additional money for the last several years. Should any catastrophe hit, PARTA would be in real trouble. This does give a little bit of breathing room that will be nice going forward.

Ms. Amrhein said PARTA goes out for bid every year for fuel and health insurance, which can flux greatly. Having a cushion is a very good thing.

Ms. Morgan Tipton noted that the Statement of Net Position for PARTA reflected dates at the top of the first two (2) columns that were the same: 2/28/2021.

Ms. Schrader noted that the column on the left should be 3/31/2021 and the column on the right should be 2/28/2021.

Mr. Gynn thanked Mr. Lewis for his thorough report.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Gynn said the Operations Committee was not scheduled to meet.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Gynn said the Personnel Committee was not scheduled to meet.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Gynn said there was no Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS

Under New Business, Mr. Gynn said Mr. Clayton Popik would be providing an overview on the East Main Street Project.

Mr. Popik provided a PowerPoint presentation, which is attached to these minutes. After the presentation, he asked if there were any questions or comments.

Mr. Vitale asked why it has taken so long to start this project.

Mr. Popik said it has taken a lot of community input and research. The city engineer is very thorough and wanted to have everything in order before going to the Citizens Advisory Committee. When the community is involved at that level, there is a lot of back and forth. The Citizens Advisory Committee throws out ideas, ARCADIS (the design firm) takes those back, incorporates what makes sense based on the safety data, and then that is brought back to the Citizens Advisory Committee. That is why the planning stage has taken so long. The funding is dedicated for certain years and would not be requested for next year because the project might not be ready. This type of funding is for shovel ready projects, which is currently not the case.

Mr. Vitale asked if it would start faster if they had the money from President Biden's infrastructure bill that might get passed.

Mr. Popik said he could not speak on that because that would be up to the city as to how they would want to handle moving money around, but right now the money is committed so they are probably going to stick with the funding sources that they are already tapped into.

Mr. Lewis asked if they knew about how long the project was going to take from start to finish.

Mr. Popik said probably at least two (2) years.

Mr. Lewis asked Mr. Popik to go back to the slide with the first roundabout.

Mr. Popik said this is the big intersection of East Main Street, Haymaker Parkway, and Willow Street, just east of KCG and downtown. These maps are some of the earlier concepts and may not look exactly like this in the final version. For example, the turn coming off East Main Street to Haymaker Parkway, that quick swoop to the right, will not be in the final design. Based on input, safety analysis, etc., some tweaks have been made. The idea is to reduce conflict points and make the roadway better.

Mr. Lewis said he was surprised at the short distance between the stop light and the roundabout because of the traffic that goes through there and the potential for backups.

Mr. Popik said he has sat through many discussions about the traffic analysis. The delays and peak times when the roadway would and would not be busy have all been evaluated. On a red light, there could be some backup in that circle, but the light cycles will also feed off activity on the side streets. If the side streets are not busy, that light will stay green. Backup will probably only happen two (2) times a day - first thing in the morning and again around 5 p.m.

Mr. Lewis wondered if Wendy's using the side exit onto Lincoln Street would play into it also.

Mr. Popik said that was his first thought when he saw Wendy's was redoing its driveway, but he does not think that is how it is exiting. He believes that will curve down the hill and move a little bit so Wendy's will exit further back from the intersection than what the drawing is currently showing. Lincoln Street came down to saving the building on the corner where Starbuck's is for historic preservation. KSU and the city have done a couple studies on the building. They acknowledged the historical significance so there was no adjusting the size of the intersection with Lincoln Street in that area. Then they looked to the east to see what land on KSU's side could be taken to make things a little better on Lincoln Street. There are a lot of mature trees on that corner and the citizens said they would rather deal with some congestion throughout the day than see a lot of those mature trees and that building get moved away. So, Lincoln Street will stay as it is right now. He does not even think that left turn lane from the south going west will be in the final drawing. It was a matter of drawing a line between expanding the roadways to the point of welcoming more traffic and destroying the landscape around it and preserving the landscape around it and living with the condition as it is. Nobody knew how to address that intersection. It came down to trying to create a balance between traffic and the environment around it.

Mr. Childers asked if PARTA would be responsible for any more than the \$95,000 in matching funds.

Mr. Popik said that is the only money PARTA is committed to at this point because PARTA chose to go after the transit dollars.

Mr. Gynn asked if anyone else had any questions. Hearing none, he thanked Mr. Popik and said he looks forward to seeing how this project develops.

Moving on, Mr. Gynn said the next item of business was the resolutions. A roll call response is needed for each and they were all discussed thoroughly and approved by the Administration Committee at their meeting tonight. The first two (2) are routine resolutions and the second two (2) are housekeeping matters.

Resolutions

Mr. Gynn introduced Resolution #2021-04-01.

#2021-04-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF APPLICATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA), AN OPERATING ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FOR FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED BY 49 U.S.C. CHAPTER 53, TITLE 23, UNITED STATES CODE, AND OTHER FEDERAL STATUTES ADMINISTERED BY THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA).

Mr. Gynn asked for a motion for approval.

Motion: Marge Bjerregaard

Second: Jack Murphy

Mr. Gynn said the Administration Committee discussed this in detail and it is a routine matter that is looked at every year. He asked if anybody had any questions.

Hearing none, Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Fletcher for a roll call vote.

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

Mr. Gynn said the motion was approved unanimously. He then presented Resolution #2021-04-02.

#2021-04-02: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF APPLICATIONS WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) FOR FY 2022 TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE GRANTS. THESE GRANTS MAY INCLUDE THE OHIO ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSIT FARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, THE URBAN TRANSIT PROGRAM, THE OHIO TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (OTP2), THE SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (SECTION 5310), AND THE OHIO RIDES TO COMMUNITY IMMUNITY PROGRAM.

Mr. Gynn asked for a motion to approve this resolution.

Motion: Debbie Davison

Second: Morgan Tipton

Mr. Gynn said this was a routine resolution and discussed by the Administration Committee in detail. He asked if there were any questions.

Hearing none, Mr. Gynn asked for a roll call vote.

Ms. Amrhein said this adds language to the Procurement Policy that PARTA does not issue any procurements with exclusionary or discriminatory terms that would serve to discourage full and open participation. These words exist in the procedure but not in the policy. This is a housekeeping matter to state that affirmatively in the Board policy that is on record.

Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Fletcher to call the roll.

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

Mr. Gynn said the resolution passed unanimously. Before the meeting was adjourned, he pointed out that Ms. Amrhein has been asked to join the Hattie Larlham Foundation Board of Directors. He said they are very fortunate to have her on their Board. He did not know until the other day that Hattie Larlham Foundation’s bus fleet is larger than PARTA’s bus fleet.

Ms. Amrhein said the Hattie Larlham Foundation operates in different areas throughout the state. They have three (3) offices: Mantua, Columbus, and Uniontown. They have their own fleet of about 80 vehicles and do all their own transportation for the day services and different programs that they offer. They have the same challenges that PARTA has with finding drivers and the logistics of transportation for a very large important service.

Mr. Gynn thanked Ms. Amrhein and asked if there was any other business.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing nothing further, Mr. Gynn asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Marge Bjerregaard made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Jack Murphy. Mr. Gynn asked all in favor to say yes. He asked any opposed to signify by saying no. Hearing no opposition, the **motion to adjourn passed unanimously.**


The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Fletcher
Executive Assistant

PARTA
2000 Summit Road
Kent, Ohio 44240

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: PARTA Board of Trustees 

FROM: Claudia B. Amrhein, General Manager

DATE: May 2021

Committee Meetings and Resolutions. The May agenda includes three (3) resolutions to address urban transit bus and trolley bus construction and purchasing over the next five (5) years. **The finance committee will meet remotely via Zoom on Tuesday, May 25, at 11:30 a.m. to review April finance reports and Resolutions #2021-05-01, -02, and -03.**

Presentation. During the board meeting, Curtis Baker, Director of the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS), will present an overview of the role and functions of AMATS in regional planning activities. This month's "Transit Trends" provides an overview of AMATS' role as the area's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Triennial Review Successfully Completed with Zero Findings. I am pleased to report that FTA will issue a "no findings" report following completion of the 2020 Triennial Review. The review, which began in late 2019, covered projects and services conducted during 2017, 2018, and 2019. FTA Region V stressed how rare it is to issue a no findings report, given that there are hundreds of potential findings. They complimented the PARTA team for its diligence, knowledge, and ability to carry out FTA regulations in letter and spirit. Thank you to all involved for your perseverance and excellent results!

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#2021-05-03: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, ENTER INTO, AND SIGN A CONTRACT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND PURCHASE OF THREE (3) CNG TROLLEY BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS WITH TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO).

Urban Transit Bus and Trolley Bus Contract Awards. Resolutions #2021-05-01 and #2021-05-02 request the award of separate contracts for the production of urban transit buses (Gillig) and trolley buses (TESCO) over the next five (5) years. Gillig and TESCO submitted the only competitive proposals in response to the procurement issued in March. Staff evaluated and scored the proposals and determined that Gillig offered the best overall value for urban transit buses and TESCO offered the best overall value for trolley buses. Resolution #2021-05-03 authorizes the initial purchase of three (3) CNG trolley buses through the TESCO contract via Resolution #2021-05-02 for an amount not to exceed \$1,800,000. The trolley buses will replace old transit buses that have exceeded their useful life and are included for replacement in the AMATS Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

RLB Phoenix Lease Agreement and Kent City Health Department (KCHD) Expansion Plans. Discussions continue over the terms for releasing RLB Phoenix from the master-tenant retail space lease agreement. In April, RLB agreed to allow KCHD to move into the former Cutler space while contract discussions continued between PARTA and RLB. However, an unexpected development interrupted KCHD's plans when the Ohio House of Representatives passed the general revenue budget in April. The budget includes a provision that threatens the continued existence of boards of health in cities with populations of 50,000 or fewer. The provision generated a flurry of questions and testimony contesting it in early May during Senate Health Committee hearings. The bill continues moving through the senate under the June 30 deadline. On May 20, KCHD recommitted to moving forward with the one-year lease. We will begin billing for the new lease when they begin using the space. The second-floor rent increase and maintenance fees will be billed retroactively to April 1.

State Route 59 Study Progressing. The Connecting Communities planning study to improve accessibility for non-car travel along the stretch of SR 59 from Horning Road to SR 261 is progressing. AMATS issued an RFP and received six (6) proposals to conduct the study. A committee comprised of staff from AMATS, ODOT, PARTA, Franklin Township, and the City of Kent selected Arcadis, the organization already engaged to design improvements along SR 59 from KCG to Horning Road.

After walking SR 59 on a cold, rainy Friday morning with Clayton Popik, Curtis Baker, and Heather Reidl from AMATS, I can attest to how difficult it is for anyone not driving a car to travel this stretch of roadway. The study will provide the basis for planning, programming, and applying for funding to support much needed transportation safety infrastructure improvements along this corridor.

Summer Meetings and Upcoming Agenda Items. During the May board meeting, we will discuss the logistics and timing for returning to in-person meetings. In June, we expect to bring forward a resolution to award a contract for building out a mezzanine and fitness room in the new bus storage facility. In July, we anticipate bringing forward a resolution to award a contract for constructing the new CDL driver training pad. The Bowen A&E team designed plans for use in bidding out both construction projects and will provide support services throughout the construction process.

Service Reports. Ridership. (*Coronavirus closures began March 2020*). Total county fixed route and DART ridership decreased by 41.30% through April, as compared to April 2020 with total county service performing 62,562 trips as compared to 106,579 trips performed through April 2020. Overall ridership, including campus service, decreased by 70.82%, with campus down by 88.64%. Total system ridership totaled 84,788 as compared to 290,615 through April 2020.

On-Time Compliance. ADA Complementary Paratransit Service. ADA on-time compliance was 95.27% in April as compared to 96.94% in March. Of 656 trips, 31 were performed late, with the latest running 16 minutes behind. **General Public (non-ADA) DART.** On-time performance for general public, non-ADA trips remained flat at 86.97% for April, as compared to 87.03% in March 2021. **Vehicle Preventative Maintenance (PM).** On-time compliance with established PM inspection schedules was 95% in April as compared to 99% in March 2021.

Parking Deck. Parking traffic remains steady, with an average of 208 cars per day in April as compared to 217 per day in March. But when compared to April 2020, parking increased by a whopping 696% with 6,249 total cars in April as compared to 785 total cars in April 2020.

Deep Sadness Over Recent Losses. Please take a moment to read the two (2) obituaries included in this packet. We are grieving the loss of Daryl and Michelle, valued team members and friends.

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



May 2021

TRANSIT Trends

News and information for the PARTA Board of Trustees



As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Akron metropolitan area, AMATS is responsible for programming public transportation projects for Akron METRO and PARTA.

These projects are identified in the AMATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a comprehensive and financially-constrained listing of regional transportation projects and services that are scheduled to be carried out within the next four years.

The TIP is important because it provides:

- a schedule by which to coordinate projects among jurisdictions and transportation agencies,
- a guide for implementation of short and long range transportation planning,
- an aid to financial programming and administration, and
- a source of information for the public.

No project can be implemented with federal transportation funds unless it is included in the TIP.

Planning key to efficient transportation system



PARTA receives both state and federal dollars for capital improvements to support its operations. These dollars, in the form of grants, flow through the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS), the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

AMATS is responsible for ensuring comprehensive transportation planning for Summit and Portage counties and parts of Wayne County. This responsibility includes coordination with various agencies in Northeast Ohio, including PARTA.

Federal transportation law requires urbanized areas with population concentrations in excess of 50,000 persons to conduct an urban transportation planning process as a prerequisite for receiving federal funding for financing regional transportation improvements.

The organizational structure for conducting this planning process is the MPO. It's a committee comprised of local elected officials, operators of major modes of transportation, and state officials that the Governor formally designates as the body responsible for conducting an urbanized area's transportation planning process. There are 17 MPOs in Ohio.

Every project PARTA initiates that receives federal funds must appear in the AMATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a four-year plan and is updated as needed. Projects identified in the TIP are also included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Sources of funds flowing through AMATS

PARTA receives funds from multiple Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) grant programs. These grants flow through AMATS and include the FTA's 5307, 5339(a), and 5310 programs. The amount, source, and purpose of these dollars is identified in the current AMATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Urbanized Area Formula Funding (5307) is the primary source of capital and maintenance dollars for PARTA. The FTA's Buses and Bus Facilities Program (5339a) also provides dollars for capital projects.

Specialized Transportation Program funding (5310) offers assistance to provide enhanced mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. These dollars help support transportation services that meet the unique needs of these populations and may be used for capital or operating expenses.

It should be noted that PARTA's primary sources of operating funds are a countywide 1/4 of 1% sales tax, revenue from contracts, and farebox returns. These local dollars do not flow through, and are not administered by AMATS.

Daryl T. Frazier

October 22, 1962 ~ May 8, 2021 (age 58)



Daryl T. Frazier, 58 years old, of Freedom Township went home to be with Jesus, His Savior, on May 8, 2021 surrounded by his loving family. Daryl is survived by siblings and their spouses, David Frazier (Karen), Deborah Szabo (Jeff), Melinda Livezey (Denny) and Daniel (Kim) and many nieces and nephews as well as his treasured pets, Doobie and Trixie and his farm animals. One of Daryl's greatest passions was riding his Harley Davidson motorcycles with his beloved riding group. Daryl had a quick wit, a warm smile, twinkling eyes and the kindest heart. Daryl's wishes were to have his family and friends come together for a "last walk" on his property on Saturday, May 22, 2021 at 5:00PM, rain or shine--"Wear your boots" (Daryl's words). Daryl also asked that after the walk everyone leave quietly with your memories.

Services

A service summary is not available

Michelle Ann (Danes) Laston

June 19, 1968 ~ May 17, 2021 (age 52)



Services

VISITATION

Sunday

May 23, 2021

2:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Shorts-Spicer-Crislip Funeral
Home Ravenna Chapel
Ravenna, Ohio

FUNERAL SERVICE

Monday

May 24, 2021

11:00 AM

Shorts-Spicer-Crislip Funeral
Home Ravenna Chapel
Ravenna, Ohio

Michelle Ann (Danes) Laston 52 of Paris Township was met at heavens gate by her parents and baby brother Monday, May 17, 2021 surrounded by her family. She was born June 19, 1968 to the late John and Carol A. (Singleton) Danes. Michelle was a bus driver for Field schools for 16 years and a driver for P.A.R.T.A. for 8 years. Michelle loved spending time with her family, her children were her life and her grandbabies completed the picture. Aside from her family she had a love for crafts, casinos, bingo and fishing. Michelle's Strength, Courage and determination was an inspiration to all who new her. Left to cherish her memory are her husband Rick, children Heather (Shawn) Harvey, Ashley (Andrew) Young and Ryan (Sarah) Stutzman, step-children Noah and Rachel, Grandchildren Zachary, Ryleigh, Baylee, Lexie, Aurora, Paisley, Sawyer & Amelia, Brother John (Dreamma) Danes, Nieces and Nephews, Cousins and tons of friends who loved and will miss her dearly. She was preceded in death by her parents and her brother and sister in law Jamie and Emily Danes. Calling hours will be from 2 - 5 PM Sunday, May 23, 2021 at Shorts Spicer Crislip Funeral Home Ravenna Chapel. Funeral services will be at 11 AM Monday, May 24, 2021 with Dave Roberts officiating. Burial will follow in West Cemetery in Palmyra. In lieu of flowers memorials should be made to Crossroads Hospice, 3743 Boettler Oaks Dr., Suite E, Uniontown, OH 44685.



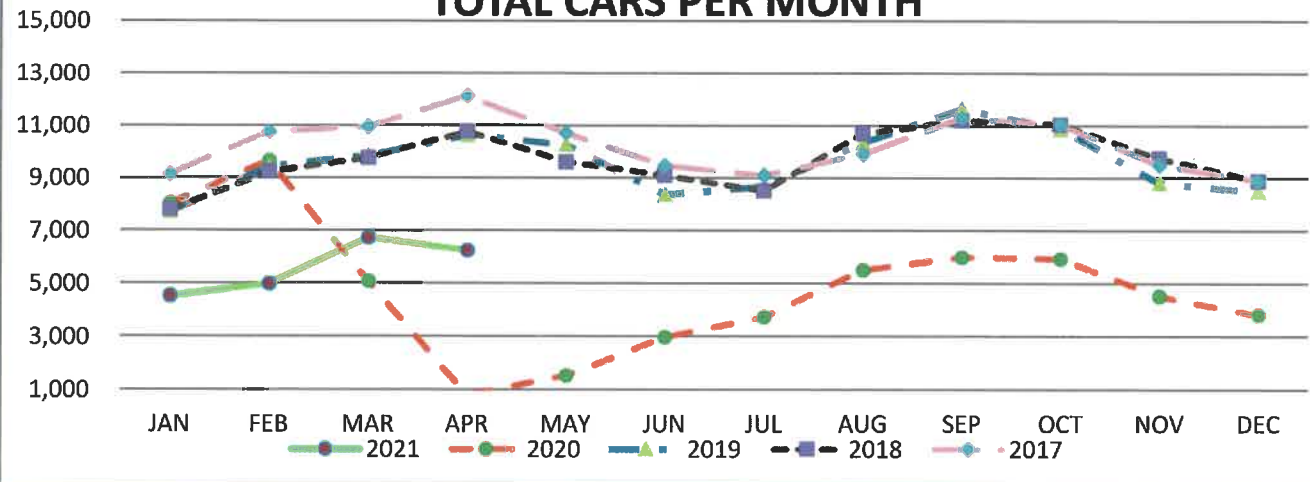
KENT CENTRAL GATEWAY PARKING SUMMARY - April 2021

6 Month Lookback						
	Monthly	Transient	Total	Cars/Day	Last	Last Year
Nov-20	3,093	1,445	4,538	151	-24%	-49%
Dec-20	2,565	1,263	3,828	123	-16%	-55%
Jan-21	2,953	1,581	4,534	146	18%	-43%
Feb-21	3,238	1,744	4,982	178	10%	-48%
Mar-21	4,181	2,557	6,738	217	35%	33%
Apr-21	3,703	2,546	6,249	208	-7%	696%

Annual Comparison

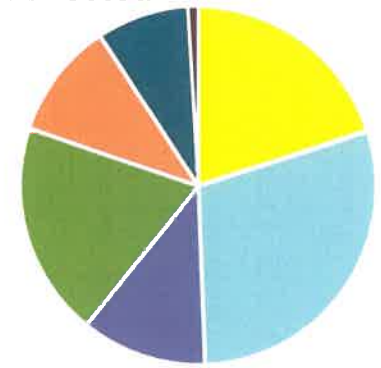
	2021	2020	2019
JAN	4,534	8,024	7,707
FEB	4,982	9,642	9,424
MAR	6,738	5,082	9,836
APR	6,249	785	10,639
MAY		1,535	10,268
JUN		2,961	8,371
JUL		3,730	8,672
AUG		5,502	10,352
SEP		5,996	11,657
OCT		5,938	10,888
NOV		4,538	8,812
DEC		3,828	8,505
TOTAL	22,503	57,561	118,373
	-4.4%	-50.0%	

TOTAL CARS PER MONTH

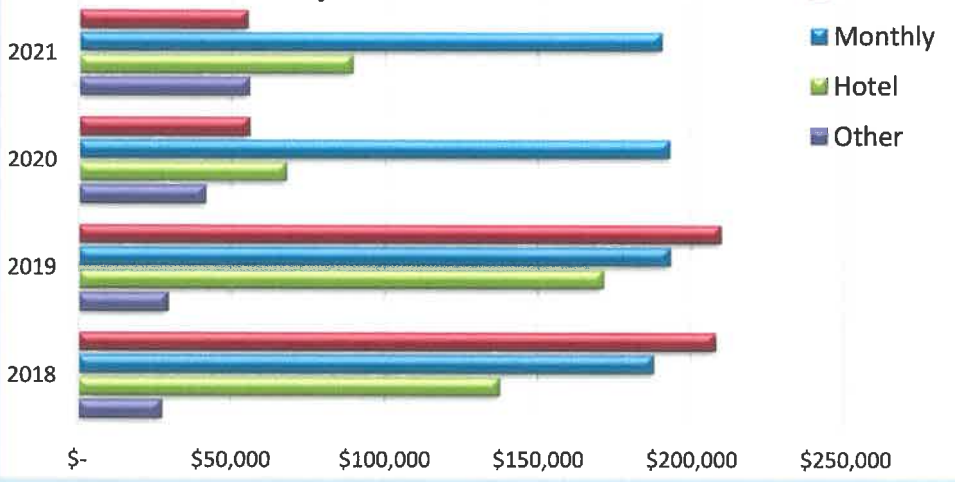


Rate Types Collected

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

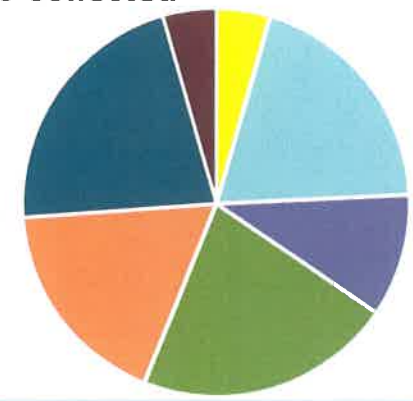


Annual Revenue By Source



\$ Rate Types Collected

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



RESOLUTION #2021-05-01

A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, ENTER INTO, AND SIGN A CONTRACT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND PURCHASE OF URBAN TRANSIT BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS WITH GILLIG FOR FIVE (5) YEARS BEGINNING IN 2021 THROUGH 2026.

WHEREAS, PARTA has identified a need to purchase urban transit buses to replace buses that are beyond their useful life and are included in the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) approved Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and

WHEREAS, PARTA conducted a formal procurement (RFP #Low Floor 2021-01), in accordance with the procurement procedures, and found that GILLIG provides the best overall product and price for PARTA for urban transit buses; and

WHEREAS, GILLIG offers diesel, CNG, and hybrid electric propulsion in its urban transit buses, and PARTA will determine the best propulsion depending on the current need and grant funding at the time of purchase; and

WHEREAS, PARTA will utilize Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant (DERG) funds, 5339(b) Bus and Bus Facilities Program funds, 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Funds, and local dollars to cover the cost of the urban transit buses during the term of the contract, consistent with PARTA's bus replacement schedule.

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 negotiate, enter into, and sign a contract for the production and purchase of urban transit buses, optional equipment, and spare parts with GILLIG for five (5) years beginning in 2021 through 2026.

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 May 27, 2021.

Date

David Gynn, President
Board of Trustees

Attested

RESOLUTION #2021-05-02

A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, ENTER INTO, AND SIGN A CONTRACT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND PURCHASE OF TROLLEY BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS WITH TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO) FOR FIVE (5) YEARS BEGINNING IN 2021 THROUGH 2026.

WHEREAS, PARTA has identified a need to purchase trolley buses to replace buses that are beyond their useful life and are included in the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) approved Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and

WHEREAS, PARTA conducted a formal procurement (RFP #Low Floor 2021-01), in accordance with the procurement procedures, and found that Transportation Equipment Sales Corporation (TESCO) provides the best overall product and price for PARTA for trolley buses; and

WHEREAS, Transportation Equipment Sales Corporation (TESCO) offers diesel, CNG, and hybrid electric propulsion in its trolley buses, and PARTA will determine the best propulsion depending on the current need and grant funding at the time of purchase; and

WHEREAS, PARTA will utilize Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant (DERG) funds, Bus and Bus Facilities Program [5339(b)] funds, 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Funds, and local dollars to cover the cost of the trolley buses, consistent with PARTA's bus replacement schedule.

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 negotiate, enter into, and sign a contract for the production and purchase of trolley buses, optional equipment, and spare parts with Transportation Equipment Sales Corporation (TESCO) for five (5) years beginning in 2021 through 2026.

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 May 27, 2021.

Date

David Gynn, President
Board of Trustees

Attested

RESOLUTION #2021-05-03

A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, ENTER INTO, AND SIGN A CONTRACT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND PURCHASE OF THREE (3) CNG TROLLEY BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS WITH TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO).

WHEREAS, PARTA has identified a need to purchase trolley buses to replace buses that are beyond their useful life and are included in the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) approved Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and

WHEREAS, PARTA conducted a formal procurement (RFP #Low Floor 2021-01), in accordance with the procurement procedures, and awarded a contract to Transportation Equipment Sales Corporation (TESCO) for trolley buses in Resolution #2021-05-02; and

WHEREAS, PARTA has identified a need to purchase three (3) CNG trolley buses consistent with PARTA's bus replacement schedule, which is vital to the continued efficient operation of PARTA; and

WHEREAS, PARTA was awarded Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds in the amount of \$832,000 to cover up to 80% of the cost of two (2) CNG buses; and

WHEREAS, PARTA was awarded \$446,742 to cover up to 80% of the cost of one (1) CNG bus through the Bus and Bus and Bus Facilities Program [5339(b)] grant; and

WHEREAS, additional grant funds may be awarded from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) through the Ohio Transit Partnership Program (OTP2); and

WHEREAS, PARTA will utilize local sales tax revenue as local match and to supplement the grant funding in the event unexpected contingent expenses arise.

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 execute said contract with Transportation Equipment Sales Corporation (TESCO) for the production and purchase of three (3) CNG trolley buses, optional equipment, and spare parts, for a cost not to exceed \$1,800,000.

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 May 27, 2021.

Date

David Gynn, President
Board of Trustees

Attested

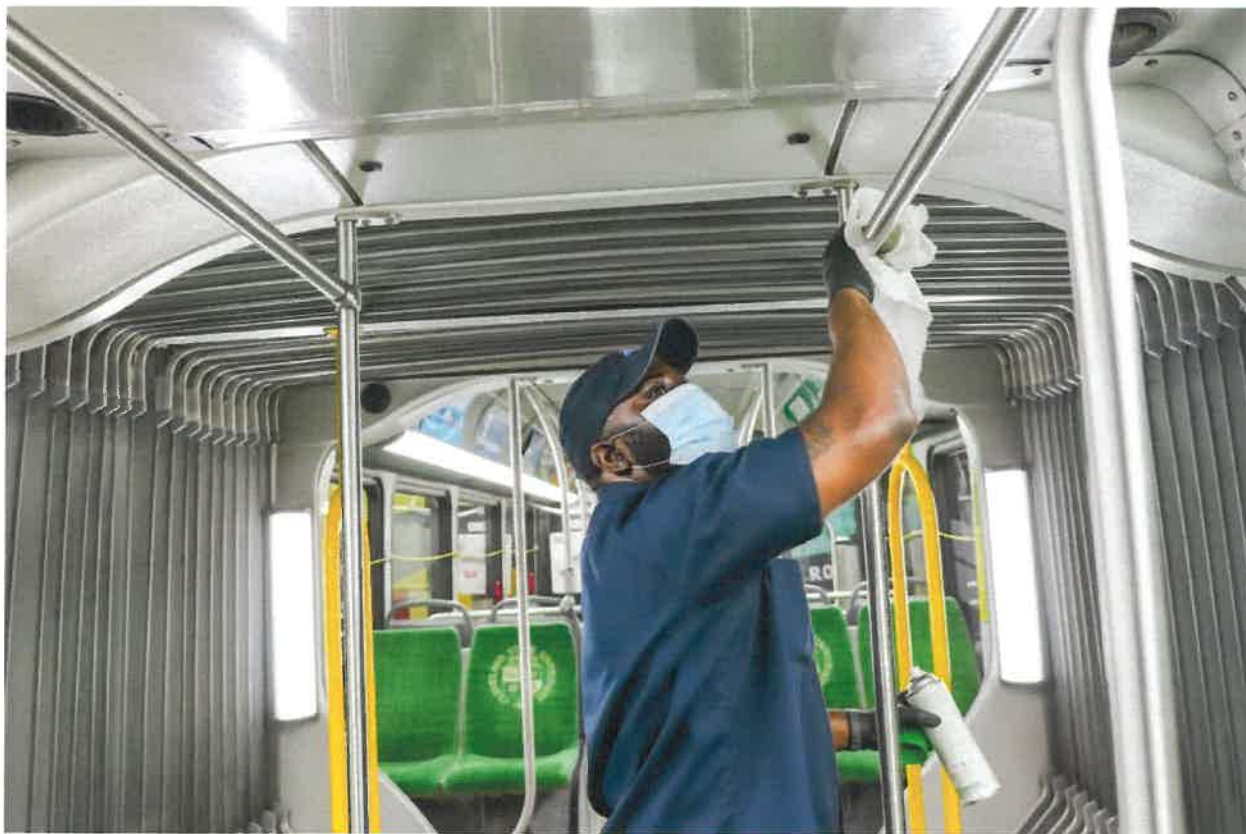
Energy News Network

Underfunded public transit systems face ongoing challenges in Ohio

Beyond pandemic-induced dips in ridership and ongoing economic challenges, Ohio's 61 public transit systems must cope with a history of underinvestment from the state.

by Kathiann M. Kowalski

April 26, 2021



A masked worker uses a rag to clean a handrail inside a public bus.

Ohio's public transit systems are likely to face significant challenges emerging from the coronavirus pandemic. Credit: Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority / Courtesy

Although Ohio lawmakers didn't slash public transportation funding this year, the state's 61 public transit systems likely will still face greater challenges emerging from the coronavirus pandemic than those in other states.

Low-income families and people of color will feel the effects most.

"We want to encourage people to get out of their cars to reduce greenhouse gases," said George Fields, deputy general manager for human resources at the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. Greenhouse gases drive human-caused climate change, and energy used by the U.S. transportation sector is responsible for 29% of those emissions. Ohio is among the top 10 states responsible.

"As the pandemic started last March, there was a big dip in ridership for us because of the different shutdowns and closures," Fields said. Ohio's largest public transit system is back to about 93% of its normal service level. Yet difficulties remain.

Even as more Ohioans get COVID-19 vaccines, ridership may remain below desired levels. Many businesses also are considering whether employees who have been working from home will keep doing so for the long term, at least part time, Fields noted.

“All of that plays into a ridership trend that may not actually bounce back as quickly as we would like it to bounce back,” Fields said. Lower ridership means lower revenues.

The economy will likely take a while to rebound as well, especially in downtown areas. That also will decrease revenues for the Greater Cleveland RTA, which gets part of a local sales tax. More generally, a slow economic recovery can mean fewer jobs for people who would otherwise ride public transit systems throughout the state.

Even while overall ridership may take a hit, “more people will probably be relying on public transit,” said Amanda Woodrum, a senior researcher at Policy Matters Ohio. “We don’t exactly know what the long-term impacts are from the pandemic on how our economy works. And that has a lot of implications, particularly for low-wage workers.”

People who work in the retail sector and at various restaurants tend to rely heavily on public transit, Woodrum said. Many of those places shut down during the pandemic or restricted their hours. For now, it’s unclear whether those jobs will come back in the same locations.

Shaky employment figures mean more people are struggling financially. Roughly one in 20 Ohioans who were available to work were out of a job in March. The state’s unadjusted unemployment rate was somewhat better than the national rate. Yet five counties were still above that 6.2% level. Adding in people who only work part-time for economic reasons or have other tenuous or sporadic employment brings Ohio’s labor underutilization rate to roughly 13% for 2020, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported on March 26.

Other people may work full time but have fewer hours or at lower-wage jobs than they had before the pandemic. As a result, more people may find cars unaffordable or need to scale back their use for monetary reasons.



The destination display on a bus, stopped at a bus stop shelter, reminds riders: "Masks required."

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, Ohio’s largest public transit system, is back to about 93% of its normal service level. Yet difficulties remain. Credit: Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority / Courtesy

Better, but...

Ohio public transit systems will get about \$70 million per year for each of the next two fiscal years under the state's new transportation budget, which goes into effect on June 30. The funding is a combination of state money and federal "flex funds," which the state can designate for any of various purposes.

The total is a tenfold increase over the \$7 million per year that Gov. Mike DeWine proposed in his initial two-year transportation budget. That amount would have slashed current state funding by roughly 90%.

"The public transit allocations reflected increases in federal allocations to offset state costs," said Dan Tierney, DeWine's press secretary.

"Across Ohio, public transit continues running due to much-needed CARES funding" from the federal government, said Claudia Amrhein, current president of the Ohio Public Transit Association and general manager and CEO of the Portage Area Regional Transit Authority, in her testimony on the 2022-23 transportation budget, House Bill 74. "CARES funds are tremendously helpful, but are a short-term fix during the pandemic, not a long-term solution to adequately funding public transit in Ohio."

The result: Despite added challenges from the pandemic, Ohio's next budget will at best keep public transit funding roughly where it is now. If any more federal money comes through, a clawback provision will let the state scale back its funding accordingly.

"The increased funding that the [Ohio] Senate put in definitely was better than what the governor had proposed. And it was better than what we passed out of the House," said Rep. Erica Crawley, D-Columbus. "But public transportation overall is still underfunded."

Six years ago, the Ohio Department of Transportation projected that in order to meet all budget needs for transit, including capital costs, the state should provide \$185 million in annual funding per year by 2025. The new budget's \$70 million annual funding is roughly three-eighths of that projected funding need. ODOT's figures have not been updated to reflect impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Put another way, \$70 million per year is less than 2% of the overall \$8.3 billion transportation package signed into law last month. Ohio spends roughly \$6 per person on public transit, compared to a national statewide average of nearly \$60 per capita.

In contrast, the state will spend \$75 million for one five-year project to reconstruct 2.5 miles of Interstate 70 through the city of Zanesville, where U.S. Rep. Troy Balderson lives. He previously chaired the Ohio Senate's Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.



"Shuttle to vaccinations," reads the destination display on a large transit van parked near a curb. Even as more Ohioans get COVID-19 vaccines, transit ridership may remain below desired levels. Credit: Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority / Courtesy

A matter of equity

Funding for public transit "goes directly to health and social equity," Crawley said. Almost a quarter of Ohio households headed by Black women don't own a car, compared to just one-twelfth of Ohioans overall, she noted.

"Economic sustainability says that people need to be able to have effective transportation to get to and from their jobs," Fields said. Yet companies' movement from downtown areas to outer-ring suburbs has created a mismatch between employers' needs and workers' ability to get to jobs.

A 2015 analysis by the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland found that half of the region's top-10 employment centers were accessible to just 15% or less of the regional workforce. And only one-third of the jobs in the region could be reached by public transit in 90 minutes or less.

The Greater Cleveland RTA is exploring a pilot program, Connect Works, to partner with other transportation providers, such as ride-share or van services to give riders first- and last-mile options for shortening their commute, Fields said. In the longer term, some new or shifted routes may also be necessary.

"We know for sure we have a population of folks that must take our service, and we need to be creative and safe in how we make those mobility connections," Fields said. All of that will cost money.

"When we have underserved communities, they're cut off from opportunities and have barriers that other people don't have to worry about," Crawley said — increasing the wealth gap and worsening health disparities.

In 2019, the top 10% of American families owned 76% of the nation's wealth, while the bottom half owned just 1%, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis reported in December. That same year, the typical White family had eight times as much wealth as the typical Black family and almost five times as much as the typical Hispanic family.

Lack of good public transportation harms people's quality of life even beyond access to jobs, Crawley said. Among other things, families in urban low-income neighborhoods often live in food deserts — areas without supermarkets offering a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, lean meats and fish at affordable prices.

Rural public transit programs also face challenges coming out of the pandemic. "In rural areas, people actually have to drive more" to get to jobs, food markets, healthcare and other basic services, Woodrum said.

Amrhein, of the Portage transit agency, told lawmakers that large parts of its service area lack fixed route service and instead provide pre-scheduled shared-ride service. "Since March 2020, 80% of our door-to-door trips have been dedicated to taking our most vulnerable populations — elderly and disabled and those without access to a vehicle or unable to drive — to life-sustaining dialysis treatments, medical appointments, jobs, and basic living necessities," she said.

Indeed, hospitals in some rural areas have closed, making it harder for people without access to cars to get healthcare. Appalachian Ohio's counties have above-average poverty rates compared to the rest of the state and are particularly hard hit by the opioid crisis, which has worsened during the pandemic. Substance abuse prevents many people from driving lawfully, yet they still need treatment, Woodrum noted.

In short, whether it's rural or urban, "transportation is critical," Woodrum said. "It's how we need to get where we need to go when we need to get there, whether it's school, work, the doctor's office or the grocery store."

Correction: This article has been updated to correct the name of the Cleveland pilot program: Connect Works.

All eyes on Tuesday's primary

Seven candidates vying for three Streetsboro City Council seats

Robert Fulton

Kaitlyn McGarvey

Ravenna Record-Courier
USA TODAY NETWORK

Streetsboro voters will see seven candidates on Tuesday's primary ballot who are looking to win an at-large seat on City

Council.

Voters will select their top three choices for the job. The top six vote-getters on Tuesday will proceed to the November election. That is when the pool will be narrowed down to the three people who will serve Streetsboro citizens on

council for the next four years.

Running this year are three incumbents, two former councilmen and one newcomer. Streetsboro's elections are non-partisan so voters will not see party designations on the ballot.

Robert Fulton is a retired educator who has lived in Streetsboro for 20 years. He earned two degrees in education from Lake Erie College and pursued post-graduate studies. In his time as a principal, Fulton said, he learned much about the

See PRIMARY, Page 2A

Primary

Continued from Page 1A

benefits of forming kind and respectful relationships with others.

Fulton said he is interested in delivering a free, monthly newsletter updating citizens about local government issues. Other goals include developing volunteer programs to provide assistance and keep the community safe, clean and respectful. If elected, he said he will listen to the concerns of residents and demonstrate good leadership.

Other organizations Fulton is involved with include the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. He has also worked extensively with Rotary, Jaycee and Lions groups. If elected, Fulton said he is dedicated to serve all of Streetsboro's citizens and will engage with all members of the community.

Jon Hannan

Incumbent Jon Hannan reflected that the city has many projects in the works, making it hard for him to pinpoint a top priority if he's re-elected. He mentioned moving ahead with a new city hall complex near the new fire station and a water line project.

With his roots firmly planted in Streetsboro, Hannan said he wants to continue making the city a great place to raise a family and intends to raise one himself there one day. He founded and coaches Running Rockets, a youth running league, and also coaches the high school's cross country team. He is also a corporal in the Ohio Army National Guard, a general manager for Domino's Pizza and is working to earn his master's degree in public administration.

Hannan has served as council representative on the city's master plan review commission and is part of the city's core concepts committee. Though he said he works well with current city administration and all council members, he said he is very willing to listen to the new ideas of any newcomers.

Chuck Kocisko

When asked about what issues are most important to him, incumbent Chuck Kocisko said continuing to fix Streetsboro's roads and updating the city's water system.



Fulton



Hannan



Kocisko



Michniak



Ring



Salyer



Woods

He considers himself a good candidate for the position because he has a lot of history with the community. He has been involved with city government for 25 to 30 years in some capacity, he said.

First elected to Streetsboro City Council in 2003, Kocisko said he has enjoyed working for the public. He has served on a number of city boards and commissions, notably the board of zoning appeals, planning commission and master plan review commission. He said he has also sat in the audience of many a city meeting.

Kocisko said his experience makes him a prime candidate to help other people. Aside from his work in local government, he founded Streetsboro Family Days in 2002, which he said has "been his whole life" for the past dozen or so years. He also spent many years as the president of Streetsboro Junior Baseball.

Steve Michniak

Steve Michniak previously served two nonconsecutive terms on Streetsboro City Council and is hoping to be elected for a third. Infrastructure and continuing to grow businesses to support the tax base are among his top issues. Michniak also said he wants to use his experience as an attorney to help the city avoid costly lawsuits and be a voice of reason at city meetings.

He said his experience makes him a prime candidate for the position. Michniak has worked with the Portage County Prosecutor's Office for 22 years. A lifelong public servant, he said he has handled some of the most serious cases in the county. Though he considers the current city council to be doing a great job, Michniak said he also wants to be a part of the city's growth.

Michniak has also served on the city's green space committee as well as on the charter review commission. If elected, he said he is "ready to go" on

Day One and hopes to help continue the good things going on in Streetsboro.

Justin Ring

Incumbent Justin Ring said it is critical that Streetsboro continues improving its infrastructure and not fall behind on the good work it's done fixing its roads. Building a community amphitheater is also extremely important, he said, because it would give back to residents. Plus, he said, events can be held at it and it would contribute to the city's sense of community.

Ring has worked in the finance industry for nearly two decades. Prior to that, he worked in restaurant management. He said he has experience working with the public and has worked many roles in a bank setting. Currently, his job entails evaluating risk and reward. He believes it translates well to working with the city's finance director.

Ring said he hopes voters understand that the relationship city council has with the administration has never been better. He said that openness allows for progress and gives opportunity for the free flow of ideas. Prior to serving on council, Ring was a member of the city's board of zoning and building appeals. Ring is also currently on the executive board of the local Sons of the American Legion and involved with the American Legion Riders.

Brian Salyer

Brian Salyer says infrastructure is one of the most important issues facing the city. He said is interested in repairing more Streetsboro roads and adding more sidewalks. A resident since 2005, he said he has seen the city make a lot of progress over the past decade and a half. Though he feels the current city council is doing a great job, Salyer said adding new eyes and ears is important.

He said he feels the city is moving in the right direction and wants to be a part of shaping it. Pres-

ently, he serves on the Streetsboro Planning and Zoning Commission. Previous roles include president and vice president of the Tinker's Green Home Owners Association and communications committee co-chair of the Streetsboro PTA.

He said his professional career in technology marketing has not been one that natively lends itself to serving the community. Desiring to do more of that, he said serving on city council will give him that opportunity. Salyer said he approaches situations by accepting feedback from others and incorporating it into the project, something he thinks he can bring to the table as a member of council.

Marvin Woods

Marvin Woods was chosen by city council to finish Art Scott's term as the Ward 3 councilman in late 2019. Though he lost election the following November, Woods is now seeking election to an at-large seat.

Woods said he would like to see infrastructure continue to improve in the city and has interest in advocating for a Neighborhood Watch Program. He also said he "fiercely" believes in the importance of Pierce Streetsboro Library and wants to seek grant money or donations for it. An advocate of parks, he would also like to see recreation programs get a boost.

A Streetsboro resident since 2008, Woods has experience serving on the Boulder Creek Homeowners Association Board; the Streetsboro's Parks, Recreation and Conservation Advisory Committee; and the Streetsboro Board of Zoning and Building Appeals. He retired from his professional career in insurance sales nearly two years ago.

Woods said Streetsboro is the place he chose to live and the place he chose to retire to. He said he is dedicated to the city and wants to help it continue to grow.

Reporter Kaitlyn McGarvey can be reached at kmcgarvey@record-pub.com or on Twitter at [@kaitlynmcg_rc](https://twitter.com/kaitlynmcg_rc)

News 5 Cleveland

Ohio House Bill 110 calls for study of small health departments, leading to possible elimination

Smaller health departments across the state of Ohio may have to close up shop and merge with their county's health department, if Ohio Senate House Bill 110 is passed. The bill is comprised of provisions to the state's two-year budget.

By: [Meg Shaw](#)

Posted at 10:03 AM, May 11, 2021

and last updated 10:03 AM, May 11, 2021

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Smaller health departments across the state of Ohio may have to close up shop and merge with their county's health department if Ohio Senate House Bill 110 is passed. The bill is comprised of provisions to the state's two-year budget.

[Under the bill](#), health departments, which serve cities with less than 50,000 residents, will be required to complete a study, evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of its services to see if it should be consolidated with its county health department - versus operating on its own. Up to \$6 million would be earmarked for these studies.

The bill says if the study concludes that a merger is advisable, the smaller health department must enter into a contract with the district advisory council for the general health district.

Nearly 20 health departments across the state would be impacted if the provision goes into the state budget plan.

In Northeast Ohio that includes cities like Alliance, Ashtabula, Conneaut, Kent, Massillon, New Philadelphia, Shelby and Salem.

The Mayor of Alliance spoke out about the bill and its provisions at last week's council meeting via Zoom.

"I'm trying to figure out the impedes for this," he said. "So there's really no understanding on my part as to how this is going to make things more efficient or effective."

He said the Alliance Health Department serves more than just the residents who live in the city of Alliance and if they were to merge with their county's department, it's going to force residents to travel several miles for services.

"So that's three times further one way for someone to get on a bus and get shots or whatever services they need, so I think there's some real impedes here for the Senate to review this."

The Ashtabula City Health Department also said they were against a merger.

In a statement, the department told News 5, "The inequity of singling out small city health departments for this efficiency study is grossly unfair. Should not all health departments, local and state be held to the same standards? Our department opposes legislation that would force a merger due to the size of our community not the needs. Ashtabula City is the largest city in Ohio's geographic largest county, Ashtabula. Our department serves a population of 19, 000 which represents 20% of our county's total population. Access to care and transportation are just a few of the issues that face our city residents and disproportionately effects our large number of residents living at or below the poverty line that regularly utilize the services provided by our local health department. Centralizing public health services twenty miles away at our county health department would serve only to widen this disparity."

In the next few weeks, lawmakers in the Ohio Senate will be reviewing changes to the state budget. The final two-year budget must be approved by June 30.

Kent officials oppose state plan that could close smaller health departments

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Kent's administration has made it clear that it is firmly against potential consolidation with Portage County's health department.

Language in Ohio's two-year budget would require cities with fewer than 50,000 residents to study whether their health department should merge with the county health department. The change could consolidate as many as 18 of the state's 113 health departments, Kent included.

Under the proposed change, the Ohio Department of Health and state auditor's office would create criteria to determine whether departments should merge, and the state would allocate \$6 million for those studies. If the study indicated that the smaller health

department should be consolidated, the city would have to enter into a contract with the county health department.

According to Kent City Manager Dave Ruller, city and health officials have been tracking the legislation, House Bill 110, and actively oppose it. The Portage County Health District does a great job and is a valued partner, he said. However, because the city is home to Kent State University, Kent's needs are very specific and much greater than most other parts of the county.

Ruller said Kent feels it is critical it has its own resources dedicated to public health.

"We recognize that the presence of 25,000 students creates extra needs on the local public health system and we don't think it's fair to expect Portage County to be able to provide that extra level of service to Kent but not the rest of the county," Ruller said. "I believe that's why Kent voters chose to specifically include the Kent Health Department in the City Charter."



If this bill is approved unaltered, Kent Health Commissioner Joan Seidel said, the state auditor and Stephanie McCloud, director of the Ohio Department of Health, would be in

charge of running the feasibility study. The study, which could take up to 18 months to complete, would then lead to a finding of either "effective" or "not effective."

Seidel said a "not effective" finding would mean work would begin to merge small health departments with their county counterparts. A merger could take up to 30 months.

"We truly hope it does not come to this," Seidel said. "Everyone in the department feels privileged and honored to serve our community to ensure people who live, work, and recreate here are safe and healthy. We would like to continue to provide our services and expand to meet additional needs of our community."

There has been a push for consolidation for many years, Seidel said, and there have been studies that looked at the benefits when cities voluntarily agree to consolidation. Many people believe there are efficiencies to be gained by consolidation. Though not surprised by this latest effort to make consolidation happen, Seidel said she did not expect it to happen in the middle of a pandemic response.

Ohio Rep. Bill Roemer, R-Richfield, who proposed the change, said he wanted to ensure Ohioans are receiving comprehensive care, and that is threatened by a patchwork of services statewide. That patchwork was even more evident during the pandemic when the job of doling out vaccinations fell to multiple different providers.

Roemer said smaller health departments would not be eliminated entirely, only consolidated with their county counterparts. "You would get the best of both worlds." Proponents of consolidating health departments say it is a matter of efficiency.

"The pandemic definitely brought it sharper into focus," said Roemer, adding that Ohio's health departments outnumber the state's alcohol, drug and mental health boards and educational services centers, combined.

Health department officials have also argued those studies are also redundant because most are already undergoing an extensive national accreditation process required by Ohio lawmakers to prove their worth.

Seidel said the Kent City Health Department is an academic health department and funded by city residents. The Portage County Health District relies on levies, though both groups also utilize grant funding. KCHD has a strong relationship with its community members, businesses, local schools and with Kent State University.

While Kent residents would surely be included in programs and offerings from the county should they combine, she said, there could be increased fees for licenses and other services.

The city has communicated its concerns with state representatives, Ruller said. Kent City Council is also anticipated to vote on a resolution "strongly" opposing H.B. 110 at its May 19 meeting.

Ruller said that, based on conversations he has had with various members council, they are equally concerned over the prospect of the city losing its public health resources—especially following the events of the COVID-19 pandemic where extra attention and personal care provided by Seidel and her staff "saved lives."

It is not unusual for health departments to consolidate for various reasons. In 2013, the city of Ravenna moved forward with a merger with the Portage County Health Department.

At that time, Ravenna City Council approved an ordinance authorizing a contract with the county for environmental health inspections. Previously, the city contracted with the county unit to also handle nursing services. Then- Ravenna Service Director Kelly Engelhart said the move represented a "functional merger" of the two health departments. The city was phasing out the role of its health commissioner.

The leap to officially bring Ravenna into the ranks of the Portage County General Combined General Health District happened in 2015. It came as no surprise as the county and city had worked on negotiating a merger deal for months. The agreement meant the Portage health district served all of the county except the city of Kent. Aurora and Streetsboro joined the county district in the early 1970s.

The number of health departments in Ohio has expanded and contracted over the years, Beth Bickford, executive director of the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners, said. Before the 1918 influenza pandemic, health departments were located only in cities, leaving Ohio's unincorporated areas underserved. After that, the number of health departments swelled to 160 by the 1980s and has since dropped to 113, she said.

Terri Argent, health commissioner of Massillon City Health Department, said that eliminating health departments would divert money collected from fees to the county instead of the city.

Lawmakers in the Ohio Senate are reviewing changes to the state budget in the coming weeks. The final two-year budget must be approved by June 30. Seidel said there is a chance the provision could be removed or further amended.

Many people testified on the behalf of small health departments, she said. That support led legislators to amend text to include the feasibility study. The Ohio Senate was asked to remove the provision altogether or, at least, carve out a space for health departments who are accredited.

The KCHD is in the final stages of seeking accreditation, Seidel said.