

**PARTA**  
**PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**March 28, 2024**

**Board Members Present:**

Victor Baerman	Mike Lewis, Vice President	Stacey Wilson
Karen Beck	R. T. Mansfield	Karen Wise
Debbie Davison	Janice Simmons-Mortimer	Marvin Woods, TPO
Dave Gynn, President	Frank Vitale	

**Board Members Not Present:**

Jeff Childers (1 <sup>st</sup> excused absence)	Jack Murphy (2 <sup>nd</sup> excused absence)
Virginia Harris (3 <sup>rd</sup> excused absence)	

**Staff Present:**

Claudia Amrhein	Ashley Forbes	Rebecca Schrader
Denise Baba	Kelly Jurisch	Greg Springer
Marcia Fletcher	Natalie Rothenbuecher, Roetzel & Andress	Brian Trautman

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Dave Gynn called the March 28, 2024, PARTA Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7 p.m. and thanked everyone for coming. He asked for a roll call, after which it was determined that **a quorum was participating.**

Moving on, Mr. Gynn welcomed Ms. Janice Simmons-Mortimer, who was appointed by the Portage County Commissioners to represent Northern Portage County, and asked Ms. Claudia Amrhein to introduce her.

Ms. Amrhein thanked everyone for coming and said she was pleased to introduce Ms. Simmons-Mortimer, who is the Executive Director of the Portage Foundation. She said Ms. Simmons-Mortimer lives in Hiram with her family and is very active in the Portage County community. She replaces the vacancy that was left by Mr. Richard Brockett.

Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Natalie Rothenbuecher to give the Oath of Office to Ms. Simmons-Mortimer.

Following the Oath of Office, Mr. Gynn asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2024, Board meeting. **Ms. Karen Beck** made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, which was seconded by **Mr. Frank Vitale**. Mr. Gynn asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he said the **motion to approve the minutes, as presented, passed unanimously.**

**GUEST COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Gynn noted there were no guests in attendance and asked Ms. Amrhein to give the General Manager's report.

## GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Amrhein thanked Mr. Gynn and said normally the agenda includes a presentation. There isn't one tonight to keep the meeting a little shorter since it's Holy Week and some folks may be going to services. There will be a brief overview of the East Main Street project during that resolution's discussion with a graphic to show where service is in that area. She mentioned that the Triennial Review was still underway, and all the required documentation was submitted for the FTA's "desk review." She said there will continue to be correspondence with them as they review those materials and prepare to come onsite at the end of July. She noted that there was a significant resolution going forward tonight for the purchase of transit buses through GILLIG, which will be discussed later.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any questions or comments for Ms. Amrhein. Hearing none, he moved on to the committee reports.

## ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Gynn said the Administration Committee did not meet and moved on to the Finance Committee. He asked Mr. Mike Lewis to give that report.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Lewis said two months of finances were covered at the meeting. Starting with PARTA, January KSU Revenues and Sales Tax Revenues were down a little below budget. On the expense side, almost everything was in line. The biggest adjustment was Fuel and Lubricants, which will be a reoccurring theme throughout the year because the bid was lower than expected. Dues and Subscriptions. OPTA and NEORide dues were paid at the beginning of the year, and that line item will catch up over time.

Moving on to February, Mr. Lewis noted there was an extra day this month since it was a leap year. He said Sales Tax Revenues was lower than budget by \$23,321. KSU Revenues was above budget by \$82,164. In March, Sales Tax Revenues should be back in line with December sales tax coming through. Expenses were pretty much in line. For February, there was a surplus to budget of \$235,288 and a YTD Actual of \$323,537. The YTD Budget was under, so there was a surplus to budget there also. He asked if there were any questions on PARTA. Hearing none, he moved on to the Kent Central Gateway (KCG).

Mr. Lewis said the number of cars was down year to date for January and February, which may have been due to there being less events during that time. He expects March and April to be up, especially with the solar eclipse on April 8.

Ms. Stacey Wilson arrived at the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Continuing, Mr. Lewis said the finances for KCG were pretty much in line. The monthly budget was \$4,962 for January. The Current Period was \$1,164. Hotel Overnight Parking and Daily Parking Revenue were down. Contract Maintenance Service was a little above budget due to parking equipment and maintenance, which will continue because of aging equipment.

Moving on to February, Mr. Lewis said both Hotel Overnight Parking and Daily Parking Revenue were down. Contract Maintenance Service was above budget. Overall, YTD Actual was \$8,565. YTD Budget was \$12,051, which was below the budget by \$3,486. That should bounce back in March and April. There was a question a while ago about what was still due to the city of Kent. The answer is that \$26,988 was paid in March, which leaves a balance of \$119,601 due to PARTA. Ms. Schrader indicated that she plans to get that taken care of this year. Finally, there were two resolutions: #2024-03-01 and #2024-03-02. The Finance Committee voted to approve those resolutions and move them forward to the Board for a full vote.

Mr. Gynn thanked Ms. Fletcher for getting the Finance Committee minutes done rapidly and for updating the Board contact sheet. He asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he moved on to the Operations Committee report.

### **OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Gynn said the Operations Committee did not meet and moved on to the Personnel Committee report.

### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Gynn said the Personnel Committee did not meet and then moved on to Old Business.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Gynn said there was no Old Business and moved on to New Business.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Gynn said there were two resolutions.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

Mr. Gynn introduced Resolution #2024-03-01.

**#2024-03-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PURCHASE UP TO FOUR (4) CLEAN DIESEL AND TWO (2) COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS (CNG) URBAN TRANSIT BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS FROM GILLIG.**

Mr. Gynn asked for a motion to pass Resolution #2024-03-01.

**Motion: R. T. Mansfield**

**Second: Karen Wise**

Ms. Amrhein said an RFP was prepared in 2021 for a large bus procurement and two different contracts were awarded: one to GILLIG for urban transit buses and one to TESCO for trolley buses. TESCO is the dealer for Hometown Manufacturing, which manufactures trolley buses. Trolley buses were ordered and the first three of five were received this year but were late. Over the last few months, Mr. Trautman has been working with Hometown Manufacturing to find out how things were progressing. It was confirmed through Hometown Manufacturing and TESCO that those final two trolleys weren't even on the production line yet. They are nine months late at this point and Hometown Manufacturing asked for another extension. At the same time, four clean diesel buses are scheduled to be replaced with grant funding. There is a GILLIG contract from which the first order for four CNG urban transit buses was received last year. There will be one out front at the end of the meeting for viewing. This resolution is for four more clean diesel buses. Since there were some issues with the trolleys that were delivered in the last few months, the best decision was to cancel the last two trolleys on order with Hometown Manufacturing. The contract is not being cancelled, just the last two trolleys. Two CNG urban transit buses will then be ordered with GILLIG. The funding dictates the propulsion system to be used. GILLIG is ready, willing, and able to add those two buses to the order. They were very efficient with the first four, which are beautiful. The resolution asks for the authority to purchase up to six buses because a notice had to be provided to Hometown Manufacturing under the contract language to give them time to appeal the decision to cancel the two and provide evidence that they could fulfill the contract. They did not appeal. *PARTA* is now free to order the two buses. The pricing schedule was attached to the resolution for the four clean diesels. The pricing schedule for the two CNGs was just received yesterday.

Mr. Frank Vitale asked how cancelling those two trolleys affected the long-term goal of having a certain number of buses of a certain age at a certain point.

Ms. Amrhein said it doesn't inflate or decrease the fleet. The two trolleys that haven't been received would have replaced transit buses that were out of their useful life. Those two trolleys will be switched to transit buses, with the same propulsion system, and will replace buses that are outside of their useful life. New buses will always replace vehicles that have been taken out of service.

Mr. Vitale said the proposal indicates PARTA will be getting four clean diesels and two CNG buses. He asked if more clean diesels were being purchased and less CNG buses.

Ms. Amrhein said the goal is to maintain about a 50/50 ratio. Right now, there are 17 clean diesels and 16 CNG buses.

Mr. Vitale asked why PARTA wouldn't go with purchasing all CNG buses since it built the CNG station.

Mr. Trautman said there are a host of reasons, but the main one is to be able to stay versatile. If the CNG station goes down, diesel buses are still available to run and vice versa. Diesel engines have more longevity than a CNG engine. CNG engines need to be rebuilt between 140,000 and 175,000 miles because of the heat. A diesel engine will go more than 300,000 miles. Either engine rebuild costs between \$20,000 and \$25,000. It's a little more expensive to maintain a CNG bus than it is a diesel bus. There are a lot of different reasons that could be argued on either side of the equation. The clean diesel fleet uses DEF and particulate traps, so there are very, very low emissions coming from the diesel buses. There are no Legacy diesels left in the fleet. They are all clean diesels. PARTA is fortunate to have a high pressure CNG line, due to Kent State University's (KSU) heating plant, that it can tap into. PARTA has a lower cost CNG station because smaller compressors can be used instead of a four-stage compressor system. PARTA is looking at smaller CNG vehicles but to get the conversion right now on those is very hard because of the supply chain issues. PARTA maintains a good balance and it's a good approach. If there's a CNG or diesel part supply chain issue, PARTA is not caught in that matrix of being a smaller transit that gets less attention.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any other questions or comments.

Mr. Victor Baerman asked what the strategy was for continuing to order trolley buses.

Ms. Amrhein said there's a lot of enthusiasm about the trolley buses, but there have been some issues with how they hold up and last. She asked Mr. Trautman to comment.

Mr. Trautman said there have been some issues with deliverables for the trolleys. The company used is smaller, and they have had some issues with parts and maintenance manuals. Keeping up on the after-the-sale support side has been a struggle. They are way behind on delivery, and PARTA has been very, very patient. PARTA purchased some EIDorado National buses, with the last series arriving in 2021. That company was relatively new and announced this year that they are going out of business. As a transit operator that must maintain vehicles for 12 years, it becomes very difficult when companies that build the buses are no longer in business. There are concerns, at this point, that Hometown Manufacturing has not been able to produce what they say they are going to be producing on time and about their long-term viability. GILLIG is a much stronger platform right now, especially in the current market. PARTA is not a big RTA like Cleveland or Toledo, so it must go where there is more longevity, which is the better choice right now. There are currently six trolleys that are running on almost every route. Everybody loves them. GILLIG has been around for more than 40 years. Making the switch will protect PARTA's interest in the long term.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any other questions. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Fletcher for a roll call.

Roll Call:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Karen Wise	<u>X</u>	___	Jeff Childers	<b>EXCUSED</b>	___
Frank Vitale	<u>X</u>	___	Karen Beck	<u>X</u>	___
Stacey Wilson	<u>X</u>	___	Janice Simmons-Mortimer	<u>X</u>	___
Jack Murphy	<b>EXCUSED</b>	___	R. T. Mansfield	<u>X</u>	___
Mike Lewis	<u>X</u>	___	Victor Baerman	<u>X</u>	___
Virginia Harris	<b>EXCUSED</b>	___	Marvin Woods	<u>X</u>	___
Debbie Davison	<u>X</u>	___	Dave Gynn	<u>X</u>	___

Following roll call, Mr. Gynn said the resolution passed unanimously. He then introduced Resolution #2024-03-02.

**#2024-03-02: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO CONTINUE JOINT EFFORTS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EAST MAIN STREET, GENERALLY FROM WILLOW STREET TO HORNING ROAD, WITH KENT STATE UNIVERSITY (KSU) AND THE CITY OF KENT (CITY).**

Mr. Gynn asked for a motion to approve Resolution #2024-03-02.

**Motion: Karen Beck**

**Second: Mike Lewis**

Mr. Vitale asked if PARTA was a partner and responsible for a third of the East Main Street project.

Ms. Amrhein said this is the city of Kent’s (City) East Main Street project, which has been discussed off and on since 2018. KSU and the City identified some mutual interest in improving the corridor in front of campus along East Main Street. KSU set some strategic goals to redesign the front campus, build the new business building that is almost finished, reorient the entry way, make it more walkable, and move parking back so it was less visible. At the same time, the City was looking for funds to redesign and reconstruct that corridor because it’s the worst traffic area in the region. Over the years, those two things came together. KSU and the City are very transit friendly and always invite PARTA to the table. About 10 years ago, PARTA was included in the meetings for the Summit Street project as well, which ran along the other side of campus. PARTA didn’t contribute financially but did give input to make sure it would work for transit. This time, PARTA participated in the community meetings with residents who would be impacted by the changes on the north side of the road. It took several years; and, of course, COVID hit, which backed things up a little bit. In the long run, PARTA agreed to look for some funding to help with the transit amenities. Out of about a \$25 million project, about \$4 million can be attributed to not just bus stops but sidewalks, paving crosswalks, lighting, etc. Many things can be called transit amenities. PARTA was not able to get funding through a different federal grant to cover all that. So, PARTA is setting aside \$90,000 from federal 5307 funds through formula funding received through the FTA each year towards the transit amenities, which are basically seven bus shelters.

Mr. Vitale asked if PARTA was contributing just the \$90,000.

Ms. Amrhein said PARTA will contribute \$90,000 in federal funding and KSU and the City will cover the local match. PARTA will put out an RFP for a bus shelter procurement with options. The shelters will have a similar look. KSU owns the utilities on their side of the street. If they want to put in charging stations, electricity, green roofs, or anything different or fancy that takes maintenance, they can do that. On the other side of the street, PARTA doesn’t own the utilities. The shelters will look similar, but they may not have all the same options. PARTA will maintain ownership and will have an agreement with KSU for maintaining the shelters on their side. PARTA will maintain the ones that aren’t on KSU property and ensure compliance with FTA standards. The City is really good at doing these agreements in stages so that there is no commitment beyond the funding available.

Ms. Amrhein then presented her PowerPoint.

Following the PowerPoint, Mr. R. T. Mansfield asked if the bicycle and pedestrian lanes were going to be used by the electric bicycles and scooters.

Mr. Lewis said those lanes can be used by electric bicycles and scooters if there is pedal assist on them.

Ms. Wilson said she uses those lanes, which is a designated multi-use path, for her Class 1 eBike.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any other questions. 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>
Mike Lewis	<u>X</u>	<u>    </u>	Victor Baerman	<u>X</u>	<u>    </u>
Virginia Harris	<b>EXCUSED</b>	<u>    </u>	Janice Simmons-Mortimer	<u>X</u>	<u>    </u>
Debbie Davison	<u>X</u>	<u>    </u>	Karen Wise	<u>X</u>	<u>    </u>
Jeff Childers	<b>EXCUSED</b>	<u>    </u>	Frank Vitale	<u>X</u>	<u>    </u>
Karen Beck	<u>X</u>	<u>    </u>	Stacey Wilson	<u>X</u>	<u>    </u>
R. T. Mansfield	<u>X</u>	<u>    </u>	Jack Murphy	<b>EXCUSED</b>	<u>    </u>
Marvin Woods	<u>X</u>	<u>    </u>	Dave Gynn	<u>X</u>	<u>    </u>

Following roll call, Mr. Gynn said the resolution was approved. He then moved on to the Executive Session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Gynn said there was no need for an Executive Session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing nothing further, Mr. Gynn entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Mike Lewis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Debbie Davison. Mr. Gynn asked all in favor to signify by saying aye. He asked any opposed to signify with the same sign. Hearing none, the **motion to adjourn passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

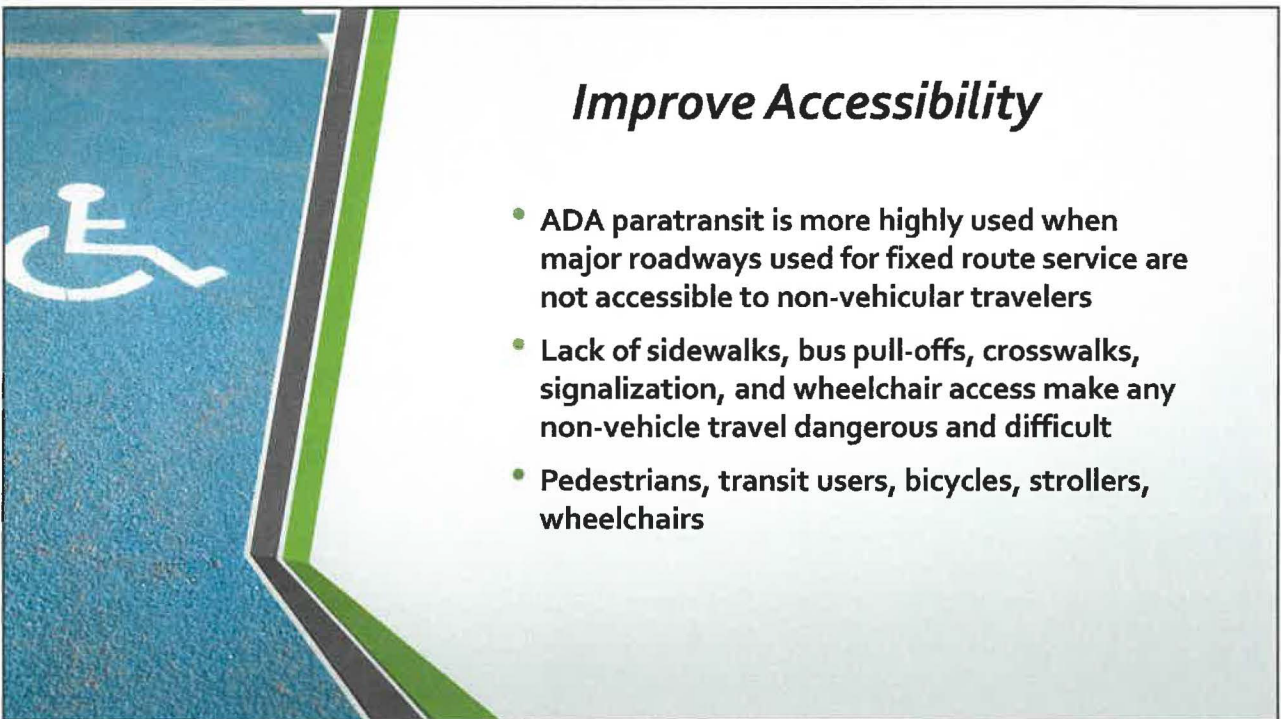
Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Fletcher  
Executive Assistant



# East Main Street Project

1



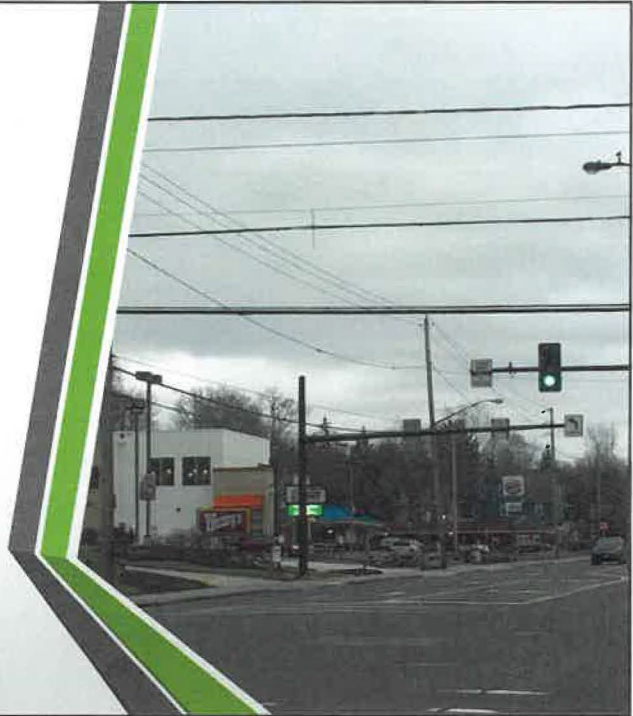
## *Improve Accessibility*

- ADA paratransit is more highly used when major roadways used for fixed route service are not accessible to non-vehicular travelers
- Lack of sidewalks, bus pull-offs, crosswalks, signalization, and wheelchair access make any non-vehicle travel dangerous and difficult
- Pedestrians, transit users, bicycles, strollers, wheelchairs

2

# City of Kent East Main Street Project

- 2025 construction
- Willow St. to Horning Rd.
- Partners:
  - City of Kent, KSU and PARTA



3

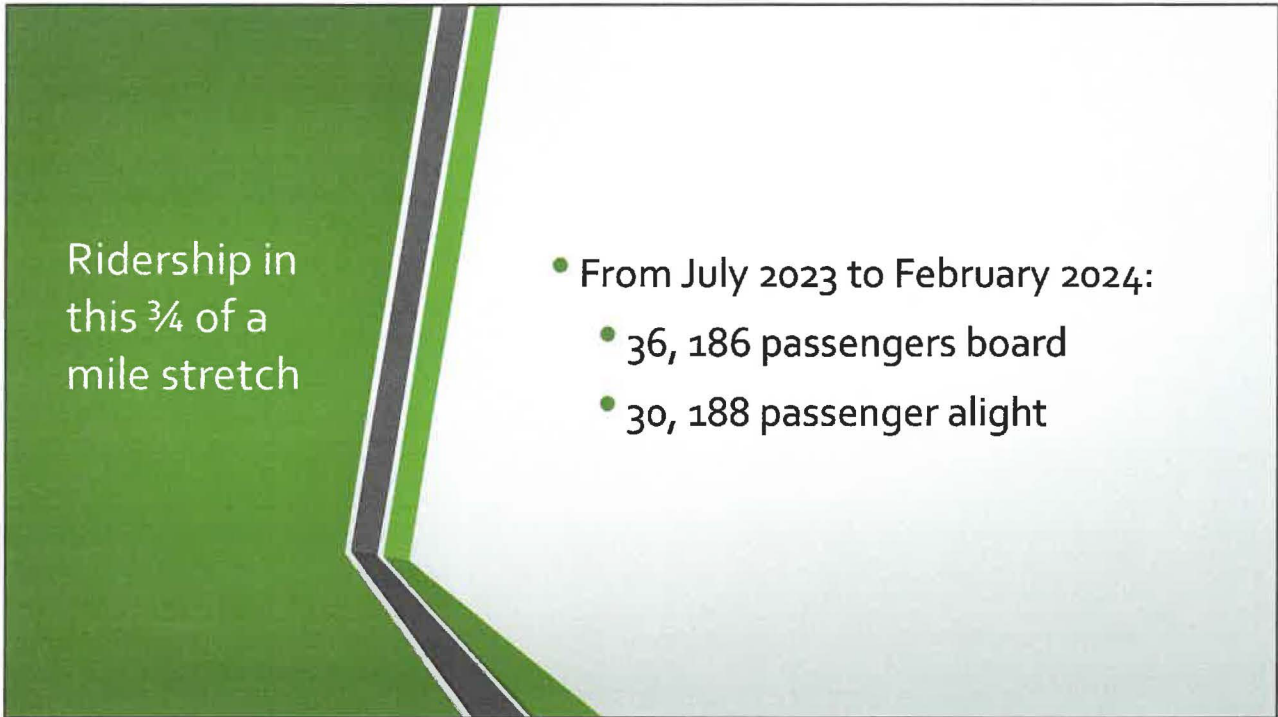
## Routes in the Corridor

- 6 routes during school year
- 4 routes in summer
- 10 buses during peak



4





Ridership in this  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile stretch

- From July 2023 to February 2024:
  - 36, 186 passengers board
  - 30, 188 passenger alight

5



**Associated Transit Improvements**

- Wider sidewalks and tree lawn on north side of the street*
- Enhanced and higher visibility crosswalks for pedestrians and bikes*
- Decorative streetlights added along the length of the roadway*
- Shared path for bikes and pedestrians created on the south side of street*
- New bus pull-offs and shelters installed along the corridor*

6