

Agenda

1. Call to Order Oral
Roll Call
2. Meeting Minutes Attachment 2a
Minutes from August 24, 2023, Meeting (Motion Required)
3. Guest Communications (2-minute limit) Oral
4. General Manager's Report Attachment 4
5. Committee Reports Did Not Meet
 - a. Administration Scheduled to Meet 9/26
 - b. Finance Scheduled to Meet 9/28
 - c. Operations Did Not Meet
 - d. Personnel
6. Old Business
7. New Business
 - Presentation
8. Resolutions - Roll Call Approval Required
 - #2023-09-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PURCHASE AUTOMATIC PASSENGER COUNTERS (APCs).**
 - #2023-09-02: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PROCEED WITH PROCURING A REPLACEMENT EMERGENCY GENERATOR ("REPLACEMENT GENERATOR PROJECT") FOR THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, MAINTENANCE GARAGE, AND SAFETY SYSTEMS.**
 - #2023-09-03: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PROCEED WITH REPAVING THE SUPPORT VEHICLE PARKING AREA LOCATED OUTSIDE OF THE MAINTENANCE GARAGE.**
9. Executive Session, as needed
10. Adjournment

Next Regular Meeting:
October 26, 2023 @ 7 p.m.

PARTA
PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
MINUTES

August 24, 2023

Board Members Present:

Karen Beck
Marge Bjerregaard
Jeff Childers
Debbie Davison

Dave Gynn, President
Virginia Harris
Mike Lewis, Vice President
Jack Murphy

Frank Vitale
Stacey Wilson
Karen Wise
Marvin Woods, TPO

Staff Present:

Claudia Amrhein
Kelly Jurisch

Natalie Rothenbuecher, Roetzel & Andress
Rebecca Schrader

Greg Springer
Brian Trautman

Board Members Not Present:

R. T. Mansfield (1st unexcused absence)

CALL TO ORDER

President Dave Gynn called the August 24, 2023, PARTA Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7 p.m. He asked for a roll call, after which it was determined that **a quorum was participating.**

Moving on, Mr. Gynn asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the July 27, 2023, Board meeting. **Mr. Mike Lewis** made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, which was seconded by **Mr. Marvin Woods**. The **motion to approve the minutes, as presented, passed unanimously.**

GUEST COMMUNICATIONS

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

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Amrhein thanked Mr. Gynn and noted that Mr. Justin Markey was under the weather and not attending the meeting tonight, but Ms. Natalie Rothenbuecher was taking his place. She said there were no resolutions, but it still has been busy with Kent State University starting classes and the Portage County Fair this week, which is where some of the staff members were working tonight. She concluded by saying more trolleys were coming and transit buses planned with a new design included. She asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Brian Trautman noted that five additional trolleys would be arriving by the end of the year.

Mr. Gynn asked how many trolleys were now in the fleet.

Ms. Amrhein said there were eight trolleys now and to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the first trolley, she rode the trolley through the city of Ravenna last week.

Mr. Gynn thanked Ms. Amrhein for her thorough report and then moved on to the committee reports.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

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

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Lewis thanked Mr. Gynn and said the Finance Committee met on Tuesday. Ms. Rebecca Schrader handed out the 21st clean audit, which was very complimentary. It's unusual to have a clean audit for so many years. Moving on to the financials for *PARTA*, KSU Revenues was down due to the summer but would catch up. Grants were heavy with \$535,033 in Federal Capital Maintenance Assistance, \$114,934 in Federal Operating (ARPA), and \$35,767 in Federal Project Management & Planning. On the expense side, services were still not at full capacity due to staffing issues. The surplus for the current period was \$737,174 with a surplus of \$680,703 to budget. Year to date actuals were at \$2 million. The grant was executed for 3 Support Vehicles (OTP2 Flex), which was reimbursed at \$138,465 in July and a prior expense for Scheduling Software was reimbursed at \$90,000. Admin Roof Replacement was a new expense for July of \$74,169. Overall, *PARTA* had a good month and was in a good position. He asked if there were any questions.

Hearing none, Mr. Lewis moved on to the Kent Central Gateway (KCG), which looked good for the month. He said revenues were at \$65,209 for the current period, compared to the monthly budget of \$67,561. Expenses for the current period were \$38,708 with a monthly budget of \$47,352. For the month, there was a surplus of \$26,501 with a Variance of \$6,291 to the budget. Year to Date Actual was at a surplus of \$107,315. He asked if there were any questions.

Hearing none, Mr. Gynn reiterated that any Board member is eligible to attend Finance Committee meetings. He thanked Mr. Lewis for the Finance Committee report and 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 moved on to Old Business.

OLD BUSINESS

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

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Gynn said there were no resolutions, but Ms. Amrhein would be providing a PowerPoint presentation on 2023-24 initiatives.

Ms. Amrhein then presented her PowerPoint, which is attached, after which she asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Frank Vitale asked if the goals were met for selling CNG to vendors.

Ms. Amrhein said there were no goals. *PARTA* worked with various businesses to promote the CNG fueling station, but it was not a priority at the time. Over the next couple of months, discussions will take place about the Regional Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan.

Mr. Gynn expressed his appreciation to Ms. Amrhein and her staff for thinking ahead and said the residents of Portage County appreciated it also.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moving on, Mr. Gynn said there was no reason for an Executive Session and asked if there was any other business to come before the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing nothing further, Mr. Gynn entertained a motion to adjourn. **Ms. Karen Beck** made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by **Mr. Jack Murphy**. 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 7:37 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: September 2023

Committee Meetings and Resolutions. The September agenda includes three (3) resolutions for board consideration on **Thursday, September 28, at 7 p.m.** The operations committee will meet at 6:30 p.m. to consider Resolution #2023-09-01, -02, and -03. The finance committee will meet on Tuesday, September 26, at 11:30 a.m. to review August financial reports.

ODOT Announces Ohio Transit Partnership Program (OTP2) Awards. I am pleased to report that ODOT awarded PARTA \$861,974 through its SFY 2024 OTP2 program. The September resolutions seek authority to proceed with three large projects receiving OTP2 funding: purchasing automatic passenger counters, replacing the emergency generator, and repaving the support vehicle parking lot. Other, smaller projects include awards to replace a utility vehicle used for property maintenance and a 4-post lift in vehicle maintenance, plus funding to help offset local match for four transit buses.

#2023-09-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PURCHASE AUTOMATIC PASSENGER COUNTERS (APCs).

Investing in automatic passenger counters (APCs) is a component of our strategic goal to completely modernize our Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and increase ridership back to pre-pandemic levels. Resolution #2023-09-01 authorizes purchasing an APC system through the five-year contract with CTS Software awarded in October 2022. ODOT awarded \$144,000 of the estimated total project cost of \$180,000, reducing PARTA's cost to \$36,000 (20%) for local match.

APCs will provide more accurate, detailed fixed route ridership data that include time-of-day and stop level details. New data will give us a better understanding of where and when our passengers are boarding and alighting. Having better data will improve route analysis and support service planning and efficiency. The addition of APCs will enable us to conduct a comprehensive system-wide route analysis using real-time census and demographic data.

#2023-09-02: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PROCEED WITH PROCURING A REPLACEMENT EMERGENCY GENERATOR ("REPLACEMENT GENERATOR PROJECT") FOR THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, MAINTENANCE GARAGE, AND SAFETY SYSTEMS.

Authorizing the Replacement Generator Project. The existing emergency generator will be replaced with a new commercial generator with greater capacity to support PARTA's expanded facilities and safety systems, as described in Resolution #2023-09-02. The resolution will authorize procuring and installing a new generator in phases over the next year utilizing multiple trade vendors to address building, electrical safety, and capacity requirements. ODOT awarded \$108,000 of the estimated project cost of \$135,000. The resolution includes a 25% contingency to address unknown cost increases that may arise.

#2023-09-03: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PROCEED WITH REPAVING THE SUPPORT VEHICLE PARKING AREA LOCATED OUTSIDE OF THE MAINTENANCE GARAGE.

Authorizing Repaving the Support Vehicle Parking Area. The portion of the parking lot where support vehicles park will be removed and repaved, as outlined in Resolution #2023-09-03. The timing of the work will depend on contractor availability and scheduling given the limited weeks remaining for concrete work and may not occur until spring 2024. ODOT awarded \$96,000 of the estimated project cost of \$120,000. The resolution includes a 25% contingency to address unknown cost increases that may arise.

Finance Department Hosts Transit Procurement Roundtable. The Transit Alliance of Procurement Professionals (TAPP) met at PARTA for networking and discussion of “hot topics” on September 7 and 8. Fifteen transit authorities and one metropolitan planning organization from five states (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Colorado) participated in the two-day event, with the majority attending in-person and staying overnight at the Kent State Hotel. Procurement is a complicated web of regulations and requirements that is a critical part of providing transit service in communities throughout the country.

Service Reports. *Please note: Like last month, we are working to update and improve the service reports for key performance indicators for transit service and parking deck operations. The ridership data reported in this section compares current data collected by the new software platforms against data collected last year by the old platforms, which count and categorize data points differently. During the board meeting, we'll present an overview of performance data likely to be reported beginning in October.*

Ridership. Total county fixed route and DART ridership increased by 29.86% through August, as compared to August 2022 with total county service performing 194,391 trips as compared to 149,694 trips performed through August 2022. County fixed route service has increased by approximately 37.02% as compared to last year, with 165,526 trips completed through August as compared to 120,801 trips completed through August 2022.

DART service has decreased by 0.10% through August as compared to August 2022, with 28,865 trips completed as compared to 28,893 trips completed through August 2022. Overall ridership, including campus service, increased by 45.92%, with campus up by 61.60%. Total system ridership totaled 464,784 as compared to 318,529 through August 2022.

On-Time Compliance. ADA Complementary Paratransit Service. ADA on-time compliance was 95.54% in August as compared to 96.11% in July. Of 808 trips, 36 were performed late, with the latest running 42 minutes behind. General Public (non-ADA) DART. On-time performance for general public, non-ADA trips was 97.17% in August, as compared to 97.43% in July.

Vehicle Preventative Maintenance (PM). On-time compliance with established PM inspection schedules was 97% in August as compared to 98% in July.

Parking Deck. The average number of cars per day utilizing the deck increased by 18% in August as compared to July and decreased by 4% when compared to August 2022.

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.

2023 TAPP ROUNDTABLE

WELCOME!

HOSTED BY PARTA



2023 TAPP ROUNDTABLE ~Hot Topics~

- SAM Searches
- Shared Bidders' Lists
- Procurement / Project Management
- Technology Procurements (ie. Fare Collection Systems, AVL, Non-US,)
- DBE (Round Table Scheduled)
- Bus Advertising / Marketing Procurements
- Training Opportunities
- Contract Closeout Process
- Vendor Performance
- Buy America / Build America
- Responsibility Determination
- Purchasing Thresholds
- State Contract
- ICE Documentation
- Triennial Review Process
- Bus Procurement (Speaker Scheduled)
- Davis Bacon / Prevailing Wages
- Alternative Fuels vs. Diesel-Fueled Vehicles (Grant Opportunities)
- Supply Chain Issues



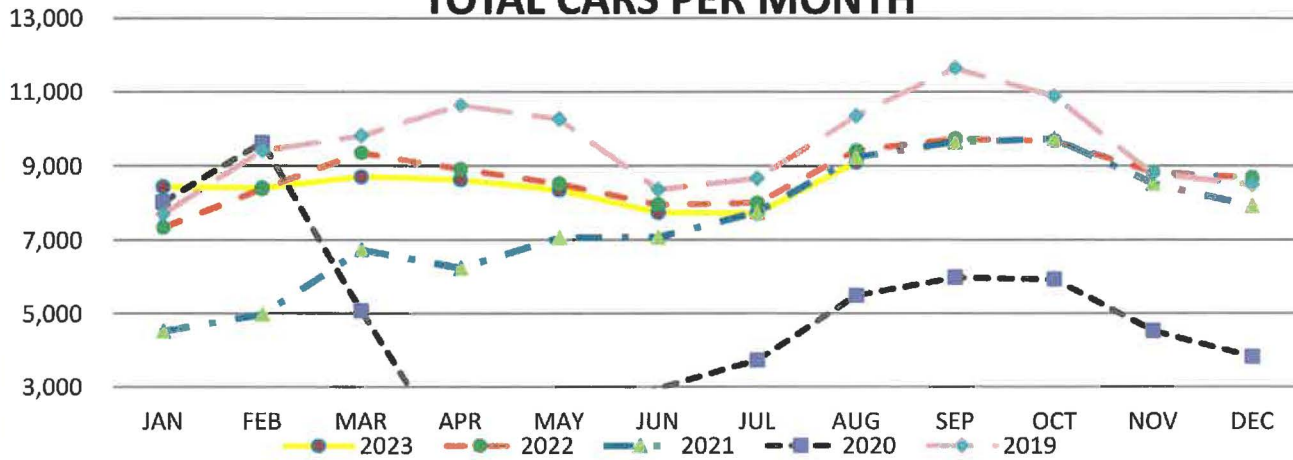
KENT CENTRAL GATEWAY PARKING SUMMARY - AUGUST 2023

6 Month Lookback						
	Monthly	Transient	Total	Cars/Day	Last	Last Year
Mar-23	4,309	4,406	8,715	281	3%	-7%
Apr-23	4,284	4,350	8,634	288	-1%	-3%
May-23	3,921	4,439	8,360	270	-3%	-2%
Jun-23	3,076	4,673	7,749	258	-7%	-3%
Jul-23	3,099	4,631	7,730	249	0%	-3%
Aug-23	4,312	4,794	9,106	294	18%	-4%

Annual Comparison

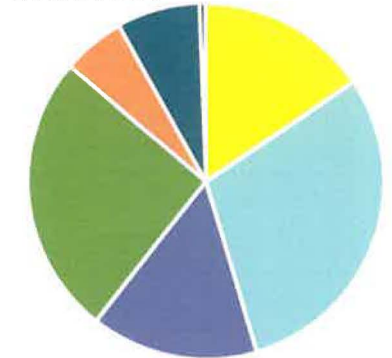
	2023	2022	2021
JAN	8,445	7,349	4,534
FEB	8,421	8,391	4,982
MAR	8,715	9,363	6,738
APR	8,634	8,923	6,249
MAY	8,360	8,529	7,067
JUN	7,749	7,967	7,084
JUL	7,730	8,009	7,762
AUG	9,106	9,437	9,248
SEP		9,749	9,665
OCT		9,693	9,749
NOV		8,840	8,538
DEC		8,694	7,919
TOTAL	67,160	104,944	89,535
	-1.2%	17.2%	55.5%

TOTAL CARS PER MONTH

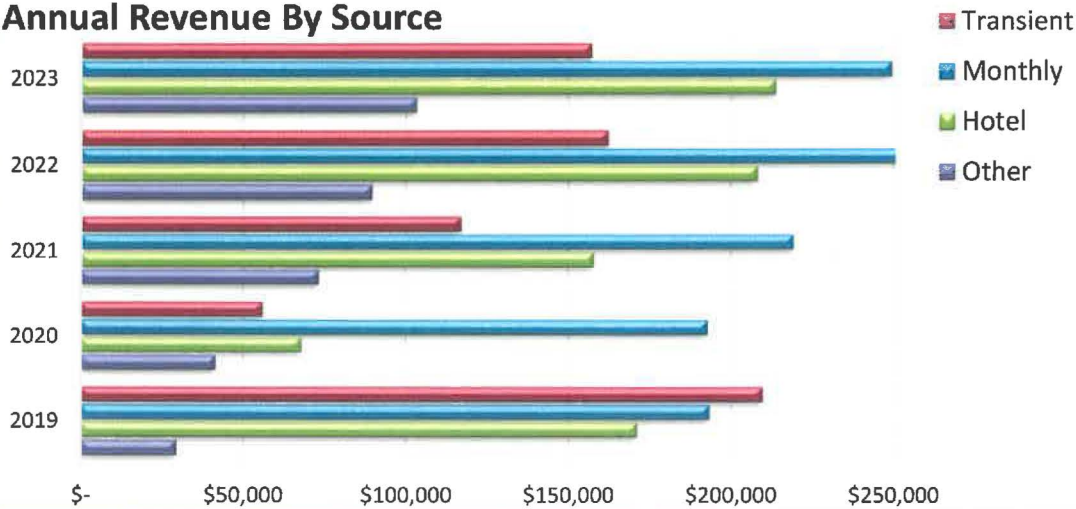


Rate Types Collected

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

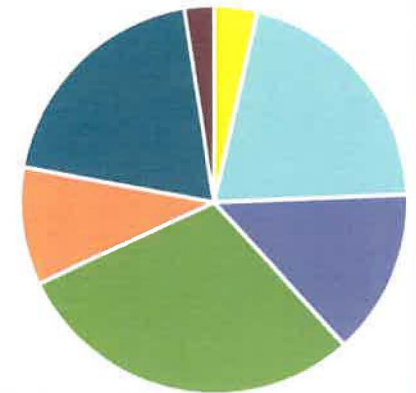


Annual Revenue By Source



\$ Rate Types Collected

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



RESOLUTION #2023-09-01

A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PURCHASE AUTOMATIC PASSENGER COUNTERS (APCs).

WHEREAS, *PARTA*'s strategic plan includes increasing ridership back to pre-pandemic levels by modernizing its Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS); and

WHEREAS, as part of the modernization of ITS, *PARTA* entered into a five-year contract with Foxster OPCO, LLC dba CTS Software (CTS) for web-based demand response and fixed route scheduling/dispatching software as approved by the Board via Resolution 2022-10-01; and

WHEREAS, the Request for Proposals (RFP) for this project included the procurement of Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs) that have the ability to conduct comprehensive system-wide route analysis; and

WHEREAS, this comprehensive system-wide route analysis will help to improve route planning by identifying gaps in service areas and/or service hours using up-to-date demographic data; and

WHEREAS, *PARTA* now desires to complete this project by procuring the APCs to increase efficiency in route planning; and

WHEREAS, *PARTA* will utilize SFY 2024 Ohio Transit Partnership Program (OTP2) grant funding and local dollars consistent with *PARTA*'s operating budget for a total project cost not to exceed \$180,000.

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 authorized to purchase Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs) to modernize and improve public transit service.

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 September 28, 2023.

Date

David Gynn, President
Board of Trustees

Attested

RESOLUTION #2023-09-02

A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PROCEED WITH PROCURING A REPLACEMENT EMERGENCY GENERATOR (“REPLACEMENT GENERATOR PROJECT”) FOR THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, MAINTENANCE GARAGE, AND SAFETY SYSTEMS.

WHEREAS, *PARTA*'s current emergency generator is past its useful life and has met its capacity to back up all of the maintenance garage, administration building and safety systems; and

WHEREAS, in the event of a generator failure during a power outage, *PARTA* would not be able to continue to provide the vital transportation services that the Portage County communities rely on; and

WHEREAS, the replacement generator project will occur in phases utilizing multiple trade vendors to address building and electrical safety and capacity requirements over approximately one year; and

WHEREAS, the replacement generator will have sufficient capacity to provide power to *PARTA*'s administrative and maintenance facilities in the event of a power failure; and

WHEREAS, *PARTA* will utilize SFY2024 Ohio Transit Partnership Program (OTP2) grant funding from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and local sales tax revenue as local match for the replacement generator project for a total project cost not to exceed \$168,750.

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 authorized to proceed with the replacement generator project for the administration building and maintenance garage, for a total project cost not to exceed \$168,750.

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 September 28, 2023.

Date

David Gynn, President
Board of Trustees

Attested

RESOLUTION #2023-09-03

A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PROCEED WITH REPAVING THE SUPPORT VEHICLE PARKING AREA LOCATED OUTSIDE OF THE MAINTENANCE GARAGE.

WHEREAS, *PARTA* requests authorization to proceed with repaving the support vehicle parking area located outside of the maintenance garage; and

WHEREAS, the current state of the paving in the area is so poor that it is no longer feasible to patch and repair the surface; and

WHEREAS, this project is shovel ready and needs to be completed as soon as feasible because the uneven surface is continuing to degrade; and

WHEREAS, *PARTA* will utilize SFY 2024 Ohio Transit Partnership Program (OTP2) grant funding from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and local sales tax revenue as local match for the repaving project for a total project cost not to exceed \$150,000.

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 authorized to proceed with repaving the support vehicle parking area located outside of the maintenance garage, for a total project cost not to exceed \$150,000.

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 September 28, 2023.

Date

David Gynn, President
Board of Trustees

Attested

The Portager

Portage County leaders say public transportation is falling short, lacking drivers and routes

WENDY DIALESANDRO · SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 · 4 MIN READ



PARTA senior bus operator Dave Brown sits behind the wheel of "Polly the Trolley." Jeremy Brown/The Portager

What to do if you represent a largely rural county that has such problems with public transportation that no one person can see the big picture, much less solve it?

If you are state Rep. Gail Pavliga, you gather Portage County's government and school leaders, public transportation officials, and heads of numerous county agencies and nonprofits into one room, and let them have at it.

On Monday, Sept. 11, a gathering at Reed Memorial Library included about 30 of Portage County's movers and shakers, including Ravenna Police Chief Jeff Wallis, Portage County commissioners Mike Tinlin and Sabrina Christian-Bennett, and Portage County Job & Family Services Director Kellijo Jeffries.

PARTA — the Portage Area Regional Transit Authority — has significant limitations, and more so the farther would-be customers get from Kent State's campus. PARTA operates 15 fixed-route service lines Monday through Saturday, though weekend service is limited. The bus service also offers Dial-A-Ride, an on-demand service available weekdays and Saturdays.

PARTA, though, is in need of 50 additional drivers just for its campus and city routes, let alone its on-demand service, said Operations and Facilities Director Brian Trautman. The transportation authority is currently able to offer less than half the on-demand trips it did prior to the pandemic.

"We can do something for a lot of people, but not everything for everyone," Trautman said, noting that PARTA focuses on wide rather than deep service.

There is no service at all — or sidewalks — on Infirmary Road. That puts people released from the jail without rides in physical danger as they try to hike over two miles from the Portage County Justice Center to the intersection of Infirmary Road and Lovers Lane, where they can catch the nearest bus.

Further complicating logistics for those leaving the jail on foot, PARTA buses only make it to that intersection five times a day, and never on Saturday or Sunday.

Nor can many of those who are newly or recently released get to court for their hearings, meet with their probation officers, or make any of the numerous other appointments necessary for successful reentry into society, said Patricia Smith, a Portage County Common Pleas court judge who oversees probate and juvenile cases.

When Smith asked PARTA officials for service to and from the county jail and juvenile detention center, Trautman asked for data to indicate when the service would most be needed. That left her frustrated: to ask for a guaranteed customer base beforehand is untenable, she said, adding that if service would be available, people would use it.

Smith noted that attempting to use PARTA is so confusing that her team of college-educated probation experts simply couldn't figure it out. The bus schedule provides times at a few stops, but would-be riders are left to guess at most of them. Guess wrong, and miss your ride.

Unable to offer competitive wages because they are working with taxpayer dollars, and unable to find candidates who can pass drug tests, school districts find themselves poaching qualified bus drivers from each other. And Christian-Bennett noted that the nation's immigration crackdown also continues to impact the workforce: employees just aren't there.

Emerald Transportation employee Tara Root, who also is a school bus driver, said having administrators who would back the drivers instead of the students would help.

Security personnel on buses would let the drivers do their primary jobs, but Portage Development Board President Brad Ehrhart noted that adding employees would only exacerbate an already dire employment situation.

Even holding job fairs aimed directly at would-be drivers hasn't worked: it turns out retirees who dropped off the driver rolls during Covid haven't returned, and much of the younger generation insists on more of a work-life balance than their predecessors did, Christian-Bennett said. Further complicating that balance is the simple fact that buses do not run on a 9-5 schedule.

Without drivers, senior citizens can't get to their medical appointments, and even certain kinds of Medicaid transportation reimbursement drops off after 10 or 15 rides. There are zero transportation options to NEOMED's free clinic, offered each Saturday in Rootstown.

"We're not getting people who do need drivers where they need to go. Without the drivers, we can't fill that need," Jeffries said.

Though Job & Family Services is working on a comprehensive transportation guide, it doesn't exist yet.

Lacking independent transportation or a reliable friend or relative, Uber, Lyft, and other ride services are an option, but are so expensive that workers quickly realize they are working several hours each day just to afford the rides.

They drop out of the workforce, frustrating their own and their caseworkers' dreams of an independent, self-sufficient life. The "pockets of poverty" Ehrhart identified remain isolated from potential resources that could mean a world of difference.

Pavliga guided meeting participants in narrowing down a multitude of public transportation issues to four: the lack of school bus drivers, driver recruitment difficulties, a truly comprehensive transportation guide, and transportation for seniors. The group will reconvene in a month after reviewing meeting notes Pavliga will distribute.

PARTA trolley celebrates its birthday; Five more trolley buses coming to Portage County



PROVIDED

Ravenna Record-Courier | USA TODAY NETWORK

Polly the Trolley, one of three trolley style buses owned by the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority, recently visited Ravenna and hosted Ravenna Mayor Frank Seman and Ryann Cline, director of the Ravenna Area Chamber of Commerce, to celebrate its one year anniversary. PARTA has three trolleys, all named Polly, and plans to add five more to its line by the end of this year. Claudia Amrhein, general manager of PARTA, said the trolleys are made by Hometown Manufacturing in Crandon, Wisconsin, and are made to resemble a turn of the century cable car. The trolleys feature real wood interiors, brushed metal fixtures, leather hand straps, and arch top windows with frosted detail, and the wood comes from an indigenous tribe in Wisconsin.