

**Agenda**

1. Call to Order  
Roll Call Oral
2. Meeting Minutes  
Minutes from March 24, 2022, Meeting (Motion Required) Attachment 2a
3. Guest Communications (2-minute limit) Oral
4. General Manager's Report Attachment 4
5. Committee Reports
  - a. Administration Scheduled to Meet 4/28
  - b. Finance Scheduled to Meet 4/26
  - c. Operations Did Not Meet
  - d. Personnel Did Not Meet
6. Old Business
7. New Business
  - Presentation
8. Resolutions - Roll Call Approval Required
9. Executive Session, as needed
10. Adjournment

**Next Regular Meeting:**  
**May 26, 2022 @ 7 p.m.**

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

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
MINUTES**

**March 24, 2022**

**Board Members Present:**

Karen Beck  
Marge Bjerregaard  
Richard Brockett

Debbie Davison  
Dave Gynn, President  
Virginia Harris

Jack Murphy  
Morgan Tipton  
Marvin Woods

**Staff Present:**

Claudia Amrhein  
Denise Baba  
Marcia Fletcher

Kelly Jurisch  
Justin Markey, Roetzel & Andress

Rebecca Schrader  
Brian Trautman

**Board Members Not Present:**

Jeff Childers (1<sup>st</sup> excused absence)  
Mike Lewis (3<sup>rd</sup> excused absence)  
R. T. Mansfield (1<sup>st</sup> excused absence)

Frank Vitale (3<sup>rd</sup> excused absence)  
Karen Wise (3<sup>rd</sup> excused absence)

**Guests Present:**

David Swirsky, AMATS

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Dave Gynn welcomed everyone to the March 24, 2022, PARTA Board of Trustees meeting. He called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and asked for a roll call. After roll call, it was determined that **a quorum was participating.**

Mr. Gynn then asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2022, meeting. **Ms. Karen Beck** made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, which was seconded by **Ms. Morgan Tipton**. He asked if there was any discussion or questions. Hearing none, he asked all those in favor to say aye. Any opposed to say no. Hearing no opposition, he said the **motion to approve the minutes, as presented, passed unanimously.**

**GUEST COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Gynn asked the one guest in attendance to introduce himself.

Mr. David Swirsky introduced himself and said he was from the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS).

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

Moving on, Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Claudia Amrhein if she had anything to add to the General Manager's report that was included in the Board packet.

Ms. Amrhein thanked everyone for coming and said it's good to see everybody again after having skipped last month due to the weather. She pointed out the grant award received of about \$1.5 million was from the very competitive Buses and Bus Facilities Program. She said she knew that PARTA was one of five in Ohio and that the total program awarded only 70 projects across 39 states. It's very competitive and she's thrilled that they awarded the four buses, which really helps with the replacement schedule when planning and talking about buses almost every day. She asked if there were any questions.

Hearing none, Mr. Gynn said the first committee report would be the By-Laws Review Committee. He said Ms. Morgan Tipton was stepping in for Mr. Jeff Childers, who is the chair of that committee and was not attending tonight.

### **BY-LAWS REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT**

Ms. Tipton said the Board received a copy of the revised By-Laws that Ms. Kelly Jurisch and the committee worked hard to complete. She asked if there were any questions or concerns about the revisions.

Mr. Gynn noted that Mr. Justin Markey provided some input as the By-Laws did not have a statement about the Annual Meeting and he suggested a new section be added. He asked for a motion to approve the By-Laws.

**Motion:**            Jack Murphy            **Second:**        Debbie Davison

Ms. Tipton asked all those in favor to say aye. Any opposed to say no.

Hearing no opposition, Mr. Gynn said the revisions to the By-Laws were approved by a unanimous vote from the Board members present, which represented a majority of the Board. He thanked the Board and noted the minor change on the back page where "amended by" should be changed to 3/22. He said these revisions were going to be presented last month but weren't because of the cancelled meeting. He expressed his appreciation for the committee's diligence and hoped the changes would last for a while.

### **ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Tipton to give the report of the Administration Committee.

Ms. Tipton said the Administration Committee met this evening to discuss three points of business - two resolutions that will come up later in the meeting and nominations of Board officers for 2022-2023. She noted that the By-Laws Committee was concerned that the nomination and voting process was overdrawn and taking up too much time in Board meetings. She said instead of nominating officers starting in March, it was decided that officers would be nominated starting in April. As a heads up for next month when nominations open, she noted that currently Mr. Dave Gynn is serving as President, Mr. Mike Lewis is serving as Vice President, and Ms. Karen Wise is serving as the Temporary Presiding Officer. She said they are one-year appointments, which began in July of 2021. If anyone is interested in nominating someone or themselves for any of these three positions, they should send a written note to Ms. Marcia Fletcher to keep the process moving in good order. She asked if there were any questions or concerns. Hearing none, she turned the meeting back over to Mr. Gynn.

Mr. Gynn thanked Ms. Tipton for chairing the committee and moved on to the Finance Committee.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Gynn said the Finance Committee met on Tuesday and Mr. Lewis, who is the chair, and Mr. Childers were unable to attend. Serving on the committee was Ms. Virginia Harris, who is a member of the committee; Mr. Marvin Woods, who served as an Alternate; and himself, who served as the Alternate Chair. A complete summary of the minutes was distributed. He pointed out that the January and February

reports were discussed because the last meeting covered the year-end reports. He said January had a Gross Operating Deficit of \$152,317 but by February the Gross Operating Surplus changed to \$94,434 year-to-date. The capital grants are difficult to keep track of, but the bottom line is that the Restricted amount for future capital projects is \$5.9 million.

Moving on to the Kent Central Gateway (KCG), Mr. Gynn said the parking graph showed 2022 was starting out in line with where it was before COVID. The Annual Revenue By Source graph showed monthly parking as the highest source of income. The finance report showed a Gross Operating Surplus of \$3,066 in January and a year-to-date Gross Operating Surplus of \$9,706 in February. To date, for January and February, the Cost Per Car was \$5.71 and the Revenue Per Car was \$5.47, which is close but not unusual for this time of year. The committee also considered Resolution #2022-03-03 to purchase up to seven Turtle Top Light Transit Vehicles (LTVs) and recommended its approval to the Board. He asked if there were any questions for the Finance Committee.

Mr. Richard Brockett said at one time PARTA got a hefty amount of money from the government for COVID. He asked if any of that money was left.

Ms. Amrhein said the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding is beginning to be drawn down, which was the last wave of assistance. About \$5 million will be used to draw down operators' salaries and will be stretched out for three years as a cushion. There is more time to spend it and no fear of it lapsing.

Mr. Brockett said it has become a political issue in that some in Congress are asking why they would vote for more money when the money already approved hasn't been spent.

Ms. Amrhein said typically, once a grant is activated and progress is shown, it's encumbered so it's being spent. The comments about COVID are being heard at the state level, as well as the federal level, so funding could be difficult particularly at the state level. Adding in all the supply chain problems, vehicle issues, and shortages makes it more complicated because the money can't be spent if there aren't enough chassis to build the vehicles that the entire transit industry wants. Those issues are being worked through, which is one of the reasons Resolution #2022-03-03 is on the agenda tonight.

Mr. Gynn said grants also are specific and can't be spent for just anything. The money must be spent for what was specifically approved in the grant. In February, \$93,568 was drawn down from the ARPA grant, which was less than the budgeted amount.

Ms. Rebecca Schrader said that number represents the wages for drivers from January. The amount chosen was the annual budgeted amount for drivers' wages divided by 12. The monthly variance will fluctuate and the plan moving forward is to not necessarily spend all the money that was budgeted this year and to stretch out that grant, if possible, to help with operating for the five-year plan. Going forward, drivers' wages will be less than the monthly budget. Some months have three pay days. For example, the draw down for May will be higher because April has three pay days. The draw down is always from the prior month.

Ms. Amrhein said it could vary as well because, at least for drivers' salaries, if there are unfilled positions or employees leave, they are not being paid. It's another complication in this post-COVID world.

Ms. Jurisch said PARTA has until 2029 to completely draw this grant down.

Mr. Brian Trautman recommended guarding against watching the politics about spending COVID money simply because PARTA couldn't execute and perform all the spending in that short period of time under their guidance even if PARTA wanted to because of the time it takes to write a procurement, accurately execute a procurement, and then turn around and use the money as intended by following the processes to get it and spend it. It couldn't possibly happen as fast as what the politicians are talking about on the news right now. He said it's just not possible.

Ms. Amrhein said the politicians don't write the regulations and don't administer them.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any other questions.

### **OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Hearing none, Mr. Gynn said the Operations Committee did not meet.

### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Personnel Committee did not meet.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no Old Business.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Moving on to New Business, Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Jurisch to bring everyone up to date on the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan.

Ms. Jurisch thanked Mr. Gynn and presented her PowerPoint on EEO, which is attached. After her presentation, she asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Tipton asked what Board members could do to support *PARTA* in its employment goals.

Ms. Jurisch said Board members could tell people about *PARTA* and its mission.

Ms. Tipton said she noticed a lot of great pamphlets on routes at the Kent Free Library. She doesn't remember seeing one on employment, but she may have just missed it. She asked if employment brochures were available for Board members to take tonight.

Ms. Jurisch said flyers are provided at the Kent Free Library whenever there is a job fair. She didn't have employment brochures tonight, but she would get them.

Mr. Marvin Woods asked if the mechanics had to be diesel or auto.

Mr. Trautman said he would take anyone and make a mechanic out of them.

Ms. Jurisch noted that Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification is not required.

Mr. Trautman said some of the mechanics are ASE certified but it's not a requirement.

Mr. Brockett said top employment was at 242 according to the presentation, which is down to 200 employees now. He asked if 242 was the goal and what positions needed to be filled.

Ms. Jurisch said she'd like to get to 270 employees and the current openings are for drivers, maintenance, and office positions.

Ms. Karen Beck thanked Ms. Jurisch for the good presentation. She said it clarified the issue that so many employers are having.

Continuing, Ms. Jurisch noted that Transit Drivers Appreciation Day (TDAD), which is a nationally recognized holiday for transit drivers, was celebrated this past Friday. She said a continental breakfast was provided for everyone, as well as a cookout at lunch with Mr. Trautman serving as the grill master. She then shared some pictures from the day.

Ms. Amrhein noted that the EEO Plan is full of data, tables, and tracking that is required to be submitted. The last plan that was submitted at the end of 2017 still has not been approved by the FTA. All this work is completed under a deadline and it's still pending for the previous submission, which is extremely frustrating but important.

Ms. Jurisch said the plan itself is about 60 pages, but she provides close to 300 pages of documents.

Mr. Gynn asked if PARTA had any significant EEO findings or complaints.

Ms. Amrhein said employees have the right to file with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, which also typically goes to EEOC, if they have been terminated or leave. She cannot remember PARTA having a finding against it. They've all been dismissed.

Mr. Gynn thanked PARTA for treating its employees so well.

Ms. Amrhein said Ms. Denise Baba is chomping at the bit to get back out and talk to people about PARTA. Hopefully this spring and summer she'll be able to get out more.

Mr. Gynn thanked Ms. Amrhein and said there are three resolutions to consider.

### Resolutions

Mr. Gynn presented Resolution #2022-03-01.

**#2022-03-01: 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 2023 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), AND THE SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (SECTION 5310).**

Mr. Gynn asked for a motion to adopt the resolution.

**Motion: Marvin Woods**

**Second: Debbie Davison**

Mr. Gynn said this is a routine resolution and asked Ms. Amrhein to discuss.

Ms. Amrhein said this is an annual resolution asking for authorization to apply for the state grant funds listed. It's a template requirement to receive formula and competitive grant funds that become available through the State of Ohio.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Fletcher to call the roll.



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

Mr. Gynn said the motion passed unanimously.

Moving on, Mr. Gynn presented Resolution #2022-03-02.

**#2022-03-02: 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 to adopt this resolution.

**Motion: Marge Bjerregaard**

**Second: Karen Beck**

Mr. Gynn said both resolutions were discussed and approved by the Administration Committee for forwarding to the Board.

Ms. Amrhein said this is the federal version of that same template resolution that is required to apply for formula and competitive grant funds, such as the Buses and Bus Facilities Program grant that was applied for and awarded. This is an annual resolution that is brought forward each fiscal year.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Fletcher to call the roll.

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

Mr. Gynn said the motion passed unanimously.

Moving on, Mr. Gynn said the final resolution was #2022-03-03.

**#2022-03-03: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PURCHASE UP TO SEVEN (7) TURTLE TOP LIGHT TRANSIT VEHICLES (LTVs) OF WIDE BODY CONSTRUCTION, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS FROM TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO).**

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

**Motion: Debbie Davison**

**Second: Jack Murphy**

Ms. Amrhein said she will give a brief overview and then have Mr. Trautman provide some details. This is coming to the Board earlier than planned and is asking for authorization to place an order for seven LTVs for a not to exceed amount of \$850,000. There is no guarantee that PARTA will get the LTVs even if they are ordered or that the price will stay as it is now. This is moving quickly with many moving parts. Everyone is competing for the same limited number of chassis in a supply chain gutted world. She asked Mr. Trautman to comment.

Mr. Trautman said that pretty much sums it up. Amazon and a few other major retail outlets are buying all the newer chassis vehicles. Ford is telling the cutaway industry, which includes ambulances and LTVs for transit, that they are only going to produce 10,000 to 15,000 chassis per industry. Forest River, the parent company of about five different manufacturers, usually produces about 20,000 vehicles alone each year. Any vehicles on a cutaway type chassis will be fighting for the same vehicles. PARTA has a five-year contract with Turtle Top, which positions PARTA a little bit better to execute some purchases to get ahead of the queue. There's no guarantee right now that PARTA will get them. Dayton is trying to get 75 vehicles. If PARTA can get all seven buses, it will be a minor miracle. If PARTA can get three out of the seven and put the other four on back order, PARTA will still be further ahead than the agencies that haven't ordered anything yet. The emergency medical side will take priority. Even with Ford making 15,000 chassis, there still may only be about 30% of them that make it to transit. The only way to get in front of this is to be in front of it. It will put PARTA in the right spot as it plays out around 2024 and 2025.

Ms. Tipton said she knows that the Board doesn't normally get resolutions like this unless it's \$500,000 or over but she wondered how much money was involved for seven LTVs.

Mr. Trautman said the resolution states a not to exceed amount of \$850,000. The contract should bring the LTVs in at about \$100,000 but the Producer Price Index (PPI) will add about \$5,000. The manufacturer has supplied a letter stating the price increases in the market, and they are willing to offer supporting documentation from all their after-market suppliers showing what their increases have been. The increases will bump those vehicles up to about \$118,000 each. He is not sure that the \$850,000 will end up covering it in the end. There are other elements at play also. Ford usually provides about a \$5,000 knock off on the chassis for government entities. They indicated they will not be doing that next year, which would bump them from \$118,000 to about \$124,000. If PARTA wants the vehicles, it's going to have to pay for them. On the other side, PARTA does a really good job maintaining the vehicles. A conversation took place with ODOT the other day trying to convince them to put together a priority planning session with the rest of the transits, but it didn't grab traction. Some of the smaller transits will be in trouble because they don't have the resources.

Ms. Tipton said given the supply chain problems that are bumping prices up, it wouldn't be prudent to wait because waiting would mean that some of the LTVs that PARTA has now will be beyond their use and then PARTA won't even be in the queue to get what it needs.



Mr. Trautman agreed and said a Transit Asset Management (TAM) plan is put together predicting when vehicles are bought, how long they will last, and when they will be ready for resale. All the transits out there that are trying to replace vehicles but won't get them and will be sitting there with old equipment that they will be trying to replace. It's going to be a long wave of time before everybody can get their fleets caught back up on the other side of this.

Ms. Tipton thanked Mr. Trautman for the explanation and said it was very helpful.

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

Mr. Murphy asked if a vehicle's useful life span was set in stone...is it generally after so many years it completely falls apart or are they still maintained?

Mr. Trautman said a lot of that comes down to writing specs, but he writes a hard spec with a lot of stainless in it. There are some 2017 vehicles that were bought off state contract, and because he didn't write the spec, there's a lot of steel on the undercarriage that is not stainless. Those vehicles cannot go any longer. As a matter of fact, they're not even making it to their predicted timeline. Vehicles that have the stainless in areas that he knows need it in Ohio can be pushed longer. PARTA almost always runs its vehicles longer.

Hearing no further questions or comments, Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Fletcher to call the roll.

Roll Call:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jack Murphy	<u>X</u>	___	Karen Beck	<u>X</u>	___
Mike Lewis	<b>EXCUSED</b>	___	R. T. Mansfield	<b>EXCUSED</b>	___
Virginia Harris	<u>X</u>	___	Marvin Woods	<u>X</u>	___
Debbie Davison	<u>X</u>	___	Karen Wise	<b>EXCUSED</b>	___
Jeff Childers	<b>EXCUSED</b>	___	Frank Vitale	<b>EXCUSED</b>	___
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 passed unanimously.

Moving on, Mr. Gynn asked if there were any comments from the staff.

Ms. Jurisch said there is a golf outing coming up on May 20 at Paradise Lake in Mogadore. PPTAFI has petitioned the state for a name change to "FORE! Transit" so that name will start appearing; however, it has not been technically approved yet. She asked golfers to please consider attending; and nongolfers to please consider volunteering. She said an email will be sent out and online registration is available.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any other comments.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION, as needed**

There was no need for an Executive Session.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing nothing further, Mr. Gynn entertained 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 aye. He asked any opposed to say no. Hearing no opposition, the **motion to adjourn passed unanimously**.

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Marcia Fletcher  
Executive Assistant

## ***PARTA's EEO Program***

**To provide a respectful and inclusive workplace  
for all**

1

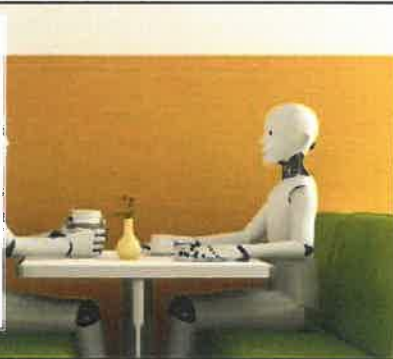
What does  
EEO stand  
for?

- Equal Employment Opportunity
- It's a Federal Law for employment protection, for new hires and current employees
- 15 employees

2

EEO protects an applicant or employee from...

- Unfair treatment
- Harassment
- Denial of a reasonable workplace accommodation
- Retaliation
- Hiring today →



3

Reasonable  
Accommodations

- It is reasonable for a job applicant to ask for an accommodation that would enable them to do the job.
- What is reasonable?
- What is unreasonable?

4

Who is  
responsible?

- We all are!
- Every employee of all levels.
- Denise Baba is our EEO Officer.
- Kelly Jurisch is responsible for directing all human resource practices.

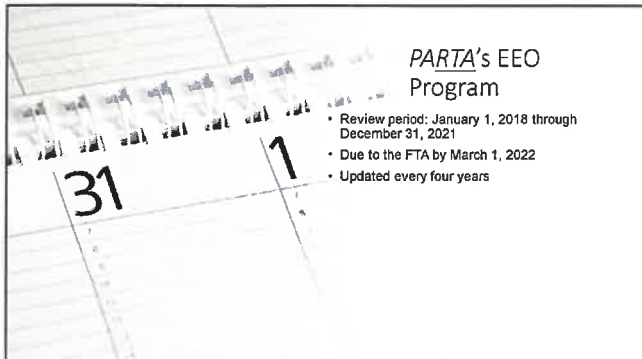


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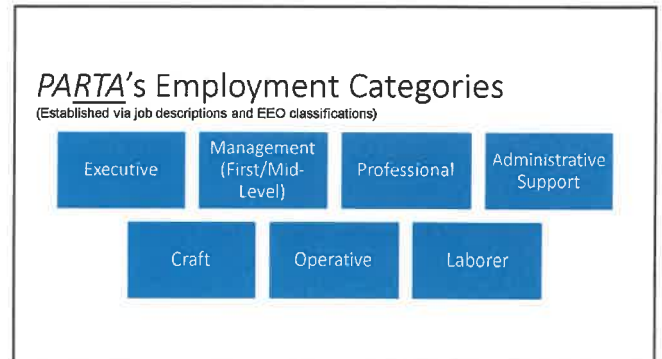
What do we  
look at?

- All work situations, including
  - Hiring
  - Discipline
  - Promotions
  - Harassment
  - Training
  - Wages
  - Benefits

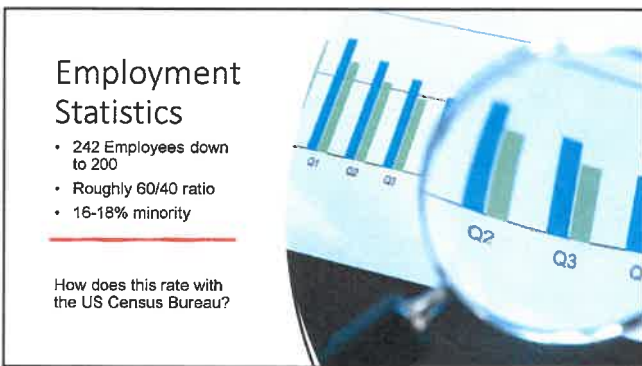
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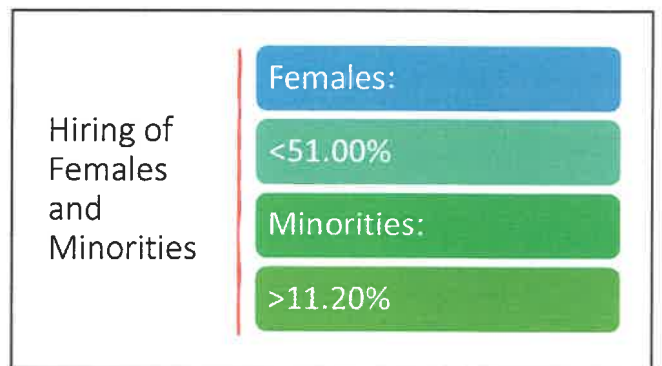
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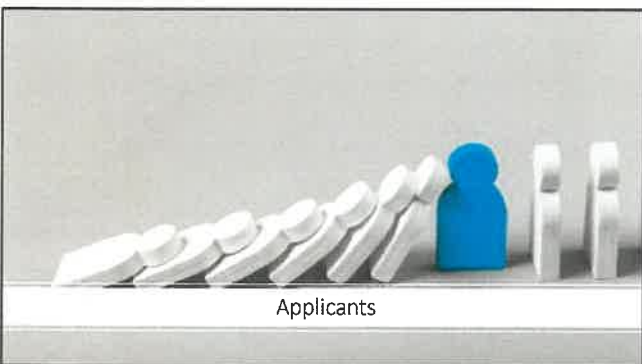
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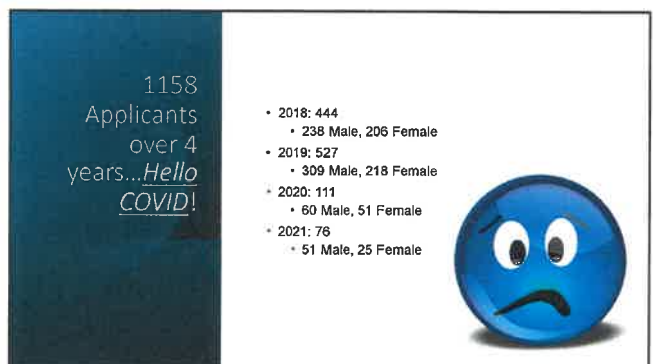
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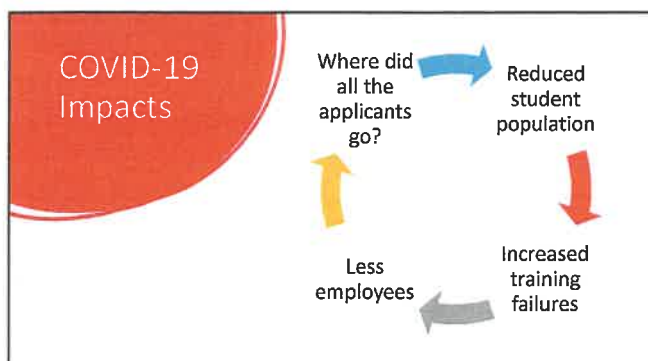
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11



12



13

**Goals**

The goals from the last EEO program, submitted on March 1, 2018 were:

- Increase number of female applicants
- Increase percentage of female operatives
- Increase number of minority applications for promotion
- Add minority or female presence to craft worker category

14

**Improvements**

- Over past four years...
  - More females and more minorities
  - Upper-level positions

15

**Looking ahead...**

- Continue to promote PARTA
- Find more applicants
- Utilize Apprenticeship and Internship Programs

16

**Questions?**

17



18





19



20



21

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

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**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

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**TO:** **PARTA Board of Trustees**  
**FROM:** Claudia B. Amrhein, General Manager  
**DATE:** April 2022

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**Committee Meetings and Resolutions.** **The finance committee will meet on Tuesday, April 26, at 11:30 a.m. to review March financial reports.** Lunch will be provided.

**The administration committee will meet on Thursday, April 28, at 6:30 p.m.** to consider board officer nominations for President, Vice President, and Temporary Presiding Officer (TPO) for one-year terms beginning in July. This will be the first meeting to consider nominations as outlined in the recently revised by-laws.

**We have no resolutions to bring forward during the April meeting,** but this in no way reflects the hectic schedule of April. The state financial auditors have been on site this month. In addition, the annual filing deadline for National Transit Database (NTD) reporting is April 30. This lengthy and detailed reporting process now includes new COVID-related data points reported monthly and ridership information annually.

**Grant Applications Due in May.** In addition to audits and annual NTD reporting, we are preparing state and federal grant applications and necessary plans to accompany them. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law presents new funding opportunities with different requirements that we are working through to make our applications competitive in this round of funding.

**Upcoming Presentations.** During the April meeting, I'll present a "big picture" overview of the major initiatives and planning priorities we are focusing on this year. COVID-19 disrupted all areas of our service beginning in 2020, and we have completed the major construction projects outlined in the 2009 campus master plan. New, long-term planning is needed to guide our transit service, capital, and infrastructure strategies over the next 10 years.

In May, Kent City Engineer Jim Bowling will present an overview of the planned East Main Street reconstruction project. In addition, we will update the board on the study of S.R. 59 from Horning Road to S.R. 261 that is nearing completion. You may recall that AMATS awarded PARTA and Franklin Township a \$40,000 "Connecting Communities" grant in 2020 to identify ways to improve pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and other non-vehicle usage of this 1-mile corridor. We will publish the draft report on our website and accept public comments during the month of May. These documents are included in this packet.

**Tour of New Facilities.** Following the April meeting, we will offer a tour of the recently completed mezzanine area in the bus garage. The area includes a two-story fitness center and document storage room. In addition, weather permitting, we will walk out to the CDL driver training pad located behind the bus wash building. You may recall that this training pad eliminates the need to use the KSU Field House parking lot for training and by doing so, has greatly improved training conditions for our employees.

**Great Job, Maintenance Team!** During the facility tour, please notice the efforts of our maintenance team, who did a beautiful job of renovating the operations department hallways. They removed old

carpet that resisted cleaning and replaced it with vinyl tiles, repainted the walls, and installed new baseboards. Enclosed in the packet are before and after photos that show the clean and updated results. Thank you, Maintenance!

**Coming Soon: Foundation Golf Outing is Friday, May 20.** The foundation formerly known as Portage Public Transportation Assistance Foundation, Inc. (PPTAFI), and currently being renamed "FORE! Transit," will host the 17<sup>th</sup> annual golf outing fundraising event on Friday, May 20, at Paradise Lake Golf Course.

Please consider supporting this worthwhile cause by volunteering, donating, and/or golfing, even if you are not a golfer! PPTAFI/FORE! Transit is a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation established by PARTA in 2006. It provides businesses and individuals with the opportunity to make tax deductible charitable contributions. All proceeds are used to support unmet transportation needs in Portage County. Details about the outing are enclosed in this packet.

**Trolley Bus Update.** It is unfortunate, but not surprising, that delivery of the three (3) CNG-powered Hometown Trolley streetcar buses will be delayed until June. Supply chain and workforce issues continue to impact vehicle build schedules. Brian and Kelly completed the required Buy America inspections of the trolleys in March. Enclosed in this packet are some photos of trolley buses under construction.

**Service Reports. Ridership.** (*Coronavirus closures began March 2020*). Total county fixed route and DART ridership increased by 18.77% through March, as compared to March 2021 with total county service performing 53,557 trips as compared to 45,093 trips performed through March 2021.

County fixed route service increased by approximately 22.72% as compared to last year, with 43,950 trips completed through March as compared to 35,812 trips completed through March 2021.

DART service increased by 3.51% through March as compared to March 2021, with 9,607 trips completed as compared to 9,281 trips completed through March 2021.

Overall ridership, including campus service, increased by 135.50%, with campus up by 433.24%. Total system ridership totaled 151,479 as compared to 64,322 through March 2021.

**On-Time Compliance. ADA Complementary Paratransit Service.** ADA on-time compliance was 97.76% in March as compared to 96.95% in February 2022. Of 802 trips, 18 were performed late, with the latest running 39 minutes behind.

**General Public (non-ADA) DART.** On-time performance for general public, non-ADA trips increased to 97% for March, as compared to 97% in February 2022.

**Vehicle Preventative Maintenance (PM).** On-time compliance with established PM inspection schedules was 100% in March as compared to 100% in February 2022.

**Parking Deck.** Parking deck usage increased again in March, with a total of 9,363 cars as compared to 8,391 in February. This represents a 12% increase as compared to February and a 39% increase as compared to March 2021.

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





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# CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

**PARTA SR 59**

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION  
IMPROVEMENTS

MARCH 2022

SPONSOR



PREPARED FOR



PREPARED BY






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**STAKEHOLDERS                      ORGANIZATION**

Curtis Baker | Director ..... AMATS  
Heather Davis Reidl | Mobility Planner ..... AMATS  
Claudia Amrhein | General Manager ..... PARTA  
Brian Trautman | Chief of Operations/Facilities ..... PARTA  
Kelly Jurich | Chief of Staff ..... PARTA  
James Bowling, PE | Superintendent of Engineering/Deputy Director ..... City of Kent  
Jenny August | Township Administrator ..... Franklin Township  
Michael Craver | Traffic Engineer ..... ODOT  
David Griffith | Highway Safety Program Coordinator ..... ODOT  
Tyler Stratton | Traffic Engineer ..... ODOT

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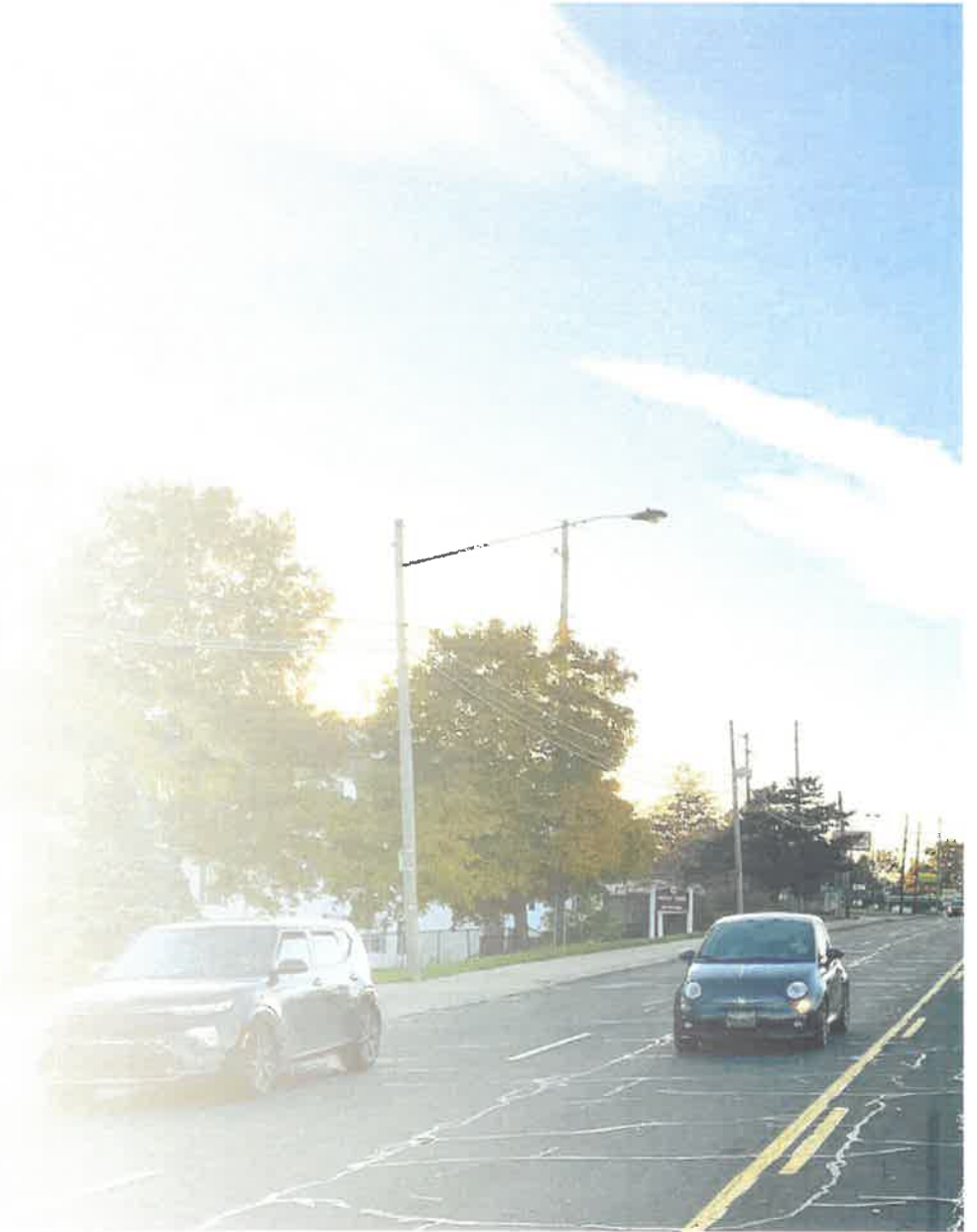
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Community Survey Results

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



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This Connecting Communities study evaluates existing conditions and recommends pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements along State Route 59 from Horning Road to State Route 261. Most of this approximately 0.9 mile corridor is in Franklin Township with a portion in the City of Kent.



**FIGURE 1** State Route 59 Corridor Study Area

# DRAFT

Current development along the corridor is generally oriented towards cars and trucks. Businesses are setback from the roadway behind large parking lots. Housing areas and institutional uses along the corridor are also designed primarily for car access. The area has a high population of students and other community members who rely on non-vehicular transportation (bicycle, pedestrian, and transit). SR 59 is the primary transit corridor connecting Kent and Ravenna and a wide range of individuals rely on transit for access to businesses and institutions located in this segment. Corridor improvements are needed to provide safe, comfortable access for residents of all abilities and income levels. Currently, the facilities needed to serve these users are lacking or deficient.

These deficiencies are evident in the 2010 Sidewalk/Crosswalk Gap Analysis, 2016-2018 Top 50 High Crash Sections, and existing data on pedestrian-related crashes. The corridor needs wide, safe, continuous sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. The corridor also needs enhanced transit waiting environments and better connections between transit stops and destinations. High speed traffic on SR 59, along with a lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and signage make conditions difficult for the community members who live, work, and travel in this area.

## Goals of the Planning Process

- Identify appropriate locations for alternative modes of transportation including pedestrian walkways, multi-purpose trails, transit improvements.
- Blend roadway and street scape improvements between E. Main Street in Kent and SR 59. There should not be a distinct boundary between the two jurisdictions and subsequent project lines.
- Provide infrastructure that supports alternative methods of transportation to employment, education and recreational centers, which in turn will support economic development activities.
- Ensure an equity focus in the community planning process by including residents of all abilities and income.
- Improve community collaboration (internally and externally).
- Identify community action items and implementation strategies.



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## Recommendations

- Reduce lane widths to reduce speeds to posted limits.
- Extend and widen sidewalks for safe shared use by bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Create additional mid-block crossings with painted crosswalks, ADA accessible curb ramps, pedestrian islands, and new crossing signals.
- Improve transit amenities, including ADA accessible bus stops, shelters, and connections to nearby designations.
- Upgrade pedestrian crossings at traffic lights with painted crosswalks and pedestrian signals.

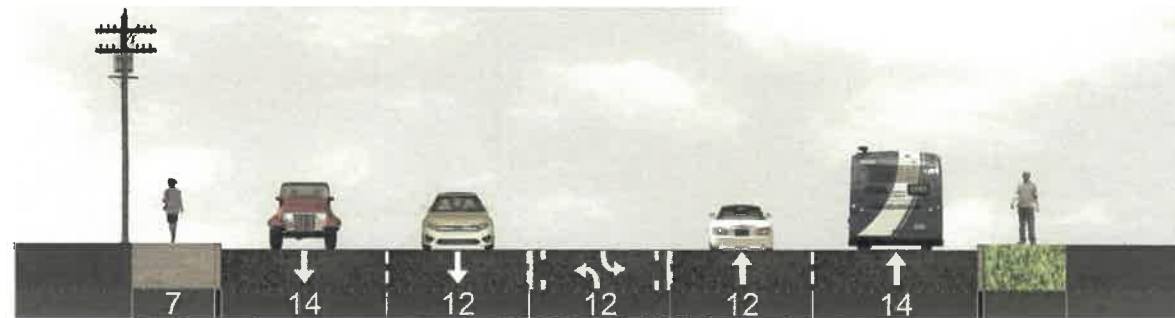


FIGURE 2 Existing corridor right-of-way and lane widths

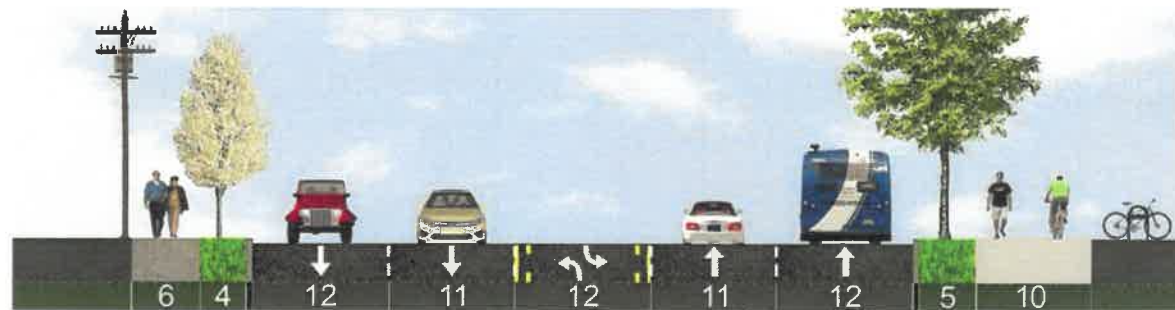
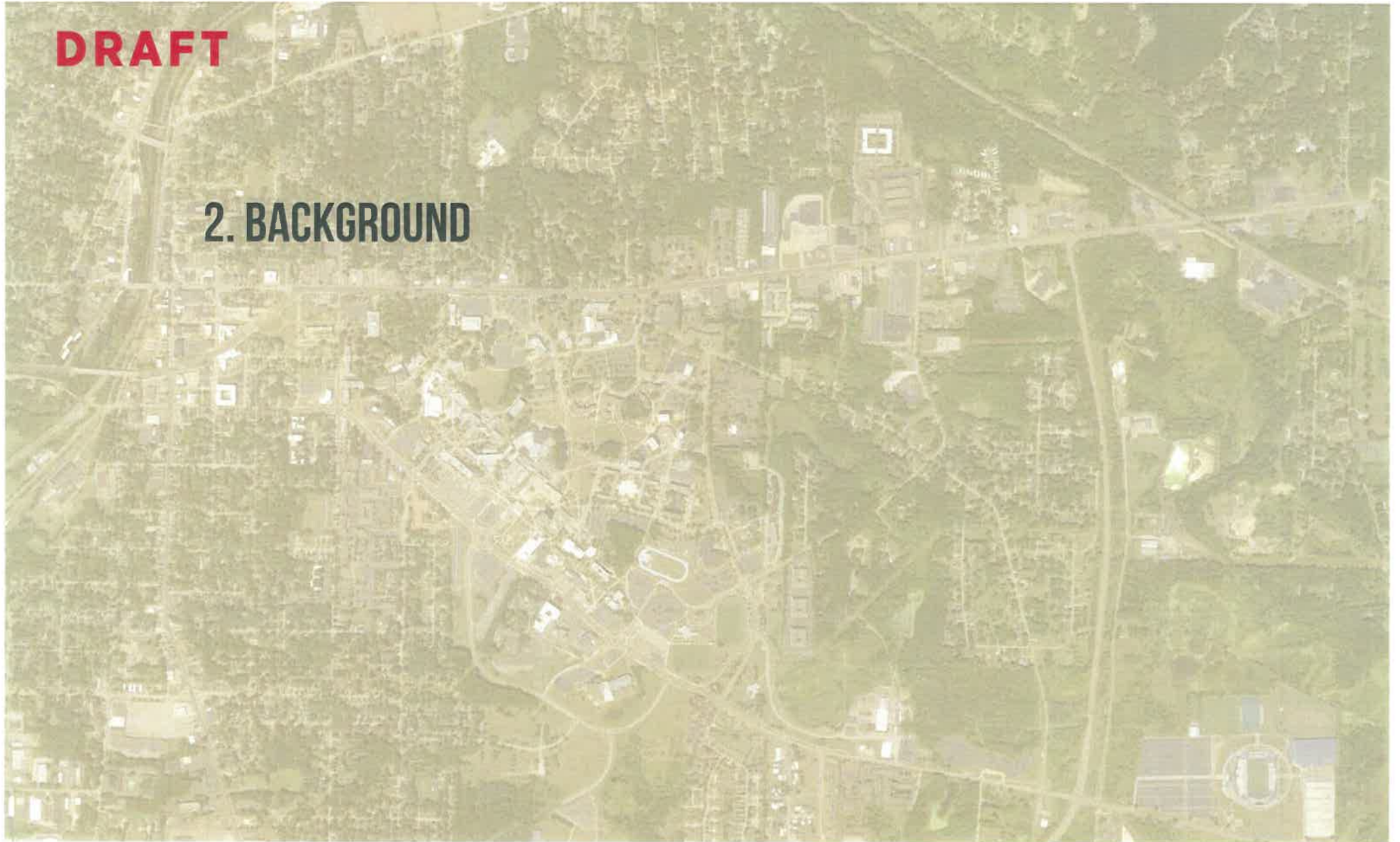


FIGURE 3 Proposed corridor right-of-way and lane widths

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## **2. BACKGROUND**



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This PARTA SR 59 Alternative Transportation Improvements Study is part of AMATS Connecting Communities initiative, aimed at increasing alternative transportation options to connect people and places; promoting Complete Street principles to create vibrant and safe places for all users; and leveraging transportation projects to develop places which support alternative transportation and complete streets through land use and design.

## Purpose and Need

State Route 59 between Horning Rd. and State Route 261 is a five lane, vehicle-centric stretch of roadway with an average daily traffic count of around 19,184 vehicles based on AMATS 2016 Average Daily Traffic Study. 1,000-5,000 of these are big trucks according to AMATS Transportation Outlook 2040.

This 0.9 mile stretch of roadway has two lanes in each direction for travel and a median left turn lane with limited facilities for transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The lack of sidewalks creates a difficult and dangerous pedestrian environment for pedestrians. Cyclists must ride with traffic with little visibility to the automobiles driving past.

The speed limit in this segment of SR 59 is 35 miles per hour, which is down from 45 miles per hour at the east end of the study area. Boarding and alighting the bus is difficult as passengers are dropped off in areas of low accessibility due to a lack of landing pads and curb cuts at the bus stops. PARTA provides two fixed routes that run every 30-45 minutes Monday through Saturday. These routes cover several residential areas and retail centers located within a quarter mile or five-minute walk. There are 17 stops in the area where PARTA saw 30,447 boardings in 2019. Only nine of the 17 stops are accessible from a

sidewalk. The rest are accessed from the tree lawn. Without sidewalks, landing pads, or curb cuts, stops are barely accessible to ambulatory passengers and inaccessible to those with mobility devices. Visibility at the stops is low due to the lack of lighting in the area.

Pedestrians in this area experience similar difficulties. Of the three signaled intersections in the study area, two have crossing signals, one has a painted crosswalk, and one has no crossing facilities at all. AMATS' Traffic Crashes and Safety Performance Measures for 2016-2018 notes that the section of State Route 59 between Horning Rd. and the Kent city limits is #18 on the list of high crash roadway sections. This section saw 48 crashes, two that were pedestrian-related. This could be attributed to the large apartment complex located across from a grocery store with no adjacent intersection from which to cross. Recently, AMATS found ten bike or pedestrian crashes in this area between 2015 - 2021. ODOT CAM tool found one bike and pedestrian crash between 2018-2020.

AMATS 2010 Sidewalk/Crosswalk Gap Analysis also noted more than half of the area is not covered by sidewalks. Bicycle amenities are also lacking. There are no marked bike lanes or paths. Cyclists must ride with traffic with no signage indicating a shared lane. According to AMATS Transportation Outlook 2040, bike crashes were down from two in 2013-2015 to zero in 2016-2018. This could be due to indirect improvements for cyclists in the greater Kent area such as paths that bypass the study area, but nothing that improved the study area directly. Cyclists can also be transit riders, since the buses have bike racks, but this is not an attractive first mile/last mile solution in this area due to the lack of amenities.

# DRAFT

The alternative transportation needs for the section of SR 59 between Horning Road and SR 261 are great. Transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists need infrastructure investments that make them safer and more visible to motorists. The corridor needs more accessible points to connect with transit and better crossing facilities to help people navigate their way safely across five lanes of traffic. In this area of retail, dining, and residential uses, it is imperative to make access for all better, safer, and more attractive to those who do not have access to a car whether by choice or circumstance. Corridor improvements for SR 59 will connect to planned improvements for East Main Street and SR 261, creating an expanded bike network.

## **Alignment with Connecting Communities Principles**

### **Alternative Transportation**

SR 59 currently prioritizes vehicular traffic, often to the detriment of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. This plan aims to improve safety, enhance mobility, and encourage bus ridership by reducing lane widths, shifting space within the right-of-way for wider sidewalks and pedestrian buffers, creating pedestrian islands at midblock crossings, and enhancing bus stops/transit waiting areas.

Wider, continuous sidewalks throughout the corridor and more prominent crosswalks will allow for a safer and more comfortable experience for pedestrians and bicyclists, so these modes of transportation become a more viable alternative to driving, particularly for short trips.

Land use patterns along SR 59 are primarily oriented for vehicular access. Development in the corridor is mostly single-use--commercial, residential

or institutional--and the area has a spread out, suburban density. However, there are a significant number of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders who live, work, and shop in this area and infrastructure investments are needed to improve safety and access for these populations.

Bicycle facilities play an important role in the transportation system. A wider sidewalk/ multipurpose path along SR 59 could eventually connect with a planned bike path along SR 261, and further connect with the Freedom Trail to Tallmadge, creating a larger bike network that could be used for commuting and recreation.

Buses are a critical part of the transportation system, providing access to shopping, restaurants, housing, employment, medical facilities, religious institutions, and other destinations along SR 59. PARTA provides frequent bus service along this segment, but sidewalks connecting to the stops are not continuous, unsafe in areas, and uncomfortably close to fast moving traffic. The sidewalk and shared use path recommended in this study would provide continuous connectivity to the many bus stops. Currently, the entire 0.9-mile segment only has two crosswalks (at the 6th Avenue and Rhodes Road signals). This is deficient given the density and locations of development. Transit users often must walk several hundred feet to the nearest crosswalk to safely cross SR 59 or cross unsafely where there is no marked crossing.

To provide high quality transit service, bus stops should ideally be located within ¼-mile (or 5-minute walk) of the user's destination. Strategically placed mid-block crosswalks near the residential developments and other high use stops would significantly shorten the walk for many users. Possible locations include the Ryan Place apartments, Holly Court apartments, and the Whispering Pines mobile home park.



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To provide a safe, comfortable experience, mid-block crossings must be highly visible to drivers through adequate signing, lighting, and pavement markings, which can include changes in pavement color and texture. Equally important to the safety of mid-block crosswalks is slowing vehicular speeds which can be accomplished by narrowing the lanes. Bus pull-offs should also be considered at higher volume stops.

## Complete Streets

Complete streets are designed and operated to ensure safe access for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists of all ages and abilities. SR 59 is particularly challenging for people with disabilities. PARTA's bus fleet is fully accessible but connections between the bus stops and many destinations in the corridor are not accessible. Some bus stops are located in grassy areas without sidewalks, which can be difficult to traverse in a wheelchair. Deep building setbacks often mean that the front door of a business or other destination is far from the location where people get off the bus, often separated by a parking lot without a sidewalk or other pedestrian amenities. As a result, people with disabilities often choose door-to-door service, which is less frequent and more expensive than the fixed route service.

Enhancements to existing bus stops, including the installation of bus shelters wherever possible, will make SR 59 more 'complete.' Collaborating with business owners and other private sector partners along the corridor can help to improve connections between the right-of-way and intended destinations.

## Land Use and Design

Development along the corridor is mostly built-out, except for a few small empty lots (out lots at the Acme Plaza and Gabe's, the former Kentwood Restaurant site, and a small parcel behind Raising Cane's). Given current land use patterns and the existing zoning code (C-1/Local Commercial and R-4/Multi-Family in Franklin Township and C-R/Commercial High Density Multifamily Residential in Kent), the corridor is likely to remain automobile-oriented for the foreseeable future. However, improvements to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure along SR 59 may encourage private property owners to invest in better connections to their facilities. This is especially important for elderly and disabled populations who use this route frequently. There are several medical facilities in the corridor and a residential complex for people 55 and older (Four Seasons at Kent). Corridor and intersection improvements should be designed to support the needs of these populations and other people with mobility limitations.



FIGURE 4 No sidewalk for pedestrians



FIGURE 5 Curb ramp with no crosswalk



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### **3. EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS**



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## **Lack of Bike Infrastructure**

There are no bike lanes, sharrows, or other bicycle infrastructure in the segment of SR 59 between Horning Road and SR 261. With five lanes of high-speed traffic, the corridor offers no facilities to protect bicyclists. PARTA buses are equipped with bike racks to allow cyclists to ride and use their bikes for first mile/last mile connections. Making cyclists more visible would improve their safety and encourage bicycling as an alternative to driving. Bike infrastructure would also provide greater access to restaurants and retail in the corridor for students who live nearby and others in the area.

## **Sidewalk gaps**

Sidewalks are not continuous throughout the corridor. Gaps were noted at the following locations:

- On the south side of SR 59 at Rhodes Road, walking east, the sidewalk in front of Sunoco does not reach the curb. Pedestrians must walk through the grass.
- There is no sidewalk on the north or south side of SR 59 between Rhodes Road and SR 261. This section of the corridor has five bus stops, three of which lack sidewalk access or even a landing pad.
- Goat paths are visible in areas where sidewalks are lacking, which is an indication that pedestrians are currently walking in these areas and would benefit from continuous sidewalks.
- There is a goat path that leads to a wide shoulder on SR 59 while heading toward SR 261. Although the shoulder is wide, this is an uncomfortable area for pedestrians since car and truck traffic is moving fast as drivers try to make the light. There is no protection from traffic for pedestrians. A sidewalk with a buffer would make pedestrians safer and more visible.

## **Limited Bus Stop Amenities**

Bus stops are not easily accessible, especially those that lack sidewalks, a landing pad, or a curb cut. A person in a wheelchair would struggle to access transit in this area at any time of the year, but especially in the snow.

## **Missing Crosswalks**

Crosswalks and pedestrian signals are needed to improve pedestrian visibility and safety at the intersection of SR 59 and SR 261. Unfortunately, there are no sidewalks on SR 59 to the east of SR 261, so a new crosswalk would bring pedestrians to grassy, snowy, or muddy areas, rather than a sidewalk.

The intersection of SR 59 and 6th Avenue has crosswalks on three sides of the intersection. The east side of the intersection lacks a crosswalk.

The intersection of SR 59 and Rhodes Road lacks crosswalks and pedestrian signals. A crosswalk exists at the east side of the intersection only. There is an existing sidewalk on the north side of SR 59, in front of Campus Point apartments. A crosswalk is lacking across Ashton Lane.

## **Safety and Crash Analysis**

Safety issues are a primary concern in the SR 59 corridor. AMATS has documented 12 pedestrian and bicycle crashes in the study area between 2015 and 2021, as shown on the map on the following page.

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## Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes

### Crash Severity

- 3=Non incapacitating injury
- 4=Possible injury
- 5=Property damage only

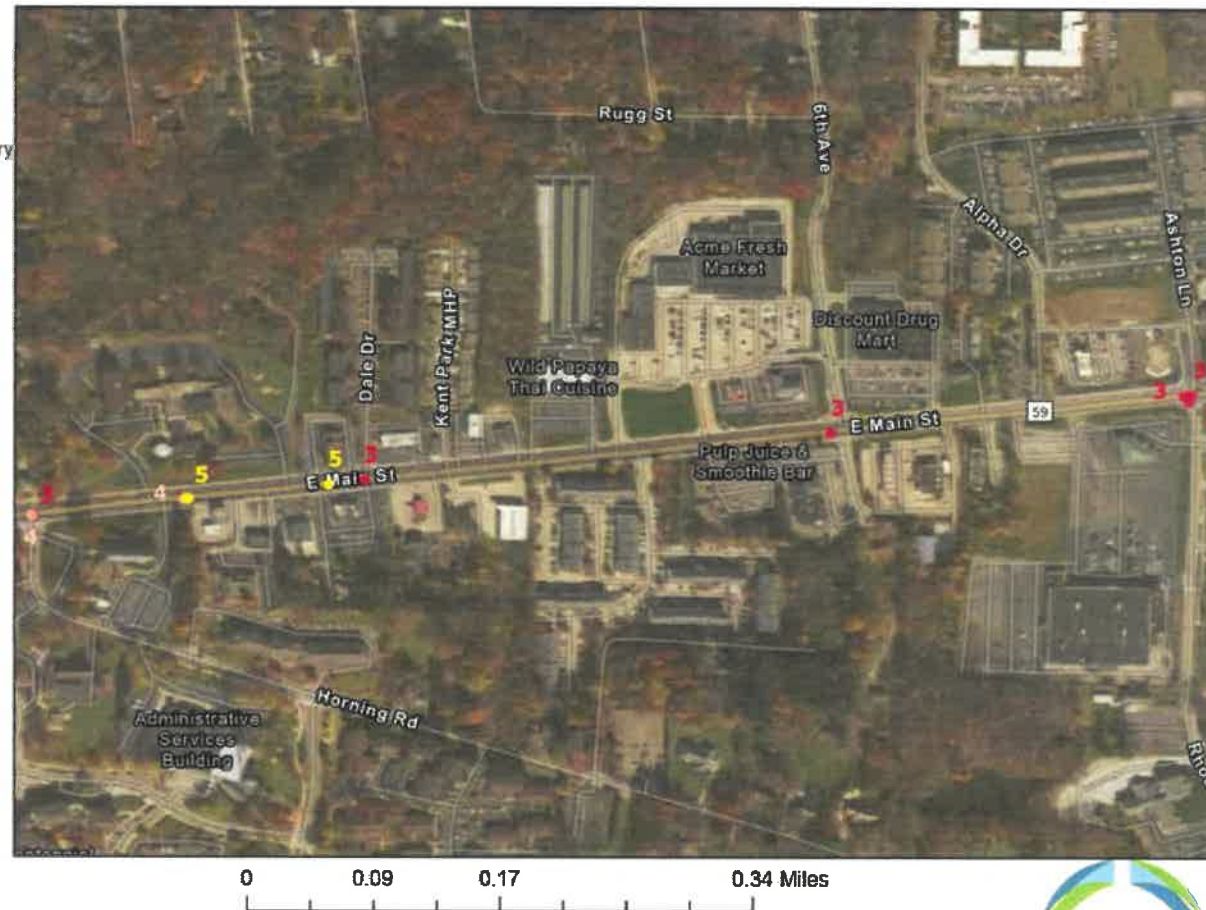


FIGURE 6 Map of Pedestrian and Bike Crashes

Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study





# DRAFT

SR 59 was widened from two lanes to five lanes in 1975. The record plans show the existing right-of-way varies considerably with generally more right-of-way on the north side, particularly from Dale Drive to Ashton Lane. In many places through the corridor, the existing right-of-way is at the back of sidewalk (where sidewalk exists), or seven to 8 feet behind the curb where there is no sidewalk.

The right-of-way is narrow in a few areas, particularly in front of the Whispering Pines mobile home park where the right-of-way is three feet behind the north curb line. The existing plans show a 64-foot pavement width from curb-to-curb, which translates to three 12-foot lanes on the inside and two 14-foot lanes on the outside. Generous lanes widths, particularly on multilane roads, result in higher vehicular speeds making roads less safe and inviting for bicycles and pedestrians. While the legal posted speed is 35-mph, the record plans show that SR 59 east of Horning Road was designed for 45-mph, which is likely much closer to the prevailing speed on this section.

## AMATS Discovery Process

AMATS completed the initial data collection and analysis in April 2021. The discovery document identified areas of concern or improvement and provided important data about the study area.

## Auto-oriented Corridor

The SR 59 corridor has five lanes and average daily traffic of almost 20,000 automobiles. It includes residential and retail/dining areas, with pedestrians of all ages. Two bus routes serve the corridor with a total of 17 stops in the study area.

The intersection of Horning Road and SR 59 has crosswalks, curb cuts, and pedestrian signals, making it safer and easier to navigate on foot than other intersections in the study area. It sets the standard to be replicated for other intersections in the corridor.

Overall, the corridor lacks crosswalks and pedestrian signals. It has missing sidewalks, a lack of bus amenities, and no bike infrastructure. Since this segment of SR 59 has only four traffic lights, traffic speeds often exceed posted limits. The corridor has heavy truck traffic which adds to pedestrian discomfort. The corridor is particularly difficult for people in wheelchairs and pushing strollers.

Several nearby housing developments offer student housing. Many students walk between their apartments and the nearby Kent State campus. Improvements are being planned for East Main Street just west of the SR 59 study area, and for the 261 corridor at the west end of the study area. Improvements for SR 59 will be designed to tie into these other projects.



**FIGURE 7** Bus Stop with no amenities

# DRAFT

## Connecting Communities Bus & Brainstorm

On August 31, 2021 the planning team and stakeholder group explored the SR 59 corridor by bus and on foot, documenting existing conditions and discussing potential improvements. The Bus & Brainstorm was attended by:

Curtis Baker (AMATS), Heather Davis Reidl (AMATS), Mark Dennis (Arcadis), Jim Bowling (City of Kent), Clayton Popik (PARTA), Claudia Amrhein (PARTA), Denise Baba (PARTA), Larry Jenkins (Portage County Engineer), Terry Schwarz (CUDC), Ann Ward (E. Main Street Citizen Advisory Committee), Randy Smith (E. Main Street Citizen Advisory Committee)

The group boarded the 35 bus at the Kent Central Gateway and headed to the easternmost stop in the study area, on the south side of SR 59 near SR 261. From there, the group walked west, crossing to the north side of SR 59 at 6th Avenue and walking to Horning Road. At Horning, the group crossed to the south side of SR 59 and walked to the Police Station for a work session.



## Observations

The group witnessed a passenger board with a walker at Rhodes. The Rhodes bus shelter is accessible from the sidewalk, but not from the roadway where passengers get on and off the bus. This particular passenger with a walker was able to navigate through the grass, but not all mobility devices would be able to function in these conditions.



**FIGURES 8 & 9** No sidewalks available for pedestrians in many regularly-used areas.

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**FIGURE 10** Rhodes Road bus shelter is inaccessible from the street.



# DRAFT

Another passenger got off the bus at SR261 and crossed mid-block toward a medical facility. The Whispering Pines mobile home park is a residential area with transit accessibility issues. Residents of Whispering Pines also have first mile/last mile issues, which underscores the need for alternative transportation improvements.

In the segment of the corridor near the Sheetz gas station, sidewalks are not continuous. There is an existing crosswalk at SR59 and 6th Avenue. Traffic moves at high speeds as people move east of this intersection. Jim Bowling made note of higher pedestrian accidents in crosswalks. A crosswalk can create a false sense of security for pedestrians. A painted crosswalk and crossing signal are often not enough.

At SR 59 and 6th Avenue, the pedestrian signal was blocked by a new utility pole. Also, the bus shelter near the Pizza Hut is accessible to buses in the roadway, but there is no access across an area of grass between the bus stop and the restaurant.



**FIGURE 11** Bus shelter near Pizza Hut is accessible from the road/bus b ut there is no pedestrian access from the bus stop to the business entrance . A person in a wheelchair would be forced to navigate around the lawn by us ing the driveway, which would put them at risk.

# DRAFT

Holly Park, Dale Drive, and the Four Seasons residential complexes need mid-block access to SR 59. Redundant access points to these residential properties are good places for mid-block medians where the extra entrance could be made into a right in/right out turn, as occurs at the west entrance to the Acme Plaza.

## Preliminary Recommendations from Work Session

Based on observations in the corridor, the group discussed reducing the outside through lanes by two feet and the inside through lanes by one foot. This provides a total of six feet of usable space in the right-of-way that can be dedicated to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements. The group also discussed reducing the center turn lane width from twelve feet to ten feet. A reduction in lane widths would help to slow traffic and provide right-of-way for a side path.

The existing five-foot tree lawn would be needed for a multi-use path on the south side of SR 59. There is a current project for SR 261 that incorporates a bike path along the right-of-way through that corridor, which would effectively connect SR 59 to the Freedom Trail to Tallmadge at some point in the future.

The expansion of Crystal Clinic underscores the need for a sidewalk to be extended along the north side of SR 59 to at least the end of the study area, with a crosswalk for access to both sides of SR 59. Signal upgrades would be needed at the three intersections throughout the study area to make the necessary pedestrian signal installations. A bus shelter in front of Acme Plaza needs to have better access to the businesses, perhaps by a dedicated sidewalk or path across the parking lot.



**FIGURE 12** Bus Shelter in front of Acme Plaza with no clear, accessible path to the businesses in the plaza.

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**FIGURE 13** Proposed midblock crossing with pedestrian island.

# DRAFT

The existing eastbound bus stop across from the Whispering Pines mobile home park lacks sidewalks and a transit loading area. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for a person in a wheelchair to board the bus at this stop. Transit, sidewalk, and crosswalk improvements are needed to address this situation.

The center turn lane could be used as a median or pedestrian refuge at mid-block crossings. The mid-block crossings would be located where people are currently crossing. Aligning mid-block crossings with bus stop locations would enable transit riders to more safely reach destinations on the other side of the street. Bus shelters are preferred at bus stops, wherever there is room in the right-of-way.

Pedestrian islands should be placed at the mid-block crossings. Access management is important, to ensure that drivers can access their destinations and trucks and emergency vehicles also maintain access. During the design process, designers will work with PARTA to finalize locations of bus stops along

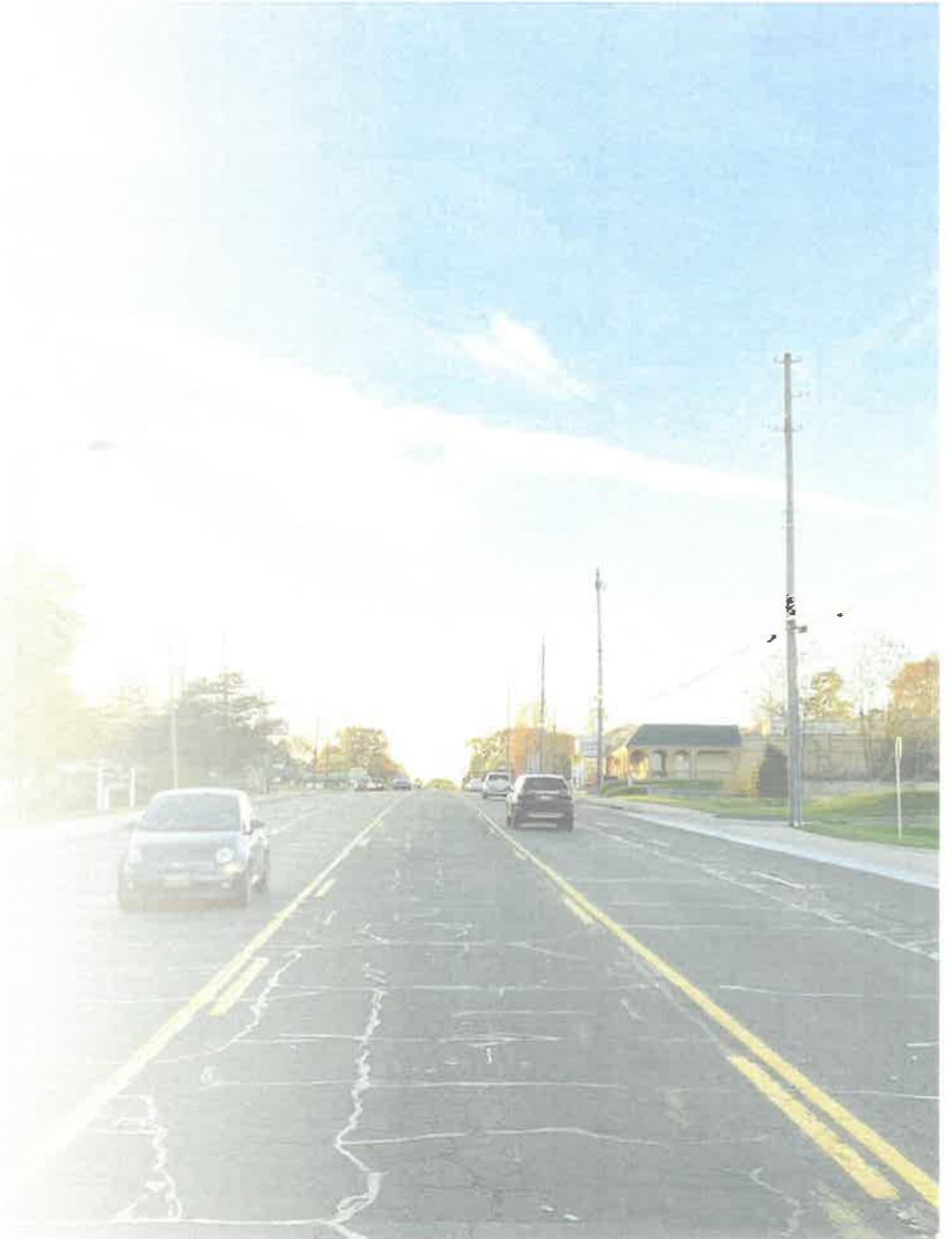
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the corridor to correspond with locations of mid-block crossings and transit needs. These could be incremental steps for implementing changes while waiting for the overall project to be put together. Better placement of bus stops would reduce the amount of east/west movement of riders along SR 59 so the lack of sidewalks in some areas would be less of an issue for the moment.

Shelters make riders feel safe and protected from the elements. Shelters should be installed at bus stops wherever possible, using transit counts and demographics to decide shelter placement. Shelters can be added at once or gradually as road improvements are made, if the sites are prepared and there is enough right-of-way established for the shelter.

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## **4. CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND ALTERNATIVES**





# DRAFT

## Overall Recommendations

Based on a review of data and on-site observations, the project team recommends:

### Narrowing the Existing Pavement

Narrowing the existing pavement will slow vehicular speeds and provide more space for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Narrowing the through lanes from 12' inside/14' outside to 11' inside/12' outside would allow the curbs to be shifted in three feet on each side, freeing up space for sidewalks or shared use paths. This would match the proposed lane widths on the E. Main Street Project providing a seamless transition to the west.

The mirrors on PARTA buses are more likely to hang over the curb on narrower outside lanes, but street signs, utilities, and other features can be set sufficiently behind the curb to avoid potential conflicts.

### Creating Continuous Sidewalks

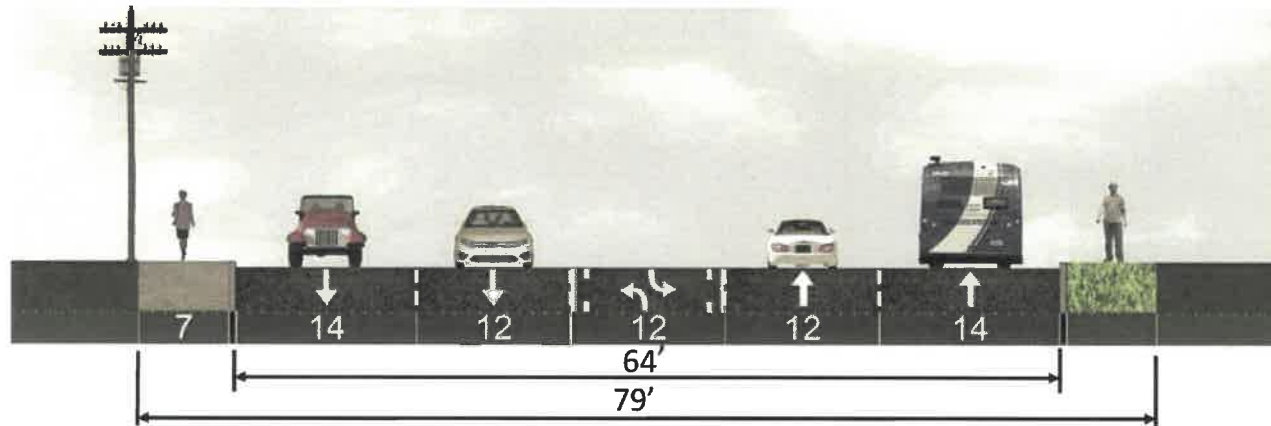
SR 59 currently has seven foot sidewalks adjacent to the curb on both sides, but the southern sidewalk terminates at 6th Avenue and the northern sidewalk stops at Ashton Lane. The sidewalks do not provide continuous connection for pedestrians, and the lack of offset from the busy, high-speed roadway does not offer an inviting pedestrian experience. The E. Main Street project will include a six foot sidewalk on the north side and ten foot shared use path on the south side, both separated from the street with comfortable tree lawns. If the curbs are shifted in three feet, this concept could be continued through the study area without reconstructing SR 59.

### Adding a Multi-Use Path

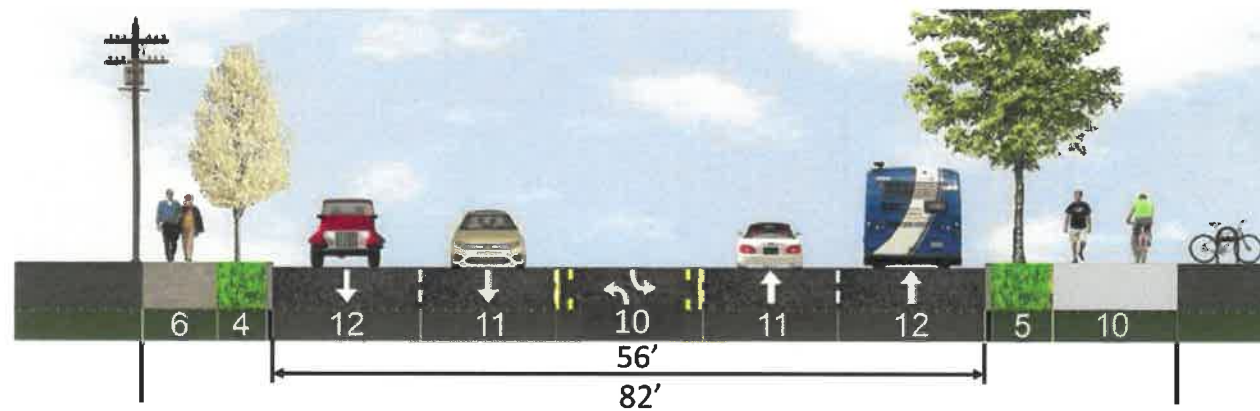
In-street bicycle lanes could also be considered, but they would reduce available space for pedestrian improvements. Also, bike lanes on higher speed, multilane streets can encourage higher vehicle speeds, because the lanes feel wider to drivers when no bicycles are present.

The primary utility poles carry three-phase power as well as phone and cable and are located on the north side at the back of sidewalk throughout the study limits. There are secondary poles on the south side for a portion of the segment, but these poles are much shorter and fewer in number, are generally farther from the existing curb, and carry fewer utilities. South side poles will likely need to be shifted back between the BP station and Pulp Juice Bar, but pole relocations outside of this segment could be minimized.

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**FIGURE 14** Existing corridor right-of-way and lane widths.



**FIGURE 15** Proposed corridor Right-of-way and lane widths, with continuous sidewalks and multi-use path

# DRAFT

## Alternatives

Arcadis developed an initial layout for the corridor based on the corridor-wide recommendations described above. After discussion with the stakeholder group, Arcadis developed a second alternative that limits the extent of property takes for implementation.

### Alternative One (Overall Corridor)



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**Alternative One (Overall Corridor) - Continued**





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**Alternative Two (Overall Corridor)**





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## Alternative Two (Overall Corridor) - Continued



The differences between the alternatives can be seen at four locations in the corridor, shown on the following pages.

# DRAFT

## 1. SR 59 & Loblolly Court

The Holly Park Apartments on the south side of SR 59 is sited below the level of the road.

Alternative One will require a retaining wall (indicated by a heavy black line on the drawing on the following page).

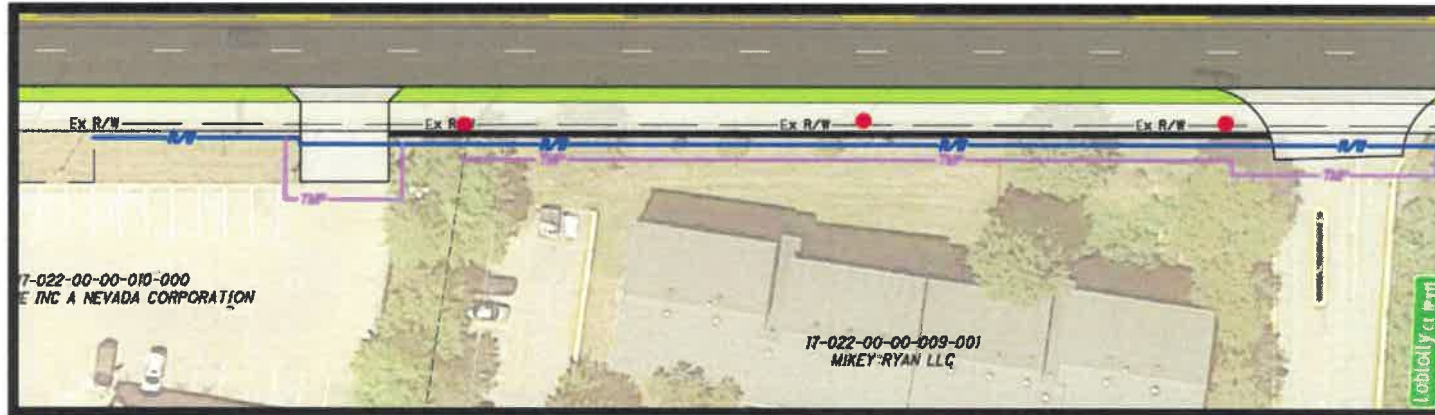
Alternative Two will leave the facility as is, without the need for a retaining wall.



**FIGURE 16** Holly Park Apartments

# DRAFT

Alternative One



Alternative Two



# DRAFT

## 2. SR 59 at Acme Plaza (between Loblolly Court and 6th Avenue)

Alternative One requires the relocation of existing utility poles to allow for a sidewalk and a landscape buffer on the north side of SR 59.

Alternative Two places the sidewalk behind the existing utility poles. The existing right-of-way extends well into the grass area so this can be accomplished without property takes.



FIGURE 17 Acme Plaza

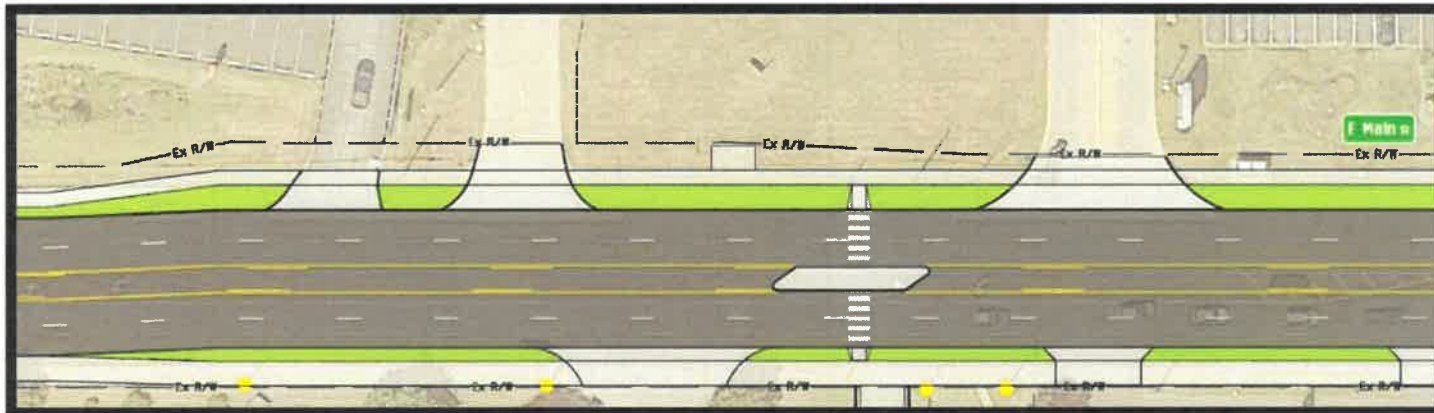


# DRAFT

Alternative One



Alternative Two





# DRAFT

### 3. SR 59 at Dollar General (Rhodes Road/Ashton Lane)

Alternative One requires a retaining wall at the edge of the property on the south side of SR 59.

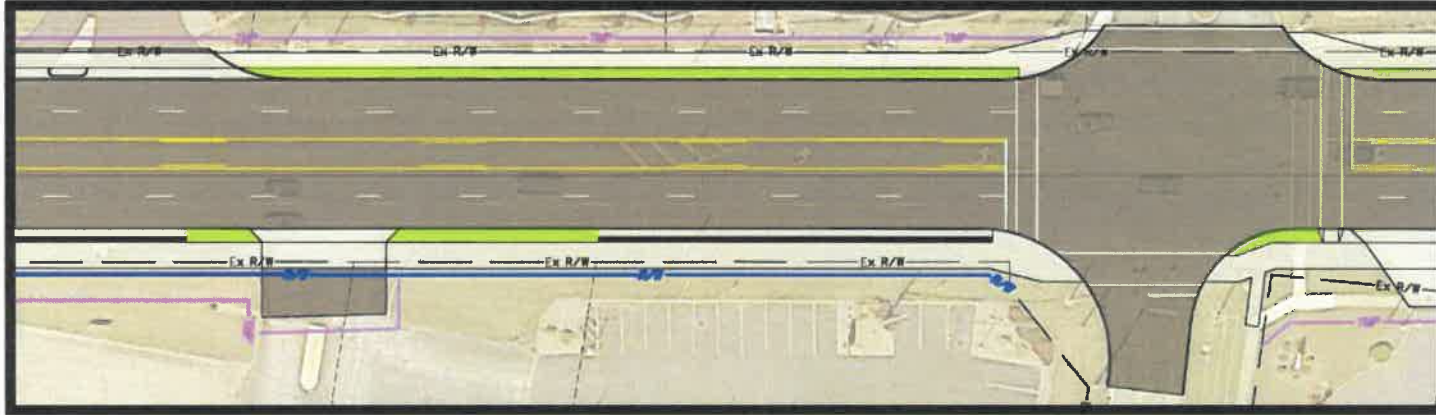
Alternative Two also requires a wall, but it is a short wall (approximately one-foot tall) at the outside edge of the right-of-way that will be less expensive to construct.



**FIGURE 18** Dollar General / Rhodes Road

# DRAFT

Alternative One



Alternative Two



# DRAFT

#### 4. SR 59 at Whispering Pines Mobile Home Park

Alternative One includes a new sidewalk and a landscape buffer on both sides of the street. This will require property acquisition on both sides to expand the right-of-way.

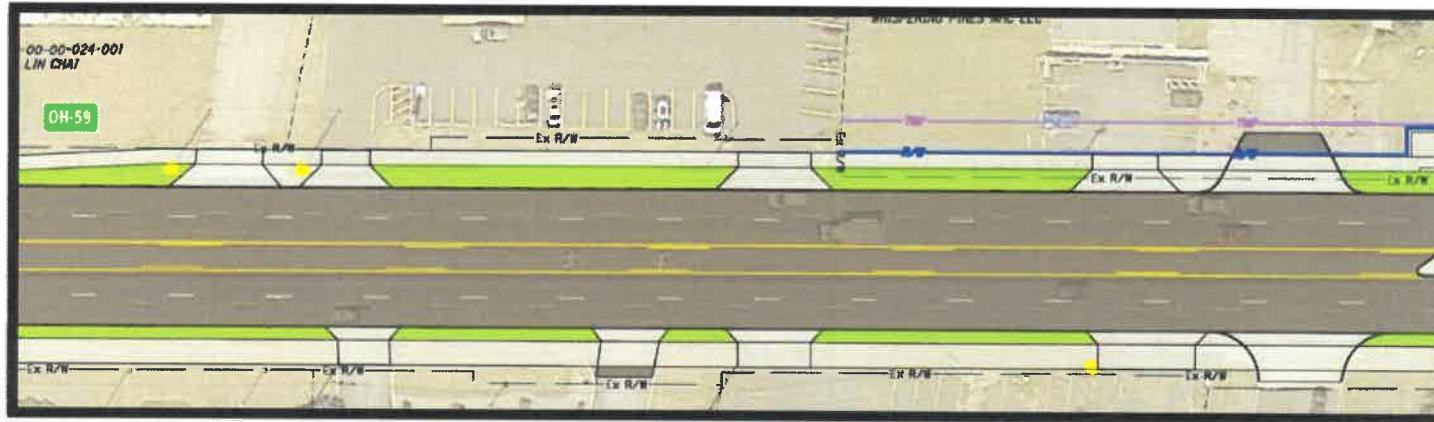
Alternative Two eliminates the landscape buffer on both sides and also eliminates the need for property takes.



**FIGURE 19** Whispering Pines Mobile Home Park

# DRAFT

## Alternative One



## Alternative Two



Alternative Two is recommended since it will be faster and less expensive to implement. Cost details are discussed in the Funding & Implementation section.





**DRAFT**

## 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Stakeholders group **will present** the preferred alternative to the community via a handout to bus passengers in **May 2022**, as well as online through PARTA's website.

Feedback **will be** able to be provided in an online or hard copy comment form, hosted on PARTA's website. The public engagement process **will be** conducted in coordination with PARTA, the City of Kent, and Franklin Township in order to obtain feedback from the adjacent property/business owners and the general public. Results and comment forms **will be** included in the appendices.



# DRAFT

## PARTA S.R. 59 - Alternative Transportation Improvements



PARTA, Franklin Township, the City of Kent, the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS), and ODOT are teaming together through the AMATS 'Connecting Communities' Program to provide transit, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements along S.R. 59, between Horning Rd. and S.R. 261. This project will connect seamlessly at the west end with the City of Kent's East Main Street project which is currently in design.

This S.R. 59 project is currently in the planning phase and hopes to improve access to multi-modal transportation by the following methods:

- **Improved Bus Access:** Improve transit amenities, including ADA accessible bus stops, shelters, and improved connections to nearby destinations.
- **Improved Pedestrian Access:** Create additional mid-block crossings with painted crosswalks, ADA accessible curb ramps, pedestrian islands, and new crossing signals.
- **Improved Sidewalks:** Extend and widen sidewalks for safe shared use by bicyclists and pedestrians.
- **Improve Safety:** Like the proposed East Main Street project, the use of new concrete islands, along with reduced lane widths will promote a reduction of vehicular speeds to posted speed limits. This improves both vehicular and pedestrian safety.



**DRAFT**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address (or nearest cross streets): \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of impacted property (or nearest cross streets), if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

Business/Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business/Organization Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your interest in the proposed project? (Select all that apply.)**

☐ Area Resident    ☐ Area business owner or employee    ☐ Commuter    ☐ KSU Student  
☐ KSU Employee    ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**How often do you travel in the project area?**

☐ Daily    ☒ A few times a week    ☐ Weekly    ☐ A few times a month    ☐ Monthly  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**How do you travel through the project area?**

☐ Car/Motorcycle   ☐ Bus   ☐ Bicycle   ☐ Walk   ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you travel by bus, which stop(s) do you typically use?**

---

**PROJECT COMMENTS:**

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page or a sheet of stationery.

Comments may be submitted:

- Verbally or in writing to:  
PARTA  
2000 Summit Road  
Kent, OH 44240
- By email at [CustomerService@partaonline.org](mailto:CustomerService@partaonline.org)
- By telephone at 330-676-6701



THE CITY OF  
**Kent, Ohio**

 THE CITY OF  
**Kent, Ohio**

**DRAFT**

## 6. FUNDING & IMPLEMENTATION

### Comparison of Estimated Project Costs

Alternative One is estimated to cost ±\$5.1M

Alternative Two estimated cost is ±\$4.2M.

The cost savings in Alternative Two is due to:

- No funding needed to purchase right-of-way. Pulling in eight feet (typically four feet on each side). In the west section, all eight feet of narrowing is on the south side, holding north curb line.
- By holding the curb line on the west side, no drainage changes are needed so cost is reduced.
- Time savings, since purchasing right-of-way will take approximately one year. Saving one year in the construction equates to inflation savings.
- Retaining wall in front of Autozone due to elevation differential is not needed in Alternative Two.
- In the east section, four-foot narrowing on each side. The shared use path is maintained up against curb in front of car wash, Gabe's, and Dollar General (no tree lawn)
- At Rhodes Road, it will be very difficult to stay within the right-of-way. There may need to be a small wall here.
- It might be possible to widen the tree lawn at Whispering Pines if they are willing to donate right-of-way.

The cost estimates include traffic signal modifications (\$125,000 per signal to replace) and traffic control (\$130,000 for five overhead signs, etc). The cost estimates also include upgrading the signal at SR 261.

All right-of-way for church properties is taken with E Main Street. Islands are extended with the E. Main Street project/

If the two-way LTL near Whispering Pines is eliminated, it would be difficult to put in the island. Can finish this study without making a decision on this.

### Phasing

The project can be constructed in one phase or two. The impacts on costs are as follows:

Construct in One Phase

- Alternative 1: \$5.1 Million (Construction in 2025)
- Alternative 2: \$4.2 Million (Construction in 2024)

Construct in Two Phases

- Alternative 2 Phase 1: \$2.1 Million (Construction in 2025)
- Alternative 2 Phase 2: \$3.1 Million (Construction in 2032)

If constructed in a single phase, the overall project cost and construction time are reduced. However, if constructed in two phases, funding may be more attainable for each phase as the phased dollar amounts are each lower than the overall amount for a single phase.

In addition, Phase 1 would be constructed on the eastern portion of SR 59 with poor condition pavement. By the time Phase 2 is constructed, the western portion of SR 59 pavement will be further deteriorated, likely resulting in further justification for pavement and roadway improvements to be performed with the other multi-modal improvements.

# DRAFT

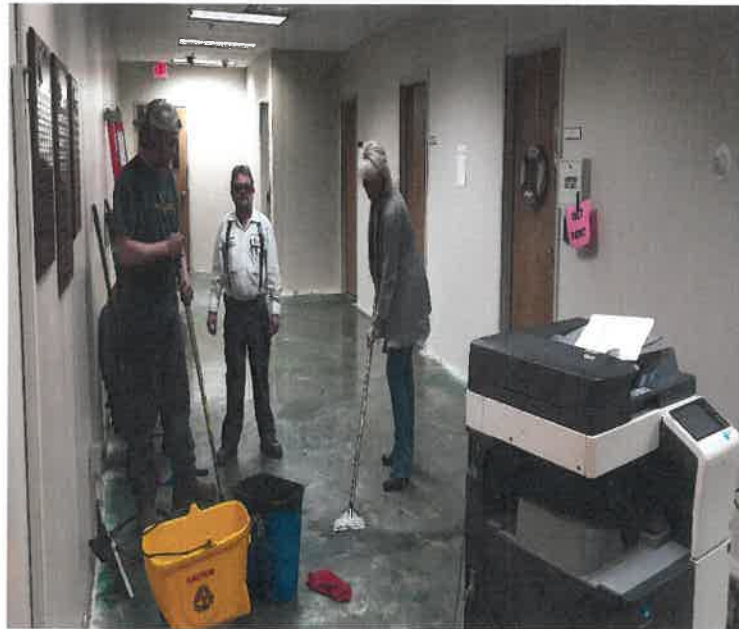
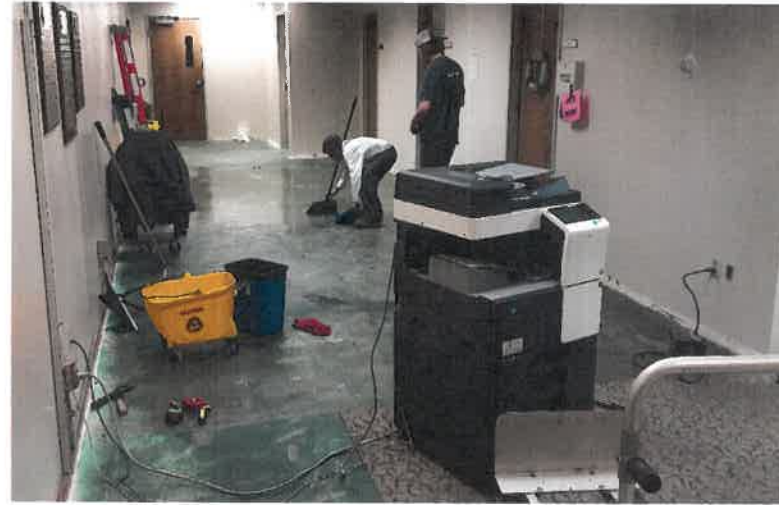
## Potential Funding Sources

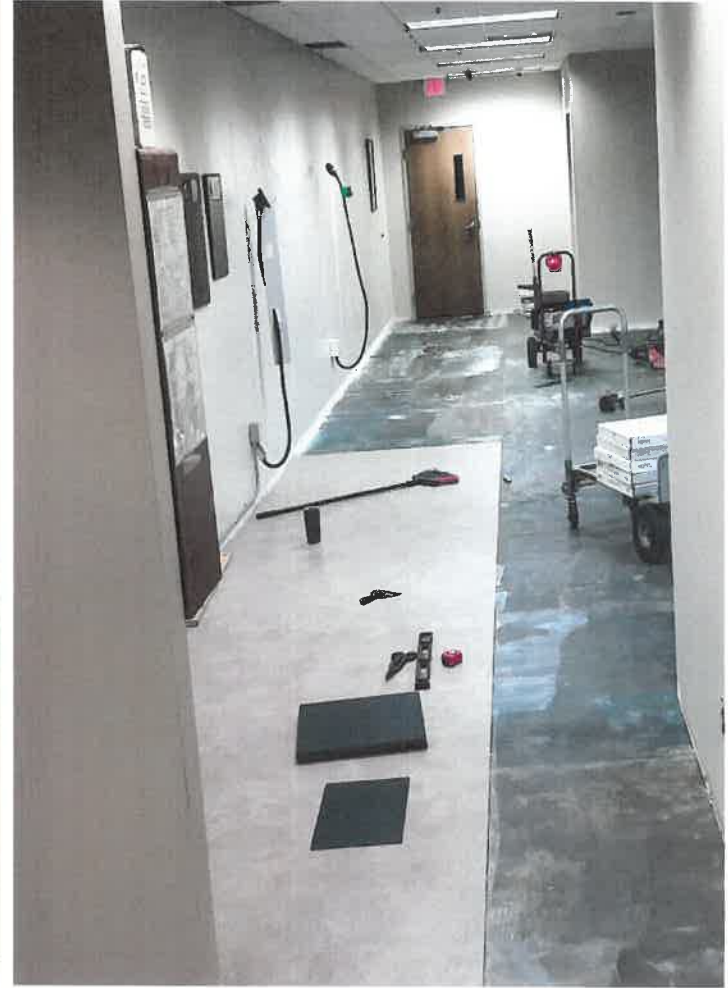
ODOT, PARTA, the City of Kent, and Franklin Township are committed to partnering in this community improvement. As such, much preliminary collaboration has occurred in order to consider all possible funding opportunities. Funding opportunities being considered include:

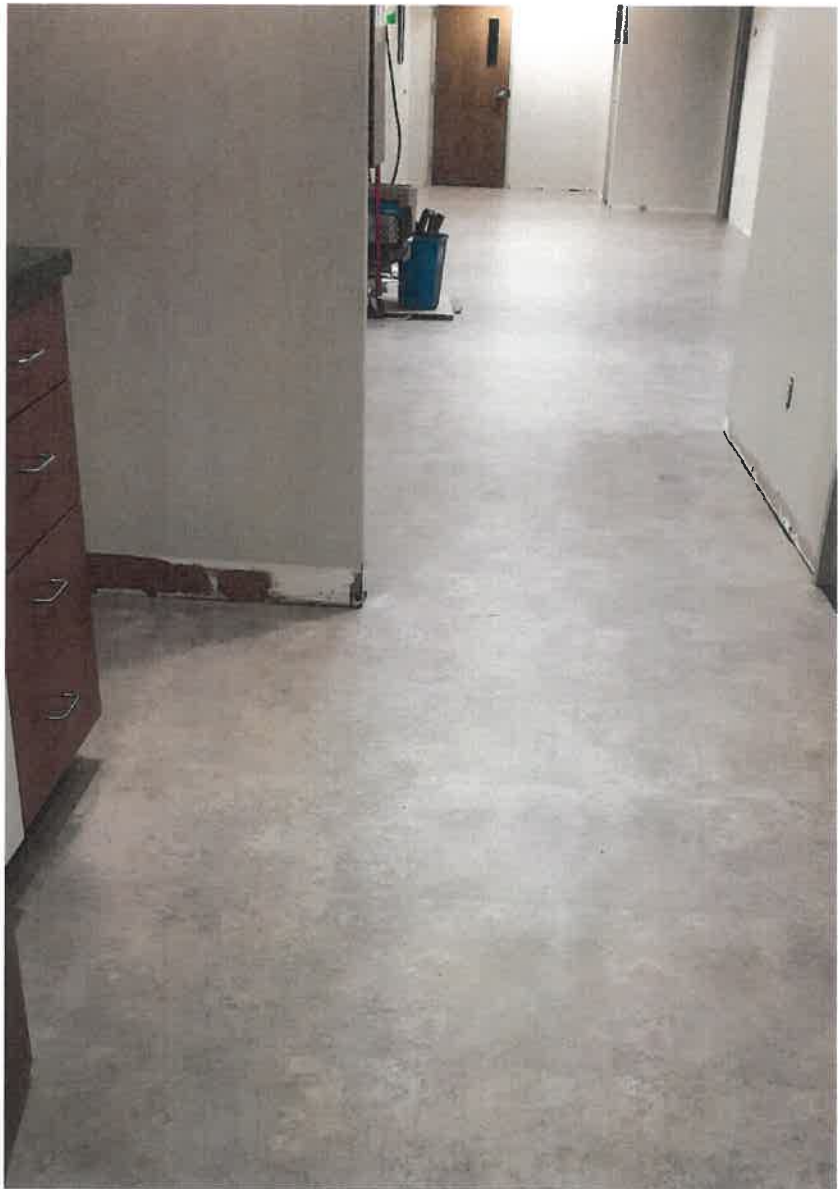
- Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) Funding - The team is hopeful in pursuing the majority of the funding from the TASA Program (\$700k max per phase).
- ODOT Safety Funds - The team is investigating the possibility of obtaining safety funds, as many of the proposed features along this corridor contribute to a reduction in pedestrian crashes.
- ODOT Paving Funds - A portion of the funding for pavement improvements may be able to be funded by ODOT's paving funds.
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Funding - PARTA is currently investigating current FTA Grant Programs, such as Access and Mobility Partnership Grants.
- Local Funding - Participants including PARTA, Kent and Franklin Township anticipate contributing to the local portion; and also anticipate that a portion of this could be supported by JEDD funds and ODOT.
- Property Owner Donations - Previously, some local property owners have indicated a willingness to potentially donate a small portion of land if these types of improvements are made. For example, Whispering Pines may be willing to donate right-of-way, allowing the tree lawn to be widened in this area.



ADMINISTRATION BUILDING UPDATE 2022









# Register Now!



**FORE! TRANSIT**

friends of riders

## 17th Annual Golf Outing

### May 20, 2022



#### Event Details

- 8am Sign-in Time
- 9am Shotgun Start
- 2pm Lunch & Prizes

**Paradise Lake Country Club**  
1900 Randolph Rd  
Mogadore, OH 44260

Portage Public Transportation Assistance Foundation, Inc. (PPTAFI) is now FORE! Transit. Our foundation has a new name and look but the same mission.

Help support Portage County residents who can least afford public transportation. Proceeds are used to provide reduced fare to the clients of local social service agencies.



[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



## Sponsorship Opportunities

There are sponsorship packages for every budget! Your support is greatly appreciated!



**FORE! TRANSIT**  
friends of riders

**Click to  
view!**

PARTA | 2000 Summit Road, Kent, OH 44240

[Unsubscribe mfletch@partaonline.org](mailto:mfletch@partaonline.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [About Constant Contact](#)

Sent by [dbaba@partaonline.org](mailto:dbaba@partaonline.org)

## TROLLEYS 2022











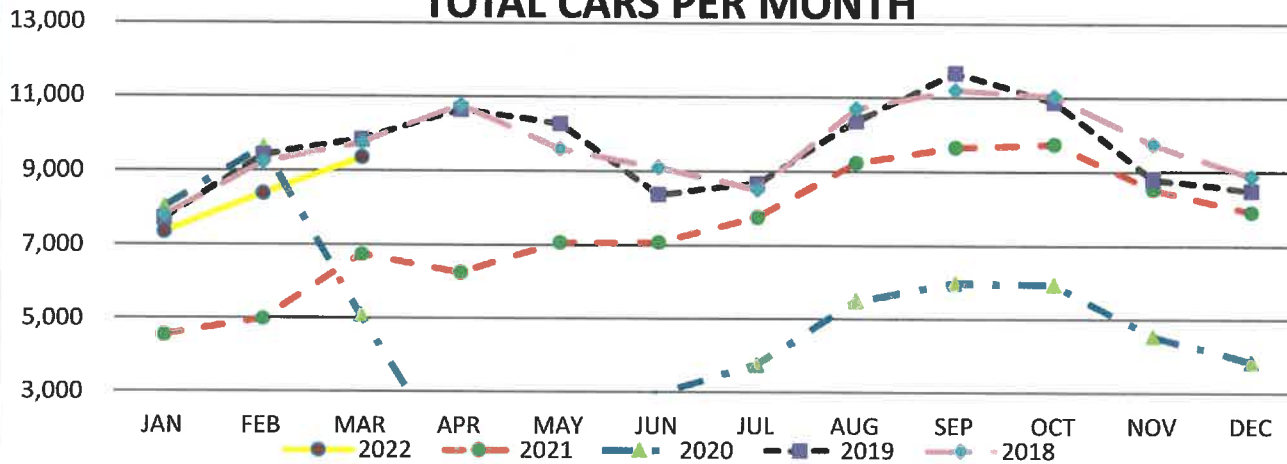


# KENT CENTRAL GATEWAY PARKING SUMMARY - March 2022

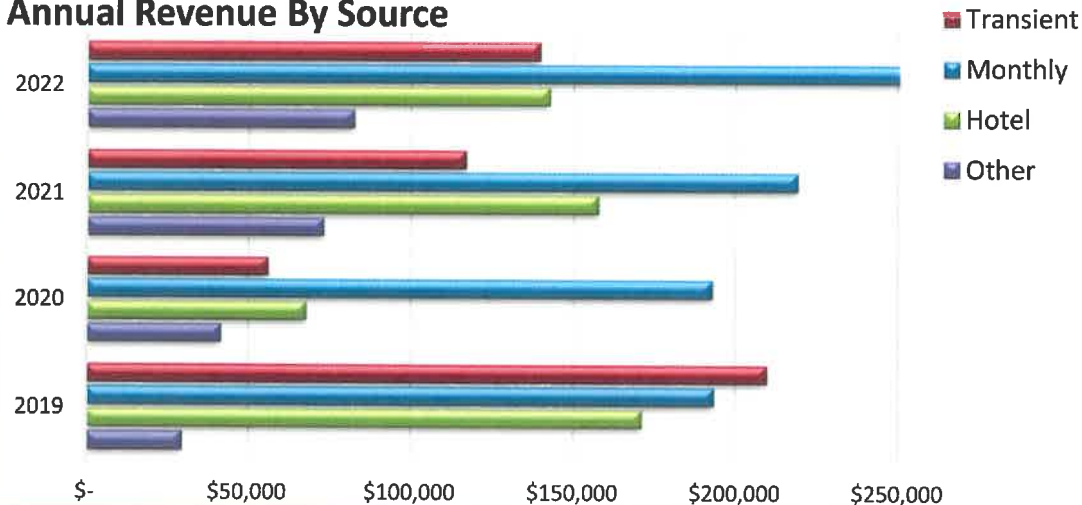
## 6 Month Lookback

	Monthly	Transient	Total	Cars/Day	Last	Last Year
Oct-21	4,922	4,827	9,749	314	1%	64%
Nov-21	4,273	4,265	8,538	285	-12%	88%
Dec-21	3,560	4,359	7,919	255	-7%	107%
Jan-22	3,853	3,496	7,349	237	-7%	62%
Feb-22	4,331	4,060	8,391	300	14%	68%
Mar-22	4,665	4,698	9,363	302	12%	39%

## TOTAL CARS PER MONTH



## Annual Revenue By Source

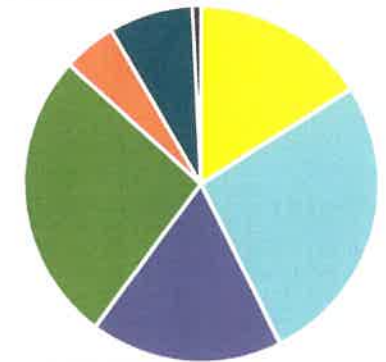


## Annual Comparison

	2022	2021	2020
JAN	7,349	4,534	8,024
FEB	8,391	4,982	9,642
MAR	9,363	6,738	5,082
APR		6,249	785
MAY		7,067	1,535
JUN		7,084	2,961
JUL		7,762	3,730
AUG		9,248	5,502
SEP		9,665	5,996
OCT		9,749	5,938
NOV		8,538	4,538
DEC		7,919	3,828
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,103</b>	<b>89,535</b>	<b>57,561</b>
	54.4%	55.5%	

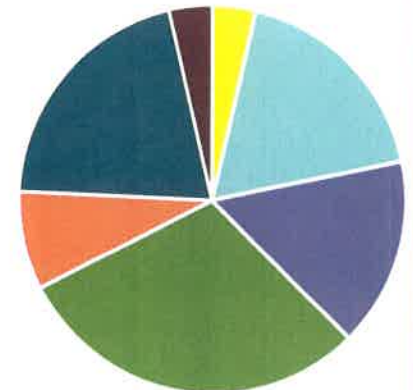
## # Rate Types Collected

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



## \$ Rate Types Collected

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



# The Portager

**Today is March 18, 2022.**

## **Letter: Why I celebrate Transit Driver Appreciation Day**

As president of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) Board of Trustees, I have sincere respect and admiration for the work our bus operators perform. They make an important contribution to our community and touch the lives of many in meaningful ways. **Friday, March 18, is Transit Driver Appreciation Day.** The other board members and I encourage those who use public transportation, as well as those who do not, to reflect on the vital service transit workers provide.

Here in Portage County, public transportation is an essential part of life for a significant number of our neighbors, friends and relatives. They use it to access jobs, health care, grocery stores and other vital resources. Whether it's on a fixed route or PARTA's door-to-door service, our bus operators strive to provide safe, dependable, on-time transportation for our riders, sometimes under difficult circumstances.

Inclement weather, road closures and heavy traffic, among other issues, can impact service. Yet, every day, Monday through Saturday, our early shift drivers are up before dawn preparing their vehicles for service; and our afternoon team members are on the road well into the evening. Many PARTA drivers know the names of regular riders and strive to greet all passengers with a warm hello as they board and a friendly wave as they exit.

I'm honored to serve as president of the PARTA Board of Trustees and proud of the work our bus operators and other transit employees perform. If you know a PARTA employee or ride public transit today, I encourage you to offer your driver a special "Thank You."

*Dave Gynn, President of PARTA Board of Trustees*