

**Agenda**

1. Call to Order Oral  
Roll Call
2. Meeting Minutes Attachment 2a  
Minutes from April 28, 2022, 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 5/24  
b. Finance Did Not Meet  
c. Operations Did Not Meet  
d. Personnel Did Not Meet
6. Old Business
7. New Business
  - Presentation on State Route 59 Projects by Jim Bowling, Kent City Engineer
8. Resolution - Roll Call Approval Required  
  
**#2022-05-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES CONSENTING TO THE APPOINTMENT OF A TRUSTEE AND ALTERNATE TRUSTEES TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE NEORIDE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (COG).**
9. Executive Session, as needed
10. Adjournment

**Next Regular Meeting:**

**PLEASE NOTE: THE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 23 HAS BEEN CANCELLED. IN ITS PLACE, THE BOARD IS INVITED TO ATTEND THE RUBBERDUCKS GAME. PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR RESERVATION AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE, IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO.**

**July 28, 2022 @ 7 p.m.**

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

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
MINUTES**

**April 28, 2022**

**Board Members Present:**

Karen Beck  
Marge Bjerregaard  
Richard Brockett  
Jeff Childers  
Debbie Davison

Dave Gynn, President  
Virginia Harris  
Mike Lewis, Vice President  
R. T. Mansfield

Jack Murphy  
Frank Vitale  
Karen Wise, TPO  
Marvin Woods

**Staff Present:**

Claudia Amrhein  
Denise Baba  
Marcia Fletcher

Kelly Jurisch  
Justin Markey, Roetzel & Andress

Rebecca Schrader  
Brian Trautman

**Board Members Not Present:**

Morgan Tipton (2<sup>nd</sup> excused absence)

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Dave Gynn welcomed everyone to the April 28, 2022, *PARTA* Board of Trustees meeting. He called the meeting to order at 6:58 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 March 24, 2022, meeting. **Ms. Marge Bjerregaard** made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, which was seconded by **Ms. Karen Beck**. He asked if there was any discussion. 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 said there were no guest communications.

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

Moving on, Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Claudia Amrhein to comment on the General Manager's report.

Ms. Amrhein thanked everyone for coming out and said there were a few things on the agenda tonight. First, there will be a "big picture" overview presentation of 2022. Secondly, a tour will be offered of the mezzanine in the Bus Storage Facility that was constructed in 2020, complete with a workout room and storage area, and the CDL Training Pad that has been in use and discussed a lot. A bus will be out front after the meeting that Mr. Brian Trautman will drive to view these two locations. Thirdly, the financial audit is underway and almost complete. The auditors are now off sight, and the final report won't be available

until July. Lastly, the golf outing is coming up in less than a month and she looks forward to seeing anyone who can make it out, even nongolfers. It's a scramble and it's a fun day. Nongolfers can volunteer, and sponsorship opportunities are available to help offset the cost of transportation for those who slip through the cracks by working with social service agencies in Portage County.

Mr. Mike Lewis said he and the *PARTA* staff would appreciate anyone's help on May 20 and if they were available to help, they should let someone know before the end of the night or call in the next couple days.

Mr. Gynn noted that the Board packet also included information on the "Connecting Communities" grant. He said he hoped everyone had a chance to look at it. A lot of work went into it and it's showing the fast forward for the proposed mile. He asked if there were any questions on Ms. Amrhein's report or for the staff.

### **ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

Hearing none, Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Karen Wise to give the report of the Administration Committee.

Ms. Wise said the Administration Committee met tonight, which included herself and Mr. Jack Murphy, as well as some other Board members. The business included a discussion about nominations for Board Officers. She reminded everyone that there are three positions: President, Vice President, and Temporary Presiding Officer. She said serving in those roles currently are Mr. Dave Gynn as President, Mr. Mike Lewis as Vice President, and Ms. Karen Wise as Temporary Presiding Officer. These are one-year appointments, which began in July 2021. Nominations will remain open now through the end of June. If anyone has an interest in nominating themselves or anyone else for the three positions, they should let Ms. Marcia Fletcher know. The committee reviewed the three officer positions and their duties. So far, Mr. Gynn has expressed interest and a willingness to serve again for another one-year term as President. She asked if there were any comments or questions.

Mr. Frank Vitale asked why the positions were only for one year because the person just starts to learn the position and then their term expires and if it would be better to serve more than one year.

Ms. Wise said one year is what the By-Laws state and to change that, the Board would need to change the By-Laws.

Mr. Gynn said since everybody is appointed by different governmental agencies, it would be possible that somebody served a year as President and then was not reappointed by the appointing agency the next year. That would put *PARTA* in a bind. He doesn't think somebody should run forever but he has served for two years and would be willing to run again unless someone else is interested.

Mr. Lewis asked if it was *PARTA*'s standard or the individual appointing agency that decides the length of the appointment.

Mr. Gynn said they are all three-year appointments and are pretty much evenly divided. For example, the City of Kent and Portage County Commissioners each have three people on the Board, with one being appointed each year. Everybody serves a three-year term and approximately one third of the Board must be reappointed or has a new person appointed. They all are under the same *PARTA* guidelines. Ms. Fletcher notifies the appointing authorities and reminds them of the need to reappoint or appoint a new person by June because the new term begins July 1.

Ms. Amrhein said each appointing authority has a resolution of their own that is adopted. The dates of appointment and terms used to be all different. About 10 or 15 years ago, the process was updated by having each appointing authority reflect the same term effective July 1 through the following June 30. When there were 15 Board members, five terms expired each year. Now, with 14 Board members, five terms expire each year for two years and four terms expire in one year.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any other questions. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Wise and her committee and then moved on to the report of the Finance Committee.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Gynn said a copy of the minutes was distributed and he thanked Ms. Fletcher for getting them out so quickly. He then asked Mr. Lewis to give the report.

Mr. Lewis thanked Mr. Gynn and said the minutes, as always, were very well done. Reading through them provides a really good idea of start to finish of the Finance Committee meeting on Tuesday. It's nice to look at a financial report and see that everything is pretty much where it should be. All Revenues were in line and where they should be. Sales Tax Revenues was ahead of budget by \$74,613 for the month. Almost all the Expenses were below budget. The only one above budget was Students Salaries and Wages. The month looked good with Revenues up and Expenses down. The budget for the month was \$199,786. The actual current period was \$439,110, which meant there was a surplus of \$239,324 for the month. It was a very good month. Moving on to the Capital Project Costs, there was a draw down for the Bus Storage Facility for the final engineering and design follow through invoice. There was a partial payment made under Facility Improvements for a study about electric vehicles. There was a discussion about electric vehicles and possibly making some adjustments in the future. He asked if there were any questions on PARTA.

Hearing none, Mr. Lewis moved on to the Kent Central Gateway (KCG). He said everything looked good. March had 9,363 cars in the deck compared to March 2021 with 6,736 cars and 2020 with 5,082 cars. The numbers are almost catching up to 2019, which was the last normal year before COVID hit. Another good thing was the monthly passes for 2022 were above 2021, 2020, and 2019. Mr. Trautman indicated they were all sold out at this time. Revenues and Expenses were in line. Everything was pretty much below budget. The monthly budget was \$881, and the current period was \$14,263, which was \$13,382 to the good compared to budget. More importantly, the year-to-date budget was \$8,800 to the negative and year-to-date actual was \$23,969 to the good, which means there was a \$32,769 variance against budget to the good. He asked if there were any questions on KCG.

### **OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Hearing none, Mr. Gynn thanked Mr. Lewis and his committee and 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. Amrhein to give her presentation on the "big picture" as promised.

Ms. Amrhein presented her PowerPoint, which is attached.

After Ms. Amrhein's presentation, Mr. Gynn expressed the Board's appreciation to the staff and employees of PARTA for making transportation accessible to so many people in Portage County.

Ms. Wise asked what the biggest limiting factor is in 2022 moving forward to meeting this year's goals.

Ms. Amrhein said it would have to be the state of the industry with bus manufacturing, finding chassis, and lack of parts. Mr. Trautman spent the last two days in Indiana and could talk more about that.

Mr. Trautman said he was in Elkhart, Indiana, until this afternoon. The new vehicle contract is with Turtle Top manufacturing out of Elkhart, where almost all the bus manufacturers are located. Ford has not delivered a cutaway chassis to any of the manufacturers since February. He was shown pictures of acres and acres of farmers' fields in Michigan that have vehicles parked in them by the thousands waiting for chips. Ford decided they will not have any model year 2020 production vehicles in the cutaway chassis market. They just wrote it off. They started building 2021s and 2022s and now they are building model year 2023 chassis and vehicles that they are parking. Turtle Top has orders for 600 vehicles right now. They build about 470 a year and have zero chassis. If they got all the chassis that they needed today, they would finish their order in a year and a half from now. They are usually building somewhere around two and a half months out from start to finish. He told Ms. Amrhein that he is going to employ some of his old school longevity maintenance on some of the current equipment because PARTA already has seven vehicles on order, which do not have chassis. PARTA is in the front of the line because the Board gave approval to order those vehicles. With luck, those seven buses might arrive in 2024. With that, PARTA will have to start looking at what it has now and maybe get back into some old school refurbishing and rebuilding the current stock and pushing out the new vehicles another two or three years. It can be done, it's just a little more expensive. The depreciation and maintenance curve will cross a little sooner than expected. Ways to push those two out so they cross a little later must be determined. It's going to be a minimum four- or five-year problem. Ford usually produces around 25,000 chassis for this industry a year. They've told the manufacturers that they are only going to produce 10,000. That includes ambulance, motorhome, and transit bus builders and everybody that builds on a cutaway chassis, which is a van front end with a box on the back. In all the years he's been doing this, he's never seen anything like it.

Mr. Murphy asked if Turtle Top would be sustainable and stay in business until 2024 if they are not getting chassis.

Mr. Trautman said there's a big player out there called Forest River that came in and bought out a lot of the smaller manufacturers putting them out of business. Elkhart Coach bought out EIDorado, which used to build Aerotechs. Aerotechs are out. There are five manufacturers left but Turtle Top builds the best, in his opinion. They also build on a Freightliner chassis, which they were able to acquire. They have been in business since the mid-1920s and are only about six to nine weeks away from shutting the plant down temporarily until they see what's going to happen. He doesn't know if it will put them out of business or not but it's a real possibility. He brought up the idea with them that they should get involved in refurbishing by bringing in vehicles, going through them, regening them, putting new seats and flooring in, and replacing sidewalls. It would cost less than a new bus and would put somebody back in a bus. This could push them out another three to four years down the road. They thought it was a good idea, but he doesn't know where they will take it. The other thing that's coming right now, whether it's good or bad he hasn't figured out yet, is the big chunk of money that's available for electric vehicles. There are several electric vehicle manufacturer platforms that are popping up all over the place so there will be a bunch of electric chassis vehicles built that will take the place of a lot of the vehicles that would have been built on these Ford chassis. There's going to be a little bit of an offset there. The infrastructure and logistics aren't there for the electric vehicle push that's coming. Ohio Edison decides whether a substation is needed or not based on how much amperage is being pulled. If a lot of chargers are planned to be put in one place and there isn't room for a substation, the chargers can't be put in. There are logistics that aren't being thought through, so he doesn't know how it's going to play out in the long run. He is going to approach it from the conservative side, which is to maintain the current equipment longer. It's been done before. Something different will have to be done with the undercarriage on the buses when they come in because what is being put on the roads now instead of salt is eating cars up faster.

Mr. Vitale asked if Ford was the only manufacturer with this severe problem of thousands of vehicles sitting in the cornfields waiting to be finished.

Mr. Trautman said no, they all have the same problem. *PARTA*'s problem is twofold in that it must comply with the Buy America Act and can't build on a Mercedes or Nissan. *PARTA* can only build on a Ford or a Chevrolet chassis because those are the only two that meet the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR). Amazon is buying about every van that's coming off the line right now and they're buying them by the thousands, which is also a battle.

Mr. Lewis said he read an article that stated there are fields of cars sitting and waiting on chips. The cars are being pushed around, lifted with forklifts, and moved around by trading chips. Now they are sitting completely ready minus the chip. There are 2021s and some 2022s that will not be able to be sold for 12 to 18 months, which is not good for the car. They will have to be sold at a discount, which was not planned by the dealers, and given a warranty because they will be sold as new cars even though they aren't new cars. This will mean skyrocketing warranty costs. Car dealers will be hurting within the next 18 to 24 months because they are going to get hit on both sides, which may result in closings unless they are the real big guys.

Mr. Trautman said the problem with the chip is that the auto industry is using old technology. It's not the chips that are in cell phones. It's a chip that was almost specific to the automotive industry and they don't want to go to the new chips because they haven't been proven in a vehicle service application.

Mr. Murphy asked what the availability of spare parts would be for maintaining equipment longer in the existing fleet.

Mr. Trautman said *PARTA* carries about \$300,000 worth of parts inventory in house and uses a just-in-time (JIT) supply chain. Most of the problems are competing with the heavy-duty truck industry. What used to be rebuildable as a diesel engine is now operating at a much higher temperature with CNG, which means it is much more brittle towards the end of life and deteriorating way ahead of what it normally would. Buses are sitting for weeks at a time waiting on a part, which usually would arrive via next day air. It's been tough and it's getting tougher. He is hopeful that the bottom of the dip is near, but there is no end in sight.

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

### **Resolutions**

There were no resolutions.

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

Hearing none, he said there was no need for an Executive Session.

Moving on, Mr. Gynn said there were a couple announcements before adjourning. After the meeting, there will be a bus out front that Mr. Trautman will be driving to the CDL Training Pad and then back to the Bus Storage Facility. The second announcement is about the June Board meeting. He has discussed with Ms. Amrhein and Ms. Kelly Jurisch about attending the Akron RubberDucks v. Harrisburg Senators game on June 23 instead of having a Board meeting since there will not be any resolutions. Everyone could meet at *PARTA*, get on a bus – maybe a trolley, and go to the Akron RubberDucks game. *PARTA* will treat everyone with a ticket to the game and an all-you-can-eat buffet-style picnic. He asked if that was something the Board would be interested in doing instead of the June meeting. He said a minimum number is required and he asked Ms. Jurisch if she had anything to add.

Ms. Jurisch said everyone is welcome to bring their families or significant others. A minimum of 24 is required. A head count is needed for riding the bus and attending the game. There is a Fowl Territory area off to the side where the picnic will be served. It would be a good time for everyone and hopefully everyone can attend. If anyone plans on attending, they should let Ms. Fletcher know. The game starts at 6:35 p.m. Plan to be at PARTA by 5:30 p.m. if a bus ride is needed. If not, plan to meet at the stadium.

Ms. Amrhein said an email will be sent out with all the information.

Mr. Gynn asked for a show of hands of those who were interested in attending the game. He said in the past, except the last couple years because of COVID, PARTA hosted an outing to the game. This time it will be a little different with seating in the Fowl Territory area instead of stadium seats. This will provide a casual atmosphere to talk and get to know each other as opposed to only seeing each other at meetings. It would be a nice opportunity to end the year.

Ms. Amrhein said PARTA cannot do a charter but is allowed to transport its employees and Board members according to the FTA.

Mr. Gynn asked if anybody else had any other comments.

Mr. Richard Brockett asked if employment has picked up any.

Ms. Jurisch said the last open interviews were held on April 6. Four people came, which was better than none but still very disappointing. The following week PARTA attended a job fair in Summit County, which wasn't very productive either. Two schedulers and a couple full time drivers have been hired and several more offers have been made so there is some movement. Hopefully it will continue.

Mr. Lewis said there are a lot of industries right now that just can't find people who either want to work or can work.

Mr. Murphy said he got a phone call at work yesterday from a recruiter. They called through the secretary to his direct work line asking if he wanted to switch jobs.

Ms. Jurisch said PARTA received a call from another transit company recruiting mechanics while they were on the clock. It's very cutthroat out there right now.

Mr. Vitale said there is a lot of retirement going on in the trucking industry. He asked what the phenomenon was between 24 months ago and now that has created such a different atmosphere as far as not having enough people.

Ms. Jurisch said nobody has the answer. In 2021, there were more 1099s opened than ever before. More people are starting their own businesses and figuring out how to survive. A lot of retirees may be working a part time job. There were a lot of early buyouts and a lot of mothers have stayed home with their children. It's a domino effect.

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

## ADJOURNMENT

Hearing nothing further, Mr. Gynn entertained a motion to adjourn. **Mr. Mike Lewis** made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by **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 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Marcia Fletcher  
Executive Assistant

# 2022 Big Picture Update



April 28, 2022

1

## Strategic Priorities, 2014 (From Transit Development Plan {TDP})



- To improve communication about transit service and enhance ease of use for passengers
- To develop and operate the new 24/7/365 parking deck business
- To bring 1<sup>st</sup> CNG fueling station to Portage County

2

## Projects & Initiatives, 2015-21

1. Simplify Transit
2. Develop parking and retail space revenue streams
3. Bring CNG fueling station Portage County
4. Upgrade big bus fleet
5. Improve resiliency and sustainability of DART and ADA services
6. Complete 2009 Master Plan Projects

3



## 1. Simplify Transit

4



## Simplify Transit

- Make fixed routes easy to navigate
  - Study/Redesign – update to TDP
  - Renegotiated KSU contract
  - New technology
  - Travel training, new schedules, bus stop signs

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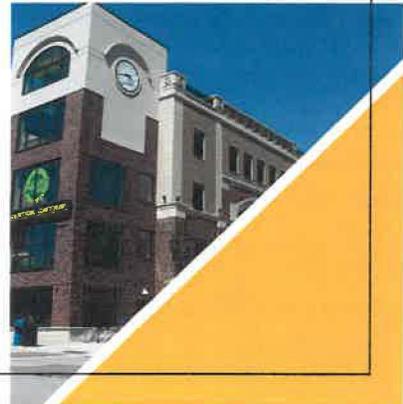


## 2. Develop Parking & KCG Revenue Streams

6

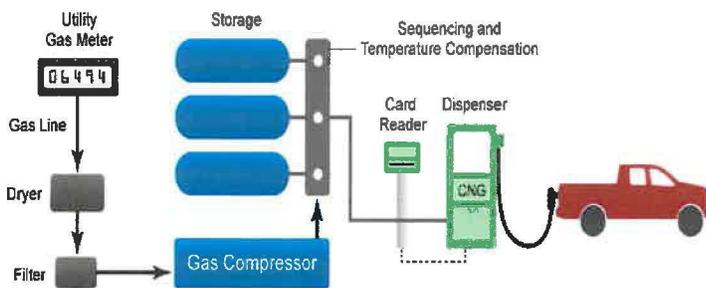
## Develop Parking & KCG Revenue Streams

- Residential passes
- Monthly passes
- Hotel overnight usage
- Retail space development
- Transient parking



7

### Fast-Fill Station



3. Bring CNG Fueling Facility to Portage County

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## Bring CNG Fueling Facility to Portage Co.



- CNG Planning & Construction
  - Design maintenance bay renovations; issue/award RFP; construct
  - Design fueling facility; issue/award RFP; construct
  - Train employees & operate & maintain facility

9



## 4. Upgrade Big Bus Fleet

10

# Upgrade Big Bus Fleet



- Issue & award RFPs:
  - TRANSIT BUSES (CNG or Clean Diesel)
    - **TESCO/Eldorado 2016-21**
  - TROLLEY BUSES (CNG, CD, Hybrid-electric)
    - **TESCO/Hometown Trolley Manufacturing 2021-26**
  - TRANSIT BUSES (CNG, CD, Hybrid-electric)
    - **GILLIG Transit Bus Manufacturing 2021-26**

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5. Improve resiliency and sustainability of DART and ADA services

12

## Improve Resiliency & Sustainability of DART and ADA Services



- DART Service & Contracts
  - Evaluate
  - Redesign
  - Implement service & fare changes
- ADA Paratransit Service
  - Determine eligibility based on functional assessment
  - Establish "Easy Streets" contract and evaluation process

13



6. Complete  
2009 Master  
Plan Projects

14



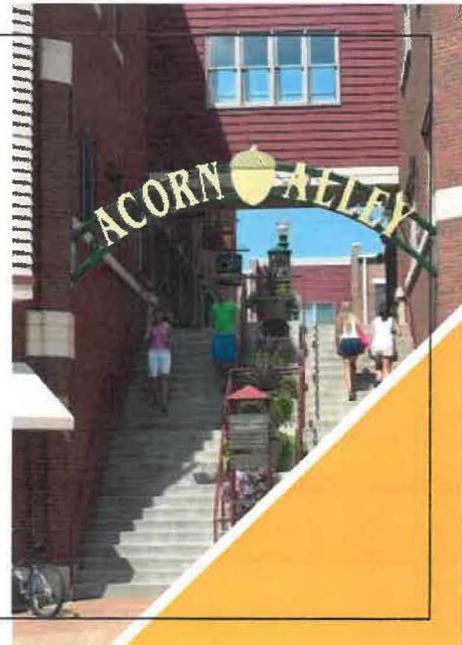
## Complete 2009 Master Plan Projects

- Obtained Additional Grant Awards:
- Design, Award, & Construct
  - New bus storage garage
  - New CDL driver training Pad
  - Renovate bus wash to CNG compliance
  - Mezzanine build-out in new garage

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## Other Major Events

- Leasing Space to Kent City Health Department
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor KCG
  - Former Cutler Realty retail space
- Collapse of RLB Phoenix Master-Tenant Lease Agreement



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## Other Major Events



- Evaluated Major Service Providers
  - **Group Health Insurance**
    - No Change
  - **Payroll Services**
    - Selected new vendor
  - **IT Managed Support Services**
    - Selected new vendor

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## Other Major Events



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## Ongoing Events that Occur in Cycles

- FTA Triennial Review
- State Financial Audit
- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Goals and Program
- Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan
- Public Transportation Agency Safety (PTASP) Plan
- Title VI Plan
- State & Federal Grant Applications

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## What's Next?



- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)
  - New investment in public transit funding
  - Formula and Competitive
- Updating and/or Creating Plans
  - TDP
  - Zero Emission Transition Plan
  - Capital Master Plan
  - Strategic Plan
  - Technology Master Plan
    - Evaluate legacy Trapeze software
    - Issue RFI, RFP, Select, Award

20

## What's Next?

- Complete AMATS Connecting Communities Feasibility Study
- Improving accessibility for non-vehicular travelers
- SR 59 from Horning Road to SR 261



21

## What's Next?

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

22



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## What's Next?

- May Board Presentation, Jim Bowling, Kent City Engineer
  - Kent East Main Street Reconstruction, KCG to Horning Road
    - 2025-28
    - RAISE Grant Application through new BIL
  - Coordination of East Main St. and S.R. 59 projects

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Questions?

Thank You!

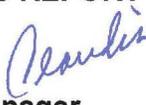
**Claudia Amrhein**  
**General Manager**

[Amrhein.c16@PARTAonline.org](mailto:Amrhein.c16@PARTAonline.org)

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

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**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

**TO:** PARTA Board of Trustees 

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

**DATE:** May 2022

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**Committee Meetings and Resolutions.** The May meeting agenda includes a resolution to update the names of alternate trustees eligible to vote at NEORide board and committee meetings. The administration committee is unable to convene this month, so the resolution will be placed on the finance committee agenda.

**The finance committee** will meet on **Tuesday, May 24, at 11:30 a.m.** to review April financial reports and Resolution #2022-05-01. Lunch will be provided.

**Presentation.** In May, Kent City Engineer Jim Bowling will present an overview of the planned East Main Street reconstruction project and the final report from the Connecting Communities study of S.R. 59 from Horning Road to S.R. 261. The final report may be found here [https://www.partaonline.org/files/ugd/6c14ce\\_ab24daabe95c42bcb5bd02c4afae3747.pdf](https://www.partaonline.org/files/ugd/6c14ce_ab24daabe95c42bcb5bd02c4afae3747.pdf) and also is included in this packet. We are accepting public comments on the report until June 15.

The presentation also will cover information about the safety study that Franklin Township, the city of Kent, and PARTA will jointly fund to compile safety data and information required to be submitted along with applications for grant funding opportunities.

On May 2, Jim and I participated in a panel discussion during the APTA Mobility Conference in Columbus. An article about the panel discussion is included in this packet.

**#2022-05-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES CONSENTING TO THE APPOINTMENT OF A TRUSTEE AND ALTERNATE TRUSTEES TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE NEORIDE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (COG).**

Resolution #2022-05-01 updates the names of alternate trustees eligible to vote on PARTA's behalf on matters that come before NEORide board and committee meetings. Having alternate trustees helps to ensure that PARTA is present at every meeting and able to vote. The resolution adds Kelly Jurisch as an alternate trustee to replace Clayton Popik, who accepted another position in late 2021.

**Streetsboro Employer Survey.** A recent *Record Courier* article described Streetsboro's intent to allocate \$25,000 to PARTA to help support a route from Ravenna to Streetsboro and Aurora. Prior to being contacted by the reporter, I had no knowledge of the city's intent to allocate funding to PARTA. After meeting with economic development directors for Streetsboro and Aurora during 2021, we worked with them in early 2022 to prepare an employer survey to collect data on how to coordinate transit services and get people to jobs. The results of the survey had not yet been shared with us.

We now have the results in hand and are following up to obtain more data the survey did not include, such as the starting and ending shift times of each participating employer. To develop a service plan or pilot and to calculate costs, we need to know the scope of service requested and how to best

ensure the employers' requirements can be met while also maintaining service that is open and accessible to the public riders.

**Zero Emission Transit Challenges in the News.** A recent *Columbus Dispatch* article published in the *Record Courier* outlined the hurdles faced by Ohio transit authorities working to transition to zero emission operations. The article provides a glance into the challenges some larger RTAs describe in their ongoing efforts to achieve net zero carbon emission goals.

PARTA's zero emission transition plan is nearly complete and will be submitted to FTA along with a funding application to support five (5) CNG-powered transit buses to replace buses in 2025 that have exhausted their useful life. We are preparing the grant application with help from Clean Energy, the company that constructed our CNG fueling facility and have acquired a "letter of intent" to supply renewable natural gas (RNG) to PARTA, a zero-emission option that we will discuss in more detail in the coming months.

CNG vehicles are considered "low" emission under the definitions of FTA's Low-No Program, part of the Buses and Bus Facilities funding program. For the Low-No Program, proposed vehicles must make greater reductions in energy consumption and harmful emissions, including direct carbon emissions, than comparable standard buses or other low or no emission buses [49 USC 5339(c)(5)(A)]. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires that at least 25% of Low-No funding be awarded to low emission vehicles.

**Service Reports. Ridership.** (*Coronavirus closures began March 2020*). Total county fixed route and DART ridership increased by 16.52% through April, as compared to April 2021, with total county service performing 72,895 trips as compared to 62,562 trips performed through April 2021.

County fixed route service increased by 20.02% as compared to last year, with 59,730 trips completed through April as compared to 49,767 trips completed through April 2021.

DART service increased by 2.89% through April as compared to last year, with 13,165 trips completed as compared to 12,795 trips completed through April 2021.

Overall ridership, including campus service, increased by 142%, with campus up by 515.97%. Total system ridership totaled 207,161 as compared to 85,602 through April 2021.

On-Time Compliance. ADA Complementary Paratransit Service. ADA on-time compliance was 94.97% in April as compared to 97.76% in March 2022. Of the 755 trips, 38 were performed late, with the latest running 26 minutes behind.

General Public (non-ADA) DART. On-time performance for general public, non-ADA trips was 96% in April, as compared to 97% in March 2022.

Vehicle Preventative Maintenance (PM). On-time compliance with established PM inspection schedules was 98% in April as compared to 100% in March 2022.

**Parking Deck.** Parking deck usage decreased in April, with a total of 8,923 cars as compared to 9,363 in March. This represents a 5% decrease as compared to March and a 43% increase as compared to April 2021.

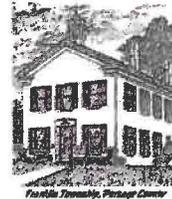
Thank you for your attention to these matters. If you have any questions prior to the Board meeting, please feel free to contact me by calling (330) 676-6315, or by e-mail at [Amrhein.c16@partaonline.org](mailto:Amrhein.c16@partaonline.org).



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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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.



200 ft 

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

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.

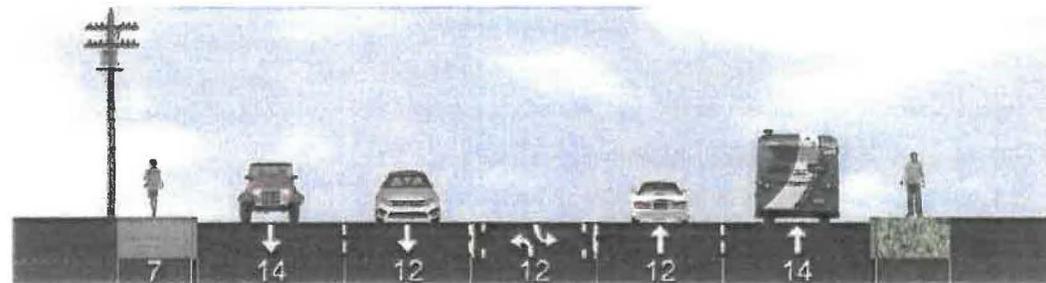
These deficiencies are evident in the 2010 Sidewalk/Crosswalk Gap Analysis, 2016-2018 Top 50 High Crash Sections, and existing data on pedestrian-related crashes. The corridor needs wide, safe, continuous sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. The corridor also needs 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.

## 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.

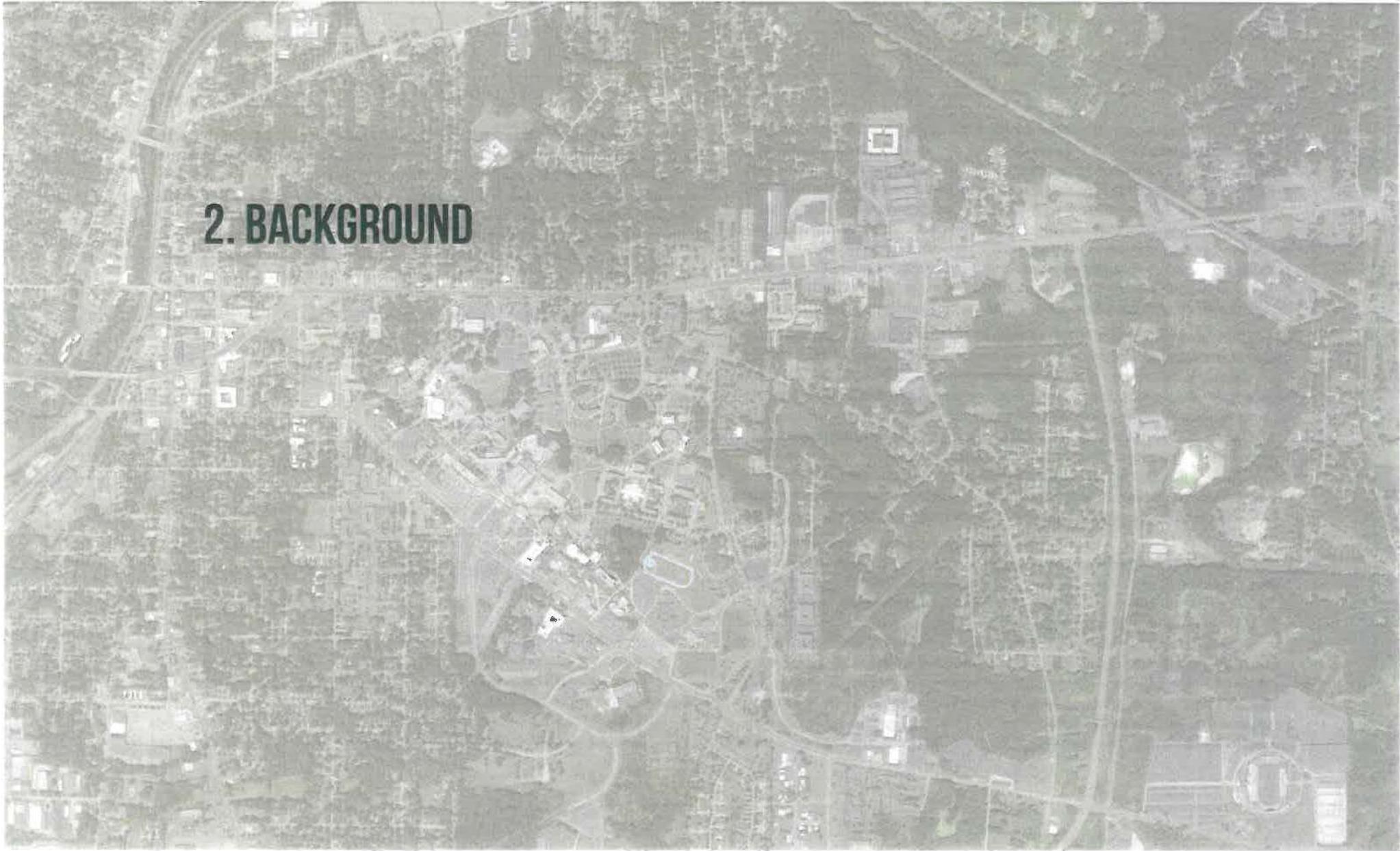


**FIGURE 2** Existing corridor right-of-way and lane widths. In some areas, pedestrians are forced to walk on grass or dirt with no sidewalks



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

## 2. BACKGROUND



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 Road 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 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 project 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 Road 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.

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.



**FIGURE 4** No sidewalk for pedestrians



**FIGURE 5** Curb cut with no crosswalk

## **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 mid-block 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 connect with the proposed side path on the adjacent East Main Street project, 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 marked 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.

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.

### 3. EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS



### **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. Bike infrastructure would improve 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.

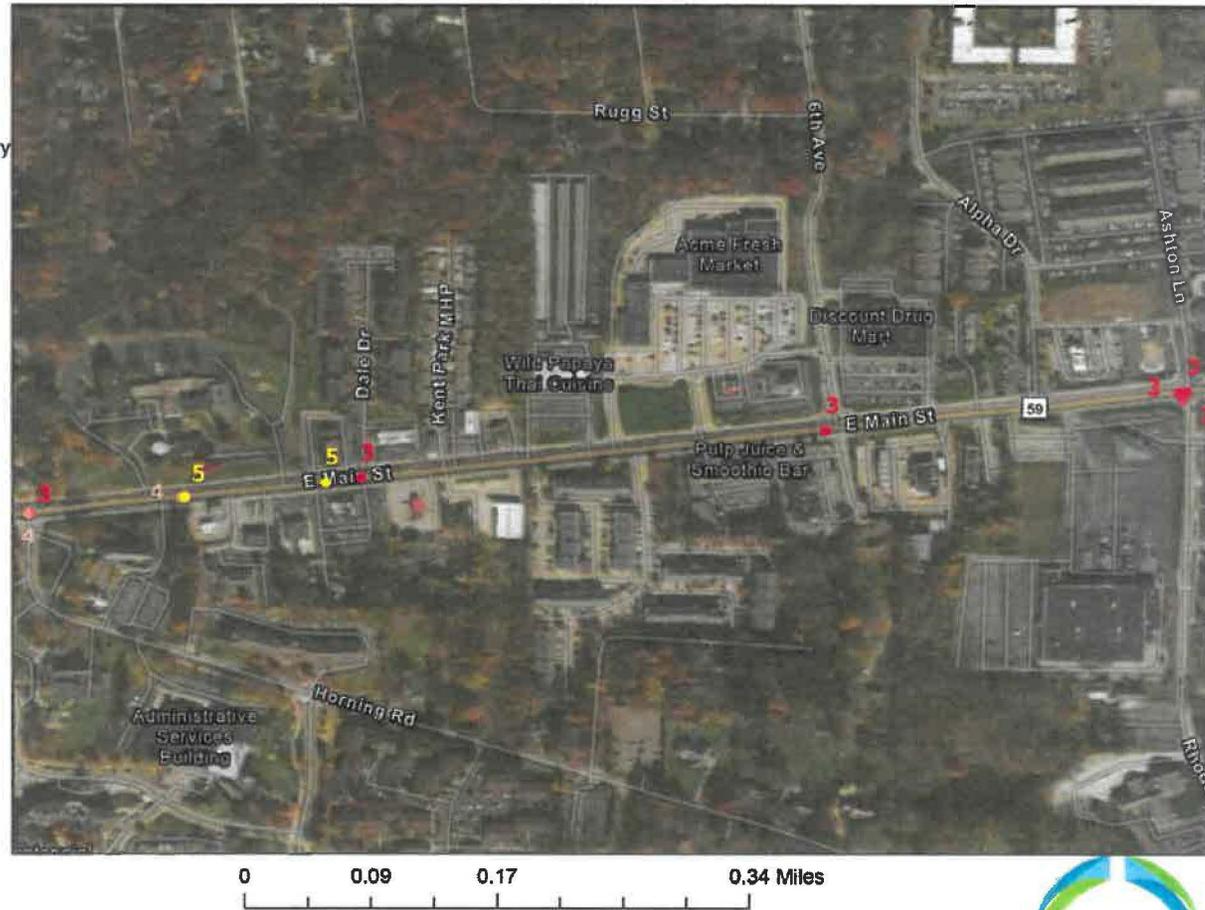
### **Safety and Crash Analysis**

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 in Figure 5.

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes**

**Crash Severity**

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



**FIGURE 5** Map of Pedestrian and Bike Crashes (Horning Rd to Ashton Lane)

Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study



ODOT District 4 provided crash data for the SR 59 corridor from 2018 to 2020. The data was sourced from the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT's) Transportation Information Mapping System (TIMS). A total of 114 crashes occurred within the study area.

Figure 6 compares the crash data to statewide averages for similar four-lane arterials in Ohio using ODOT's Crash Analysis Module (CAM) Tool. The figure shows that the SR 59 corridor exceeds statewide averages for pedestrian, sideswipe-passing, left turn, angle, rear-end, and injury crashes.

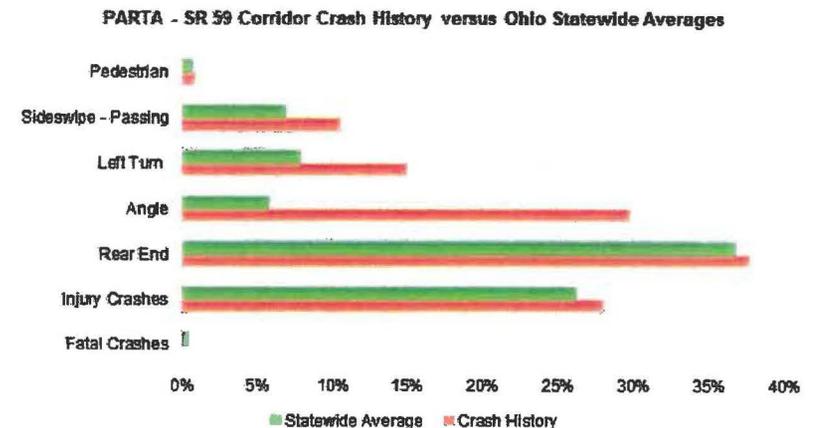
The crash statistics are summarized in Table 1.

No fatalities occurred on SR 59 between 2018 and 2020. One crash resulted in a serious injury in 2019 when a westbound vehicle turning left into the BP gas station collided with an eastbound vehicle. Thirty-one crashes resulted in minor injuries. A majority of the crashes, approximately 72 percent, were property damage only crashes.

Rear-end and angle crashes were the most common crash types accounting for 68 percent of the total crashes, followed by left turn and sideswiping-passing crashes (25 percent combined). Approximately 76 percent occurred between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. during weekdays and 72 percent occurred on dry pavement.

One pedestrian was struck in 2020 by a southbound vehicle turning right out of the United Methodist Church of Kent (across from the BP gas station driveway) resulting in a possible injury to the pedestrian. The crash occurred during daylight hours on dry pavement. One bicyclist was rear ended in 2020 by an eastbound vehicle near Rockne's but the cyclist was not injured. The crash occurred at night in the rain.

Given the frequency and severity of crashes a more in-depth safety evaluation will be conducted in the next phase of this project. The in-depth safety analysis will use more recent crash data and will either follow the ODOT guidance for a formal safety study or the ODOT guidance for a systemic safety application depending on whether the injury rate exceeds 30 percent with updated data.



**FIGURE 6** PARTA – SR 59 Study Area Crash History

**Table 1 - PARTA - SR 9 Crash Summary**

Crash Severity	Total	Percentage
Fatal Crashes	0	0%
Serious Injury Crashes	1	1%
Minor Injury Crashes	19	17%
Injury Possible Crashes	12	11%
PDO Crashes	82	72%

Crash Type	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage
Rear-End	0	10	33	38%
Angle	0	10	24	30%
Left Turn	1	6	10	15%
Sideswipe-Passing	0	2	10	11%
Fixed Object	0	2	0	2%
Animal	0	0	2	2%
Backing	0	0	1	1%
Right Turn	0	0	1	1%
Bicycles	0	0	1	1%
Pedestrian	0	1	0	1%

Contributing Factor	Total	Percentage
Other Improper Action	1	1%
Following too Close/ACDA	43	38%
Failure to Yield	34	30%
None	4	4%
Improper Lane Change	8	7%
Other	6	5%
Ran Red Light	9	8%
Improper Turn	3	3%
Improper Backing	1	1%
Left of Center	1	1%
Unsafe Speed	0	0%
Drove off Road	1	1%
Improper Passing	2	2%
Ran Stop Sign	1	1%

Time of Day	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage
12 a.m. to 6 a.m.	0	0	3	3%
6 a.m. to 9 a.m.	0	1	4	4%
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.	0	11	22	29%
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.	1	11	37	43%
7 p.m. to 12 a.m.	0	8	16	21%
Crashes by Day	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage
Sunday	0	1	6	6%
Monday	0	2	12	12%
Tuesday	1	8	9	16%
Wednesday	0	4	10	12%
Thursday	0	3	15	16%
Friday	0	9	14	20%
Saturday	0	4	16	18%
Month	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	
January	0	3	10	
February	0	3	9	
March	0	4	5	
April	0	2	4	
May	0	2	2	
June	0	1	4	
July	0	1	6	
August	0	5	3	
September	1	2	5	
October	0	3	11	
November	0	3	10	
December	0	2	13	
Crashes by Year	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	
2018	0	12	26	
2019	1	10	30	
2020	0	9	26	
Road Condition	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage
Dry	1	24	57	72%
Wet	0	7	15	19%
Ice/Snow	0	0	10	9%
Unknown	0	0	0	0%

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 multi-lane 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

### 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.



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

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 painted 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 but 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 using the driveway, which would put them at risk.

Holly Park, Dale Drive, and the Four Seasons residential complexes need access to mid-block crossings on 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 plan 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.

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, Arcadis will work with PARTA to finalize locations of bus stops along 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.



**FIGURE 13** Proposed mid-block crossing with pedestrian island

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



## **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, multi-lane 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.

### **Access Management**

Access management is a preferred countermeasure to potentially mitigate the most common crash types in the study area: rear-end, angle, left-turn, and sideswipe-passing.

The in-depth safety analysis mentioned in Section 3 will evaluate whether rear end crashes are caused by drivers on SR 59 stopping quickly to avoid an angle, sideswipe, or left turn crash with vehicles entering SR 59 from an unsignalized side street or driveway. The analysis will also evaluate whether the angle, left-turn, and sideswipe-passing crashes are caused by drivers on SR 59 colliding with vehicles exiting the unsignalized side streets or driveways or colliding with weaving vehicles changing lanes to turn at unsignalized side streets or driveways.

Access management techniques include combining driveways, converting driveways to right-in/right-out operation, and providing a physical barrier to restrict left turns into and out of the unsignalized cross streets and commercial driveways. Managing access along SR 59 may contribute to a reduction in collisions by decreasing the number of vehicles turning left onto or off of SR 59 and by decreasing the frequency of weaving maneuvers as vehicles change lanes to turn at unsignalized side streets or driveways. It may also benefit active transportation users by allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to pause in the center median when crossing SR 59. Most of this segment of SR 59 is in unincorporated Franklin Township and is therefore maintained by ODOT. When reviewing access requests to the state highway

system, ODOT utilizes their own State Highway Access Management Manual. The principles of this manual can also be applied to the portion of SR 59 within the City of Kent. SR 59 is classified as a Category 2 access facility requiring a higher level of protection due to existing congestion, traffic volumes, and crashes. While the property along the corridor is mostly developed, a few parcels are available for development and redevelopment of parcels is also occurring.

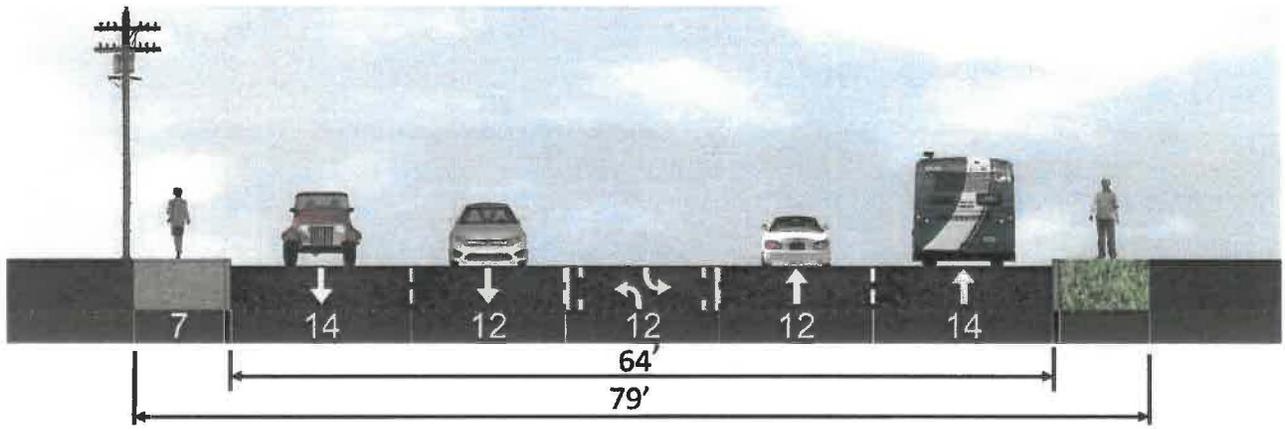
Cross access easements can be encouraged to provide multiple businesses access to lower volume side streets, signalized side streets, or common access drives. ODOT has recently applied access management successfully for the new Raising Cane's and Arby's developments, which were both given access to side streets to avoid new driveways on SR 59 (POR-59-3.43) and the new ModWash development which was given access to the existing Gabe's drive through a cross access easement (POR-59-3.37).



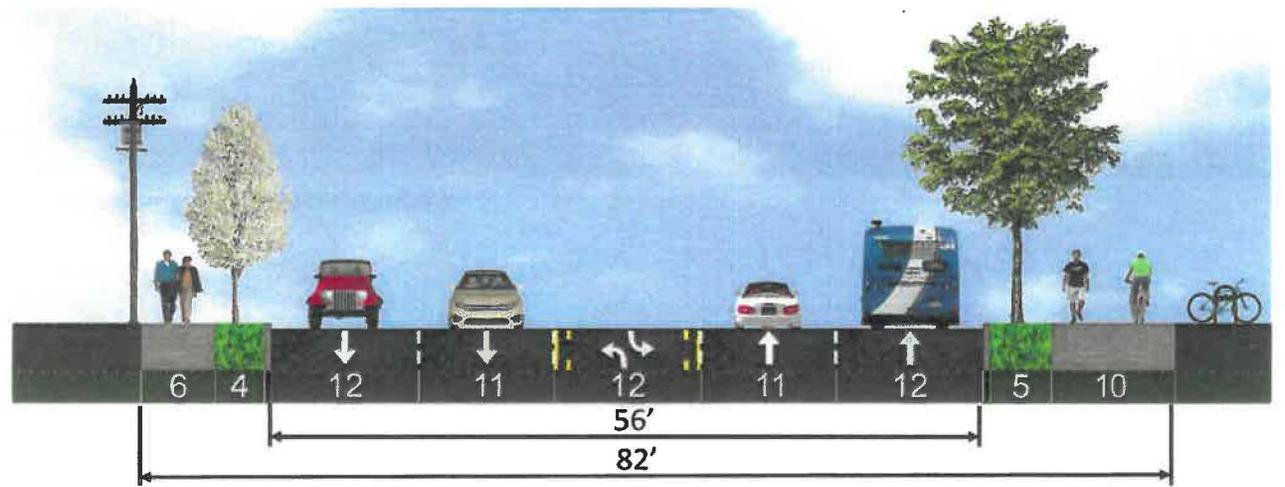
**FIGURE 14** POR-59-3.37 Access Management Improvements



**FIGURE 15** POR-59-3.43 Access Management Improvements



**FIGURE 16** Existing corridor right-of-way and lane widths.



**FIGURE 17** Proposed corridor right-of-way and lane widths, with continuous sidewalks and multi-use path.

## 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 required for implementation.

### Alternative One (Overall Corridor)



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



### Alternative Two (Overall Corridor)



### Alternative Two (Overall Corridor) - Continued



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

**1. SR 59 & Loblolly Court**

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

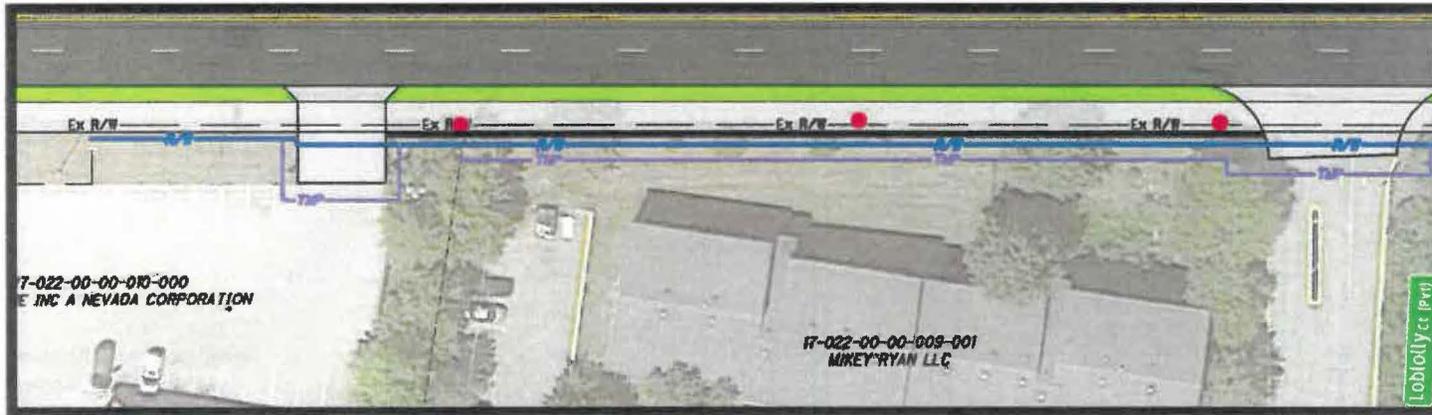
Alternative One will require a retaining wall (indicated by a heavy black line on the drawing on the following page).

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



**FIGURE 14** Holly Park Apartments

**Alternative One**



**Alternative Two**



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

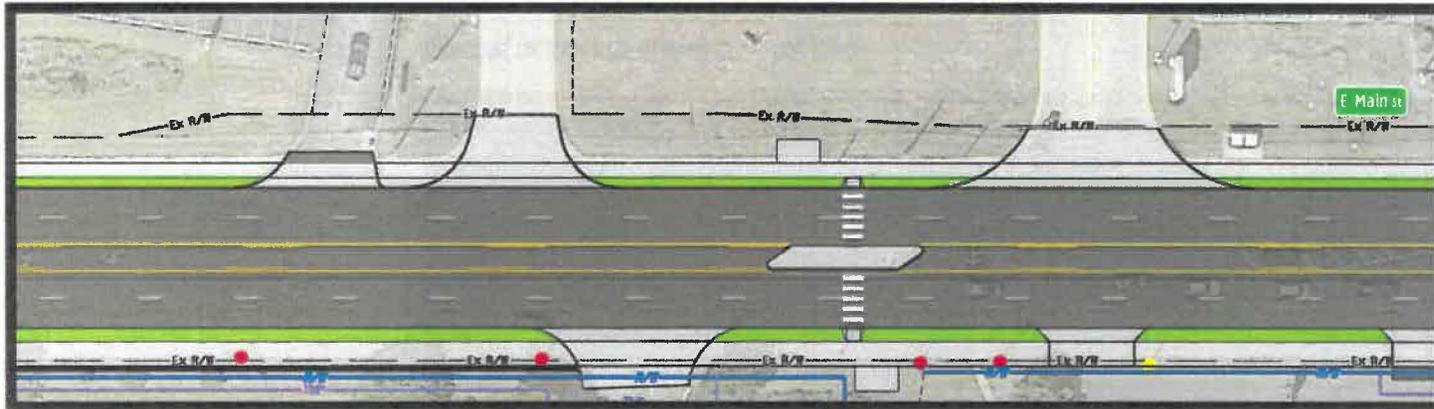
Alternative One requires the relocation of existing utility poles to allow for a sidewalk and a landscape buffer on the north side of SR 59.

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.

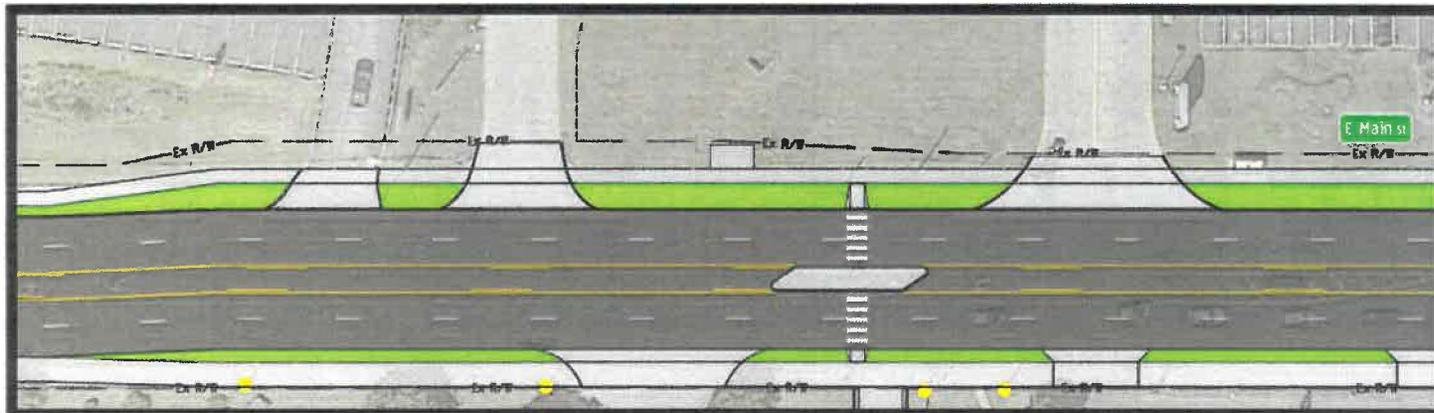


**FIGURE 15** Acme Plaza

**Alternative One**



**Alternative Two**



**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 16** Dollar General / Rhodes Road

**Alternative One**



**Alternative Two**



**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 17** Whispering Pines Mobile Home Park

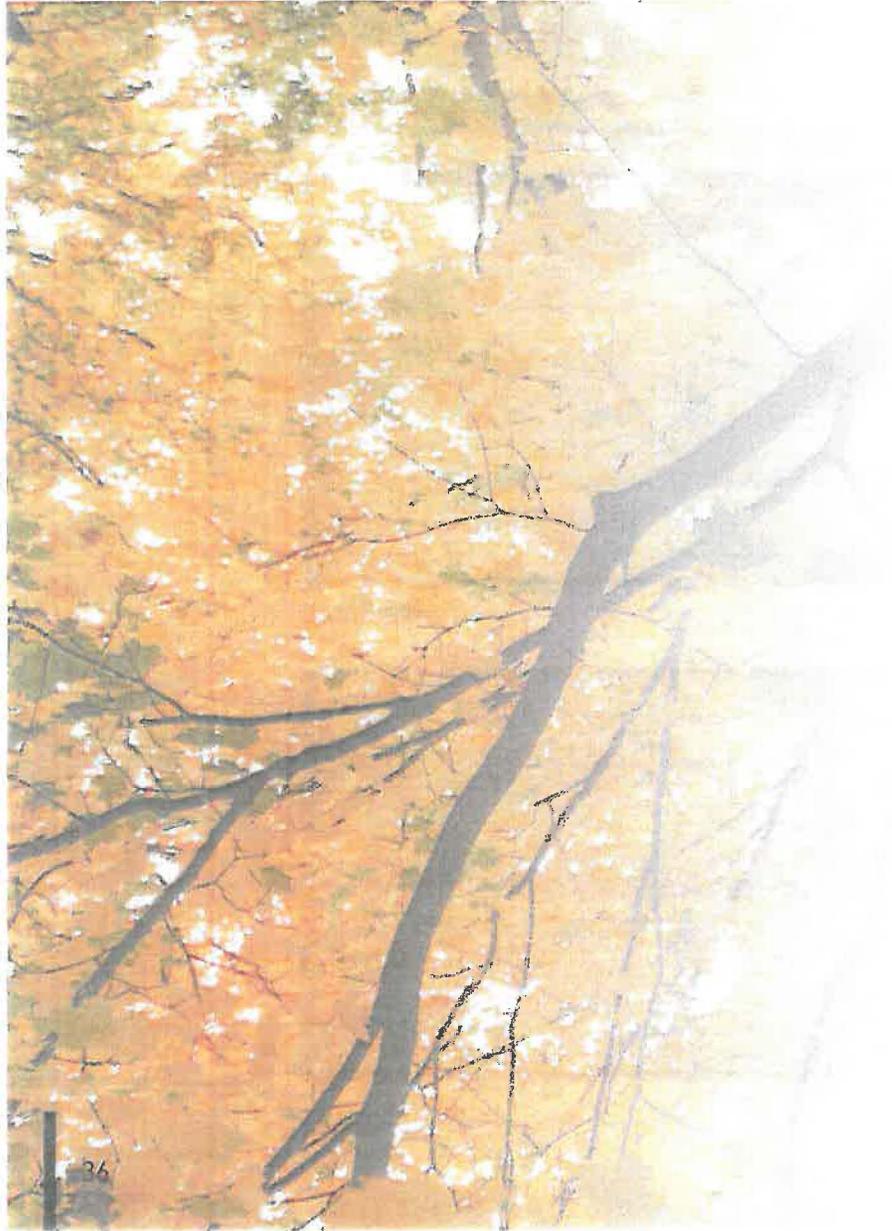
### Alternative One



### 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.



## 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 are described below with survey results and comment forms will be included in the appendices.

## 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.

## 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.

# APPENDICES

1. Crash Data
2. CAM Tool
3. Community Survey

## APPENDIX 1 CRASH DATA

### PARTA - SR 9 Crash Summary

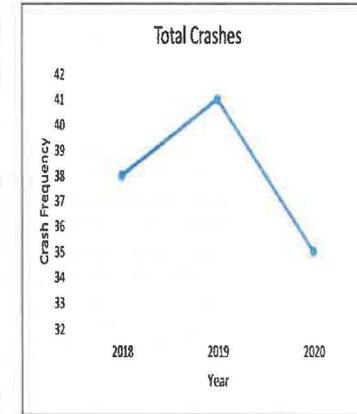
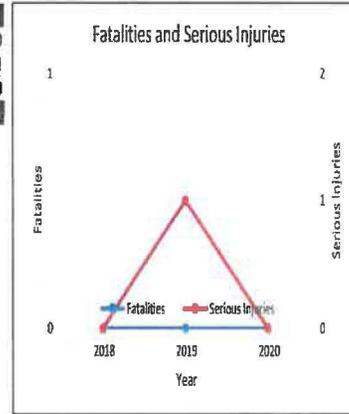
Crash Severity	Total	Percentage			Time of Day	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDD	Percentage	
Fatal Crashes	0	0%			12 a.m. to 6 a.m.	0	0	3	3%	
Serious Injury Crashes	1	1%			6 a.m. to 9 a.m.	0	1	4	4%	
Minor Injury Crashes	19	17%			9 a.m. to 3 p.m.	0	11	22	29%	
Injury Possible Crashes	12	11%			3 p.m. to 7 p.m.	1	11	37	43%	
PDO Crashes	82	72%			7 p.m. to 12 a.m.	0	8	16	21%	
Crash Type	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage	Crashes by Day	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage	
Rear-End	0	10	33	38%	Sunday	0	1	6	6%	
Angle	0	10	24	30%	Monday	0	2	12	12%	
Left Turn	1	6	10	15%	Tuesday	1	8	9	16%	
Sideswipe-Passing	0	2	10	11%	Wednesday	0	4	10	12%	
Fixed Object	0	2	0	2%	Thursday	0	3	15	16%	
Animal	0	0	2	2%	Friday	0	9	14	20%	
Backing	0	0	1	1%	Saturday	0	4	16	18%	
Right Turn	0	0	1	1%						
Bicycles	0	0	1	1%						
Pedestrian	0	1	0	1%						
Contributing Factor	Total	Percentage			Month	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDD		
Other Improper Action	1	1%			January	0	3	10		
Following too Close/ACDA	43	38%			February	0	3	9		
Failure to Yield	34	30%			March	0	4	5		
None	4	4%			April	0	2	4		
Improper Lane Change	8	7%			May	0	2	2		
Other	6	5%			June	0	1	4		
Ran Red Light	9	8%			July	0	1	6		
Improper Turn	3	3%			August	0	5	3		
Improper Backing	1	1%			September	1	2	5		
Left of Center	1	1%			October	0	3	11		
Unsafe Speed	0	0%			November	0	3	10		
Drove off Road	1	1%			December	0	2	13		
Improper Passing	2	2%								
Ran Stop Sign	1	1%								
Road Condition	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage	Crashes by Year	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDD		
Dry	1	24	57	72%	2018	0	12	26		
Wet	0	7	15	19%	2019	1	10	30		
Ice/Snow	0	0	10	9%	2020	0	9	26		
Unknown	0	0	0	0%						

## APPENDIX 2 CAM TOOL

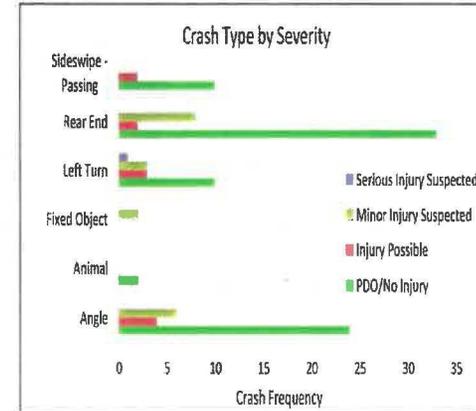
### POR SR-59 Section SLM 2.88-3.80 CAMTool 2018-2020

#### Crash Summary Sheet

Year	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
2018	38	0	0
2019	41	0	1
2020	35	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1



Crash Type	Injury Level					Grand Total
	PDO	No Injury	Injury Possible	Minor Injury Suspected	Serious Injury Suspected	
Rear End	33	2	8	0	0	43
Angle	24	4	6	0	0	34
Left Turn	10	3	3	1	0	17
Sideswipe - Passing	10	2	0	0	0	12
Fixed Object	0	0	2	0	0	2
Animal	2	0	0	0	0	2
Backing	1	0	0	0	0	1
Right Turn	1	0	0	0	0	1
Pedalcycles	1	0	0	0	0	1
Pedestrian	0	1	0	0	0	1
Grand Total	82	12	18	1	0	113



**POR SR-59 Section SLM 2.88-3.80 CAMTool 2018-2020**  
**Crash Summary Sheet**

Weather Condition	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Dry	82	0	1
Ice	2	0	0
Snow	8	0	0
Wet	22	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Weather Condition	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Clear	52	0	1
Cloudy	36	0	0
Rain	13	0	0
Snow	13	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

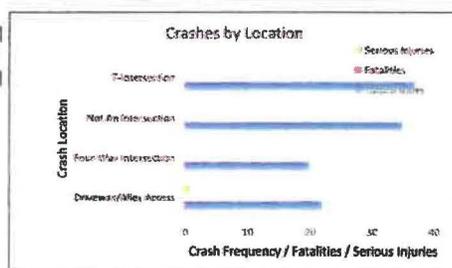
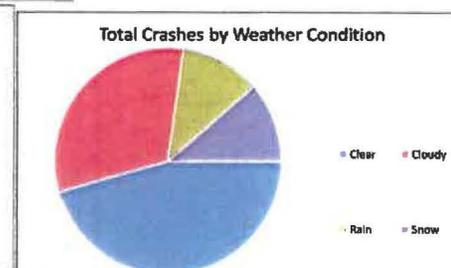
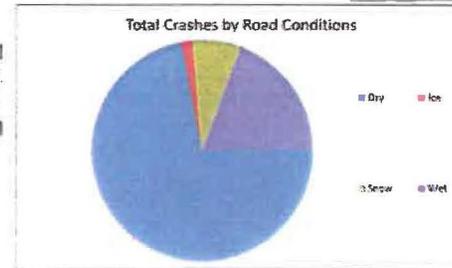
Weather Condition	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Driveway/Alley Access	22	0	1
Four-Way Intersection	20	0	0
Not An Intersection	35	0	0
T-Intersection	37	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Weather Condition	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Straight Grade	40	0	0
Straight Level	74	0	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Hour of Day	Total Crashes
0	3
7	2
8	3
9	3
10	2
11	7
12	6
13	8
14	5
15	13
16	8
17	15
18	13
19	6
20	3
21	12
23	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>

Month	Total Crashes
January	11
February	12
March	9
April	6
May	8
June	7
July	7
August	8
September	8
October	14
November	12
December	17
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>

Day of Week	Total Crashes
Sunday	7
Monday	14
Tuesday	10
Wednesday	14
Thursday	16
Friday	12
Saturday	20
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>



**POR SR-59 Section SLM 2.88-3.80 CAMTool 2018-2020  
Unit 1 Crash Summary**

Type of Unit	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Sport Utility Vehicle	27	0	0
Semi-Tractor	1	0	0
Pick up	4	0	0
Passenger Car	73	0	1
Passenger Van (minivan)	6	0	0
Motorcycle 2 Wheelad	1	0	0
Bicycle	1	0	0
Cargo Van	1	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Special Function	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
None	113	0	1
Other / Unknown	1	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Pre-Crash Action	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Backing	1	0	0
Changing Lanes	9	0	0
Entering Traffic Lane	12	0	0
Making Left Turn	27	0	1
Making Right Turn	2	0	0
Overtaking/Passing	3	0	0
Straight Ahead	60	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

**POR SR-59 Section SLM 2.88-3.80 CAMTool 2018-2020  
Unit 1 Crash Summary**

Gender	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Female	58	0	1
Male	54	0	0
Unknown	2	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Driver Age	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
<15	5	0	0
15-19	13	0	0
20-24	43	0	0
25-29	13	0	0
30-34	6	0	0
35-39	2	0	0
40-44	4	0	0
45-49	2	0	0
50-54	4	0	0
55-59	3	0	0
60-64	2	0	0
65-69	4	0	0
70-74	5	0	0
75-79	4	0	1
80-84	2	0	0
85-90	2	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

**POR SR-59 Section SLM 2.88-3.80 CAMTool 2018-2020  
Unit 1 Crash Summary**

Traffic Control	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Stop Sign	4	0	0
No Control	86	0	1
Signal	44	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Object Struck	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Light/Luminaries Support	1	0	0
Utility Pole	2	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Contributing Circumstances	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Failure to Yield	34	0	1
Improper Backing	1	0	0
Improper Turn	3	0	0
Left of Center	1	0	0
Operating Defective Equipment	2	0	0
Other Improper Action	1	0	0
Ran Red Light	9	0	0
Ran Stop Sign	1	0	0
Swerving to Avoid	1	0	0
Lying in Roadway	1	0	0
Drove off Road	1	0	0
None	4	0	0
Not Discernible	2	0	0
Following too Close / ACDA	43	0	0
Improper Passing	2	0	0
Improper Lane Change	8	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

**POR SR-59 Section SLM 2.88-3.80 CAMTool 2018-2020  
Unit 1 Crash Summary**

Alcohol Involved	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
No	111	0	1
Yes	3	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Distraction By	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Other / Unknown	5	0	0
Not Distracted	91	0	1
Manually operating an electronic communication device	1	0	0
Other distraction inside the vehicle	7	0	0
Other distraction outside the vehicle	8	0	0
Talking on hand held communication device	1	0	0
Other activity with an electronic device	2	0	0
Passenger	1	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Neighborhood Location	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Estimated Speed	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
< 15	59	0	1
5-19	12	0	0
20-24	10	0	0
25-29	9	0	0
30-34	6	0	0
35-39	15	0	0
40-44	2	0	0
65-70	1	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>



## 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 signalized crosswalks at traffic lights.
- **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.



## 2022 MOBILITY CONFERENCE



From left: Katharine Kelleman, CEO, Port Authority of Allegheny County, PA; Catherine Vanderwaart, director of analytics, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; Shyam Kannan, Mid-Atlantic transit lead, HDR; Jane Chan, transportation planning management analyst, Culver CityBus; Claudia Amrhein, board president, Ohio Public Transportation Association, and general manager, Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority; and James Bowling, superintendent of engineering/deputy director, City of Kent, OH.

# Repurposing Streets For Universal Mobility

**IN A SESSION ON “REPURPOSING Streets for Vibrant Communities and Universal Mobility,”** transit leaders discussed ways they had found to make streets accessible to cars, buses, cyclists, pedestrians, wheelchair users and scooter users. The session was sponsored by HDR.

Shyam Kannan, associate vice president for Mid-Atlantic transit at HDR, pinpointed a cultural attitude underlying a problem. “We treat our streets as if they were the sacrosanct, exclusive domain of personal vehicles,” he said. And 95 percent of a personal vehicle’s time is spent not moving. “If you want to get more people moved on these thoroughfares, you’ve got to use the bus,” he said.

Opponents say building bus lanes is too expensive. But Kannan, working with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), DC, found traffic delays are costing the system \$66 million a year.

Added Catherine Vanderwaart, director of analytics at WMATA, “When we talk about the cost of bus priority, we’re already spending money. Do we want to spend it on making buses better, or do we want to spend it on buses stuck in traffic?”

In Culver City, CA, traffic congestion

is expected to worsen as more tech companies come to the city, said Jane Chan, transportation planning management analyst with the Culver City Transportation Department. The question, said Chan, was “how we can redistrict the public right of way for people that don’t have cars, or are not able to drive, or are not good at driving, to use the lanes.”

To transform the streets, the city deployed what Chan called “tactical urbanism.” In the pilot program, the city broke no concrete but used lower cost, temporary materials that could be adjusted to meet changing needs. The results of the pilot will help in designing the permanent solution.

In Northeast Ohio, Claudia Amrhein, general manager of the Portage Area Transportation Authority (PARTA), is working with James Bowling, superintendent of engineering for the City of Kent, to make the streets more accessible.

In one example, Bowling worked with Kent State University, which donated more than five acres for the city to build sidewalks on its property. The lack of a sidewalk had created accessibility and safety problems. Three years after it was built, it reduced crashes by more than 60 percent.

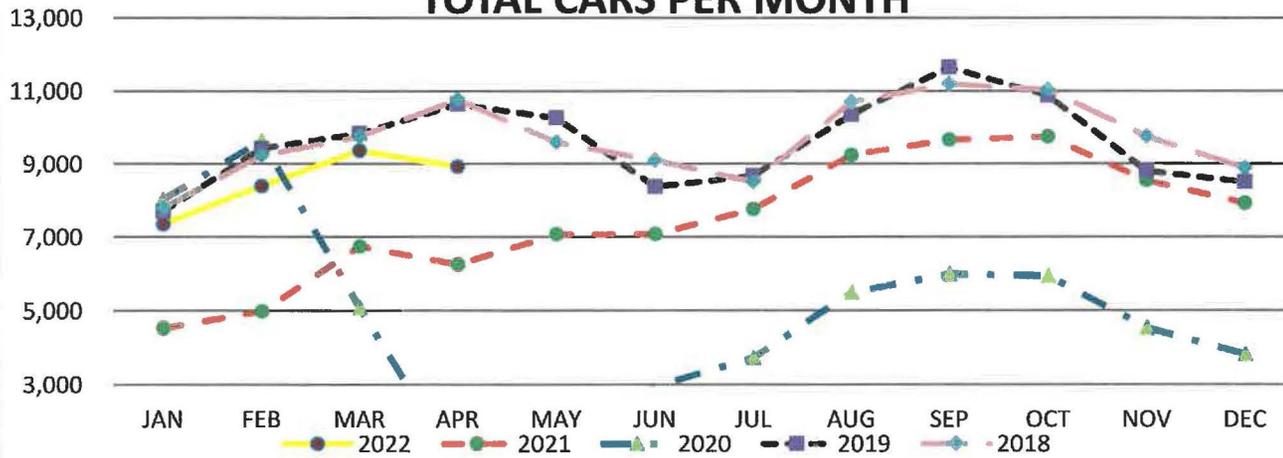


# KENT CENTRAL GATEWAY PARKING SUMMARY - April 2022

6 Month Lookback						
	Monthly	Transient	Total	Cars/Day	Last	Last Year
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%
Apr-22	4,296	4,627	8,923	297	-5%	43%

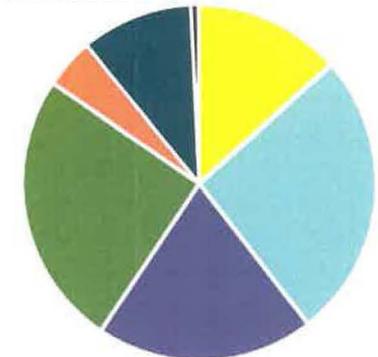
Annual Comparison			
	2022	2021	2020
JAN	7,349	4,534	8,024
FEB	8,391	4,982	9,642
MAR	9,363	6,738	5,082
APR	8,923	6,249	785
MAY		7,067	1,535
JUN		7,084	2,961
JUL		7,762	3,730
AUG		9,248	5,502
SEP		9,665	5,996
OCT		9,749	5,938
NOV		8,538	4,538
DEC		7,919	3,828
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34,026</b>	<b>89,535</b>	<b>57,561</b>
	51.2%	55.5%	

## TOTAL CARS PER MONTH

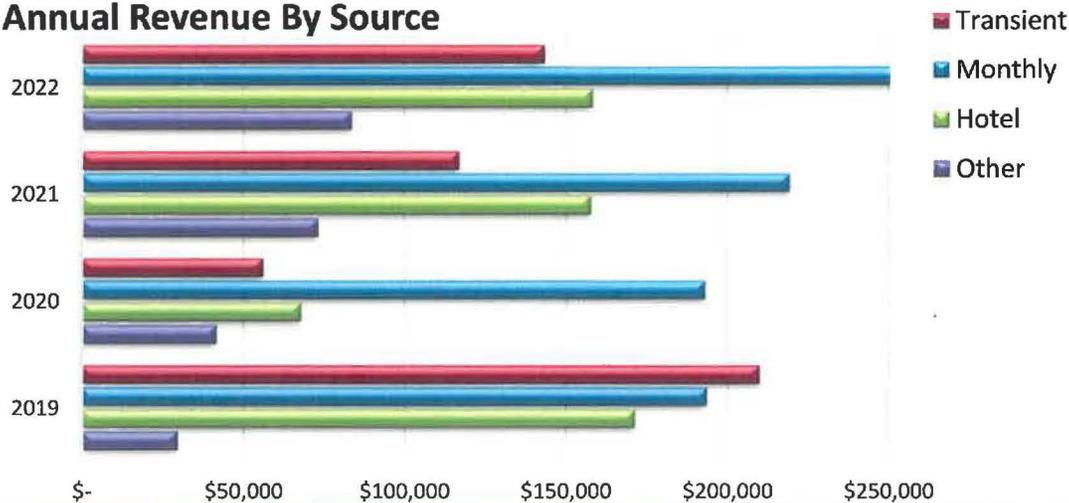


## # Rate Types Collected

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

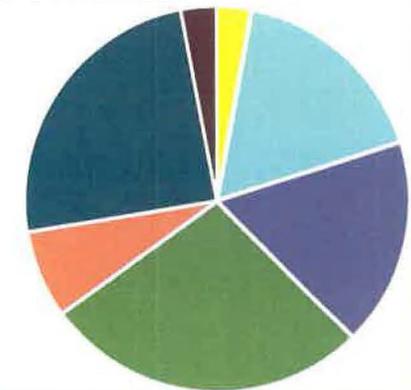


## Annual Revenue By Source



## \$ Rate Types Collected

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



**RESOLUTION #2022-05-01**

**A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES CONSENTING TO THE APPOINTMENT OF A TRUSTEE AND ALTERNATE TRUSTEES TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE NEORIDE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (COG).**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Trustees of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (*PARTA*) authorized the General Manager via Resolution #2014-06-01 to execute the membership agreement and bylaws of a council of governments for the purpose of exploring transportation coordination options within and between member jurisdictions in the state of Ohio; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 19, 2014, the General Manager executed the membership agreement and bylaws of the aforementioned council of governments, now known as the NEORide COG; and

**WHEREAS**, *PARTA*, as a member of the NEORide COG, is entitled to representation on the board of trustees of the NEORide COG and last appointed a trustee and alternate trustees via Resolutions #2016-02-01 and #2018-12-07; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board desires to affirm its appointment of General Manager Claudia Amrhein as trustee of the NEORide COG and Brian Trautman as alternate trustee and appoint Kelly Jurisch as an additional alternate trustee of the NEORide COG to serve and vote in the absence of Ms. Amrhein.

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

1. This Board hereby affirms the appointment of Claudia Amrhein to the board of trustees of the NEORide Council of Governments and the appointment of Brian Trautman and Kelly Jurisch as alternates to the board of trustees of the NEORide Council of Governments to serve and vote in the absence of Ms. Amrhein.

**CERTIFICATION:**

The undersigned duly qualified Board President, acting on behalf of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (*PARTA*), certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Board of Trustees held May 26, 2022.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Attested

# Streetsboro hopes to bring in bus route

## City officials says it will help with labor shortage

**Diane Smith**  
Ravenna Record-Courier | USA TODAY NETWORK

The city of Streetsboro plans to allocate part of its Community Development Block Grant funding to the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority in hopes of getting fixed-route bus service to the city.

Streetsboro Economic Development Director Patrick O'Malia said he believes a bus route would help people

who don't have cars get to jobs that are available at the city's industrial parks.

"We are the second largest municipality in Portage County and we have zero bus service," he said. "A lot of people live in Ravenna but can't get to our jobs here because they don't have cars."

He said PARTA has been telling the city for years how costly it would be to add a bus route, so he is hoping that allocating \$25,000 toward the bus route might help, especially if Aurora is willing to contribute.

The city is getting \$127,500 in CDBG

**See BUS, Page 2A**



A PARTA bus leaves the Kent Central Gateway. Streetsboro is hoping that PARTA will establish a fixed-route service in their city to transport people without cars to jobs in Portage County's second-largest city. LISA SCALFARO/RECORD-COURIER

## Bus

Continued from Page 1A

funding, and has two years to spend the money. The rest of the money would be spent on senior programming and a program that would help property owners demolish their damaged buildings. If the bus route fails to materialize, O'Malia said the funding would be moved into senior programming.

Claudia Amrhein, general manager of PARTA, said Streetsboro

hasn't yet discussed its plan to allocate funds toward a bus stop with them. However, she said PARTA has been working with Streetsboro and Aurora on an employer survey to collect data on how to coordinate transit services there and get people to jobs.

People, she said, already use services such as "Dial-A-Ride" to get to and from locations in Streetsboro, and last month, PARTA provided 519 shared service trips to and from Streetsboro locations using the service.

"We have indicated that in or-

der to develop a service plan or pilot and to calculate costs, we need to know the scope of service requested and how to best ensure the employers' requirements can be met while also maintaining service that is open to the public," Amrhein said. "And like most employers, PARTA is still recovering from employee losses during the pandemic, working to restore service as additional employees can be hired and trained."

Reporter Diane Smith can be reached at 330-298-1139 or [dsmith@recordpub.com](mailto:dsmith@recordpub.com).

# Transit agencies face hurdles in efforts to decarbonize

**Patrick Cooley**

Columbus Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

Journalists, politicians, and business leaders boarded a light blue Stark Area Regional Transit Authority bus on a temperate late April afternoon in Downtown Columbus.

Rather than the vibrations and low grumble of a diesel engine, riders heard a soft whirr as SARTA Executive Director Kirk Conrad started the bus and took the massive vehicle on a quick spin around the Ohio Statehouse.

The hydrogen fuel cell powering the bus made the smooth and largely silent running possible. SARTA has 20 emissions-free hydrogen buses in its fleet. The trip was a showcase for the Canton-area agency's plan to ultimately decarbonize its entire fleet.

The transit authority is hardly alone. Nearly every Ohio transportation agency has plans to reduce carbon emissions, a priority given that the majority of the nation's carbon emissions come from transportation. They face an uphill battle.

Public transportation "is one of the first places we can and should see mass decarbonization efforts," said David Cooke, senior associate director of Ohio State University's Center for Automotive Research.

Creating an environmentally sustainable transportation service, however, isn't easy or cheap. Hydrogen or electric battery buses save money in the long run, Cooke said, but years pass before an agency experiences those savings.

A 2019 report from the Environment America Research and Policy Center found the average price of a diesel bus is \$500,000, compared to roughly \$750,000 for an electric bus. The savings on gas and maintenance cost makes up the difference after five years, the report found.

Hydrogen fuel also comes from natural gas, which gives off carbon dioxide and methane, reducing their

environmental benefits.

Most transit agencies in the Buckeye State plan to use electric buses to reach sustainability, but buses that run on electric batteries come with complications.

COTA put two electric buses in service last year (in a fleet of more than 300) and plans to buy eight more this year. The agency pledged to operate an emissions-free fleet by 2035 and achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045.

The authority uses mostly compressed natural gas buses and aims to phase out diesel buses in 2025, said Andrew Biesterveld, COTA's chief engineer and mechanical officer.

"That's a huge milestone," he said. "Going from diesel to compressed natural gas already achieved a 17% reduction in greenhouse emissions and a 73% reduction in particulate emissions."

Hydrogen power is a less widely used option. SARTA is still the state's only transit agency to take serious steps toward a hydrogen-fueled fleet.

SARTA's hydrogen buses get 7.8 miles per kilogram of hydrogen, compared to 4.8 miles per gallon of diesel. Hydrogen, the price of which has fallen steadily in recent years, is also cheaper than diesel at around \$1.80 per kilogram. And Conrad said the fuel is now easier to find.

"When we started this process, we only received one responsive bid to provide the (hydrogen)," he said. "Now I'm getting sales calls."

The Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority's use of electric vehicles dates to the 1930s, when it adopted trolley buses connected to overhead wires. While most U.S. cities phased out trolley buses decades ago, Dayton took a different path.

"When the transit system tried to get rid of them at least twice, the citizens revolted," Greater Dayton RTA CEO David Ruzinsky said.

While Dayton's transit authority has no plans to buy electric buses, the agency upgraded the trolley buses

to lengthen routes. The vehicles can now detach from overhead wires for short trips.

"Wright State University is about 25 minutes away from downtown Dayton," Ruzinsky said. "Before we used to run diesel buses (to Wright State), even though the trolley went three quarters of the way. Now the trolley bus can take them the whole way."

Cincinnati has 12 electric-diesel hybrid buses and a light rail system, and late last year received a \$12 million grant to, among other things, develop a plan to zero out carbon emissions. Akron's Metro RTA unveiled two electric buses last month, and Cleveland introduced 16 low-emissions buses in January.

Scientists and environmentalists overwhelmingly support electric battery vehicles but are divided on the use of hydrogen as a tool to fight climate change. SARTA uses so-called blue hydrogen, which is procured from natural gas.

A Stanford and Cornell study released last year said hydrogen fuel produces 20% more carbon emissions than fossil fuels because hydrogen extraction requires so much energy.

The study concluded that the money needed for hydrogen extraction is better spent on wind and solar.

The Midwest Hydrogen Alliance, a group of businesses, researchers, and public officials, said the study underestimated the carbon dioxide captured in the hydrogen extraction process and overestimated the odds of methane leaks.

Central Ohio's geography is itself a barrier to public transportation. "We have relatively flat and cheap land," said Elena Irwin, faculty director for Ohio State's Sustainability Institute. "That led to sprawl."

As the population of Greater Columbus grew, the region's leaders expanded roads rather than public transit. Columbus is one of the nation's largest metropolitan areas without a light rail system, and it's harder to build one when the infrastructure is built to accommodate cars, Irwin said.

"We've made cars too convenient," she said.

COTA's electric buses need to charge for five hours a day and have a 140-mile range, spokesman Jeff Pullin said. The agency hopes to build overhead charging infrastructure that lets buses power up as they travel, Pullin added.

The charging needs and limited range give some transit officials pause.

"They have to be charged, and then you're out of commission," said Ruzinsky, with Greater Dayton RTA.

Ruzinsky said he wants to see other transit agencies work out the kinks before the Greater Dayton RTA buys electric buses.

"The electricity demands during hot and cold periods (when buses run heaters and air conditioning) suck the life out of the batteries," he said. "They're still a ways out there before that technology is perfected."

But the nature of public transportation routes makes electrification simpler, Cooke said.

Transit buses "have a fixed route," he said. "We have a solid understanding of where the buses need to go and what their day looks like."

Environmentalists agree that decarbonizing transit is a positive step, as long as it happens alongside other steps. Electric buses, for example, would be truly emissions free only if they drew energy from a renewable power grid.

Even natural gas and diesel buses can reduce carbon emissions if cities expand transit options and fewer people drive.

"The majority of emissions are coming from single-occupancy vehicles," said Miranda Leppa, director of the Environmental Law Clinic at Case Western Reserve University's School of Law.

"Making (public transportation) as convenient and accessible and interesting to the general public so they're shifting toward public transit is really, really critical."

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[@PatrickACooley](https://twitter.com/PatrickACooley)

# PARTA seeks input on improvements in Kent area

**Diane Smith**  
Ravenna Record-Courier  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority is seeking public input concerning recommended transit, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements along Route 59, from Horning Road in Kent to Route 261 in Franklin Township.

A survey designed to gather public comments has been posted to PARTA's website, [www.partaonline.org](http://www.partaonline.org).

The survey may be completed online or downloaded. Printed copies of the survey may be obtained at the PARTA administrative offices located at 2000 Summit Road in Kent or the Kent Central Gateway Transit Center in downtown Kent. Verbal comments may be offered by calling PARTA at 330-678-7745. The deadline for submitting feedback is June 15.

PARTA teamed with Franklin Town-

ship, the city of Kent, the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study and the Ohio Department of Transportation to explore possible enhancements to the corridor. A study of the area funded by a grant from the AMATS' "Connecting Communities" program also is posted to the PARTA website.

"This stretch of roadway is generally oriented towards cars and trucks," said PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein. "We're looking at options to make the area safer for transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Public comment is an important part of this process."

Recommended improvements include reducing lane widths to decrease speeds to posted limits; extending and widening sidewalks for safe shared use by bicyclists and pedestrians; creating additional mid-block crossings with painted crosswalks, ADA accessible curb ramps, pedestrian islands, and



**PARTA is experiencing a shortage in bus operators.**  
LISA SCALFARO/  
RECORD-COURIER

new crossing signals; improved transit amenities, including ADA accessible bus stops, shelters, and connections to nearby designations; upgrading pedes-

trian crossings at traffic lights with painted crosswalks and pedestrian signals.