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Strategic Plan Process

Deliver a 10-year Strategic Plan

Create understanding and build consensus; pull “Pillar Studies” together into a cohesive plan

Strategic Plan: Framework for the Future

- Economic Impact Study
- Fare Equity Analysis
- Rail Car Study
- Efficiency Study & Operational Review
- System Redesign Study
Strategic Planning Process

- Update Vision & Goals
- Preliminary Findings: Assess Transit Needs
- Identify Priority Strategies
- Stakeholder and Public Engagement

riderta.com/strategicplan
Considerations of Recent Events

- COVID-19 Pandemic
- Economic Downturn
- Calls to Action for Social Justice
COVID-19

RTA actions are national best practices. Examples include:

- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of vehicles and facilities
- Barriers and separators for operators and staff
- Personal protective equipment
- Collaboration with Health departments and Centers for Disease Control

Recent American Public Transportation Association research:

- No direct correlation has been found between use of urban public transit and transmission of COVID-19
- Public transit ridership in multiple cities shows no correlation with the rise or fall of local COVID-19 cases
- Mask wearing has been shown to be effective at reducing person-to-person transmission
Strategic Plan: Framework for the Future

Customer Focused
Community Engaged
**CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**
RTA will provide dependable, clean, fast, and seamless transportation that creates a positive experience for RTA customers.

**EQUITY**
RTA will continue to provide equitable transit services that benefit disadvantaged individuals and communities.

**ACCESS**
RTA will facilitate increased access to jobs, education, and civic life.

**STATE OF GOOD REPAIR**
RTA will enhance, preserve and maintain its infrastructure and assets.

**FINANCIAL STABILITY**
RTA will be a responsible steward of public funds by providing exceptional services cost-effectively.
COLLABORATION
RTA will work with stakeholders to foster creative solutions to mobility challenges and drive opportunities for transit oriented development.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION
RTA will lead in its integration of new technologies and evolving mobility options to enhance the transportation experience for customers, RTA employees, businesses and visitors.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY
RTA will be the transportation backbone that moves the economy forward and improves the quality of life of county residents by enabling economically sustainable regional land use and development and reinforcing investment in strategic employment and population centers.

TRANSPARENCY
RTA will instill public confidence as a well-run institution that is accountable to its customers, employees, and taxpayers.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
RTA will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region by providing clean transportation and shifting travelers away from single occupancy vehicles.
Preliminary Findings
RTA Existing Conditions

- RTA economic impact - $485M on local employment & $2.2 billion on Cuyahoga County property values
- Decreasing ridership
- External factors influence RTA such as population/job loss & shifting job locations outward
- Internal factors are those under control of RTA, such as fares, customer communication, on-time performance

RTA Ridership Chart
SWOT Analysis

Before COVID-19

**STRENGTHS**
- As a legacy transit system with robust history, local residents and businesses are aware of what RTA is. The brand recognition is high.
- Staff members have deep institutional knowledge.
- Rail lines and BRT services provide a backbone for additional system improvements.
- Past investments provide value to customers
- New leadership paves the way for innovative changes.

**WEAKNESSES**
- Passenger experience is degraded by unreliability and a poor image.
- Infrastructure needs are not being met as highlighted by the breakdown of the Red Line in summer 2019.
- Ridership has decreased for several years.
- Technology adoption is slow compared with peers.
SWOT Analysis

Before COVID-19

OPPORTUNITIES
- Job hubs drive transit ridership and the largest hub remains downtown where transit service is greatest.
- Partnership is increasing among public and private agencies on transportation issues.
- Disruptive technologies and business models can be harnessed to advance RTA goals.

THREATS
- The region is losing population and jobs.
- Competition for travel service in urban areas is increasing with new options providing door-to-door service for relatively cheap costs to customers.
- Job locations are spreading across Cuyahoga County and the region.
SWOT Analysis

After COVID-19 - Additional Issues

• Uncertain travel demand for all modes
• Health concerns
• Work from home
• Economic decline
• Social issues can be catalyst for change
• Increased realization of importance of transit for essential services and workers

• Temporary versus Long-Term Impacts
  • Thinking ten years ahead, virus will likely be overcome in time
  • However, past economic recessions have had long-term effects on Northeast Ohio
  • Transit remains backbone of economic opportunity for those who need it most
Stakeholder & Public Engagement
Engagement

• Three stakeholder input periods
  • External Stakeholders
  • Internal Stakeholders

• Pillar Study Engagement
  • *Three surveys, over 6,250 responses*
  • *Approximately 40 public meetings attended by over 300 people*

• Bus Operators, Vehicle Maintenance, and Other Staff

• Public Engagement - Meetings, Website, Surveys
• **Nine Public Meetings:**  
  Feb. 20 - Mar. 11, 2020

• Online & In-Person Engagement Yielded Thousands of Responses from Participants
Engagement - Top Strategies

FORTY-NINE STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED

TOP 3 STRATEGIES FOR ALL PUBLIC RESPONDENTS

- Increase frequency of bus service on existing key routes, while maintaining existing coverage
- Identify additional funding to meet existing and future transit needs
- Better link people to jobs
Engagement - Top Strategies

Top ten strategies were similar among online surveys and public meeting participants

**TOP 10 STRATEGIES FROM THE ONLINE SURVEY**
1. Increase frequency of bus service on existing key routes, while maintaining existing coverage
2. Identify additional funding to meet existing and future transit needs
3. Better link people to jobs

**TOP 10 STRATEGIES FROM THE PUBLIC MEETINGS**
1. Identify additional funding to meet existing and future transit needs
2. Better link people to jobs
3. Increase frequency of bus service on existing key routes, while maintaining existing coverage
Recommendations: Geographic Focus
Priority Corridor Update

Update Priority Corridors from Previous Strategic Plan

• Previous RTA Strategic Plan identified several Priority Corridors that were recommended for investment

• Priority Corridors brought focus to locations where transit-oriented development could be emphasized in partnership with local stakeholders
Priority Corridor Update

• Need to increase cohesion between infrastructure development & service frequency
Priority Corridor Update

Network of urban corridors with frequent service

- Increase cohesion between infrastructure development & service frequency
- Emphasize connections among corridors to create network
- New corridors offer new opportunities
- Enhance consistency among pillar studies
- Several priority corridors remain unchanged
Priority Corridor Update

Network of urban corridors with frequent service

- Focus on transit need of populations with lower incomes, lower educational attainment, & higher unemployment
- Focus on places where transit works best and can help provide a leg up to those who need it most
- Multiple connections provide seamless transfers and shorter travel times
- Partnership for transit-oriented development
Priority Corridor Update

Data Driven to Deliver Equitable Service

Lorain Avenue Example

- Levels of income
- Educational attainment
- Unemployment rate
Outlying Job Hubs

- Focus on need of workers with lower incomes, lower educational attainment, & higher unemployment compared to County average

- Challenging transit environments require shared funding with job providers to be determined through collaboration

- Opportunities for pilot projects to improve equitable access

- Requires definition of success that measures job access and retention, not high ridership
Recommendations: Key Initiatives for the Future
Key Initiatives: Create Framework for the Future

- Highlight prioritized recommendations of study based upon data gathered from:
  - 10 Goals
  - Preliminary Findings Analysis
  - Identification of 49 Strategies
  - Pillar Studies
  - Stakeholder Input
  - Public Engagement

- Provide a guide for enhancing the customer experience and pursuing capital improvements to create a framework for the future
Key Initiatives

- Improve Where and When Buses Travel
- Improve How Streets Function
- Improve How Customers Pay
- Improve Passenger Safety and Comfort
- Engage with Emerging Technology, Data, and New Mobility
- Address Funding Challenges
- Partner to Support Vibrant Communities and Access to Job Centers
Improve Where and When Buses Travel

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• Implement System Redesign

• Shift to the Current Funding Concept

• Expanded Funding Concept provides basis for future potential

**Pandemic Impact:** Focus on urban corridors with frequent service improves safe & equitable access to opportunity

**Responsibilities**
Champion: RTA - Planning and Implementation

Infrastructure and community relations support:
- City of Cleveland
- NSCA
- Cuyahoga County
- ODOT
- Municipalities
- Private and nonprofit partners

**Outcomes**
Current Funding Concept
For the average resident in Cuyahoga County:
- Current Funding Concept will link people to 17% more jobs in under 45 minutes and 11% more jobs in under 60 minutes than the present-day network.

Expanded Funding Concept
For the average resident in Cuyahoga County:
- Expanded Funding Concept will link people to 42% more jobs in under 45 minutes and 36% more jobs within 60 minutes compared to the present-day network.
Improve How Streets Function

- Prioritize Transit in Street Design
- Allocate appropriate space for buses to travel
- Work with cities to enhance signal systems
- Priority Corridors
- Increase fast and reliable service

**Pandemic Impact:** Opportunities to rethink street operations & transit access are prevalent, as made clear during shutdown
Improve How Customers Pay

- Implement recommendations from Fare Equity Analysis pillar study
- Change RTA fare collection to improve customer experience and better reflect best practices
- Seamless, equitable

**Pandemic Impact:** Current policies & technology unfortunately have largest negative impact on people with low incomes
Improve Passenger Safety and Comfort

- Purchase new rail cars
- Improve transit stops
- Continue to upgrade bus fleet
- Experiment with Zero Emission Vehicles
- Enhance safe and comfortable riding experience

**Pandemic Impact:**
Increase sanitation & social distancing.

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**TIMEFRAME**

**Short (2020-2022):**
- Continue and enhance cleaning procedures to address COVID-19
- Continue to provide service with a focus on essential workers getting to jobs at locations such as medical facilities and grocery stores
- Provide service with a focus on equity - the Priority Corridors of frequent service include neighborhoods with high levels of poverty, joblessness, and vulnerable health populations
- Begin procuring new heavy rail vehicles
- Evaluate and improve stop amenities on Priority Corridors during implementation of Current Funding Concept
- Pilot zero emission vehicles with support from federal grants and with feedback on passenger comfort

**Medium (2023-2026):**
- Discontinue the practice of purchasing diesel vehicles
- Integrate zero emissions vehicles into bus fleet procurement strategy
- Begin procuring light rail vehicles
- Delivery of heavy rail vehicles and placement into revenue service
- Evaluate and improve stop amenities on Priority Corridors during implementation of Expanded Funding Concept

**Long (2027-2030):**
- Delivery of light rail vehicles and placement into revenue service
- Move from CNG to zero emission vehicles

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**OUTCOMES**

Outcomes Include:
- Increased passenger comfort to resume or continue riding during and after COVID-19 pandemic
- New rail car fleet
- Upgraded bus fleet
- Transition away from purchasing diesel buses
- Transition to zero emission vehicle purchases
- Enhanced customer experience as a result of transit stop improvements

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**RESPONSIBILITIES**

Champion: RTA

Supporting partners:
- City of Cleveland
- MDAC
- Cuyahoga County
- Power utilities
- Municipalities
- Private and nonprofit partners
- Neighborhood groups
Engage with Emerging Technology, Data, and New Mobility

- Refocus using technology as way to improve the customer experience & equity
- Experiment with connected vehicles
- Improve infrastructure
- Enhance real-time info
- Invest in data security & sharing
- Pilot mobility management

**Pandemic Impact:** Tech is helping transit agencies navigate new challenges
Address Funding Challenges

- Top issue during public input for the Strategic Plan concerned the necessity for additional funding to meet existing and future transit needs
- Backlog of state of good repair needs
- Multiple options requiring difficult decisions balancing raising new funds, SOGR, & growth projects

**Pandemic Impact:** Transit funding nationwide is existential issue being prioritized by collective advocacy for continued federal support
Partner to Support Vibrant Communities and Access to Job Centers

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Pandemic Impact: Shared funding with employers is essential to keeping the economy moving.

### Priority Corridors
- Downtown
- University Circle

### Outlying Hubs
- Solon Corridor
- Chagrin Highlands
- I-77-Rockside
- Hopkins Airport Area

**TIMEFRAME**
- **Short (2020-2022)**
  - Establish stakeholder group around Solon Job center to assess needs and feasibility of solutions
  - Conduct pilots program centered around Solon Job center
  - Evaluate before-and-after metrics of employee attraction and retention as well as community perception
  - Respond to needs and establish stakeholder group around Chagrin Highlands Job center
- **Medium (2023-2026)**
  - Conduct pilot program centered around Chagrin Highlands Job center and other regional job centers as needed
  - Conduct flexible studies of transit service for other regional job centers
  - Evaluate before-and-after metrics of employee attraction and retention as well as community perception
  - If successful, launch regional long-term microtransit program
- **Long (2027-2030)**
  - Evaluate ongoing success and community perception
  - Transition to widespread autonomous microtransit solutions as technology advances

**RESPONSIBILITIES**
- **Champions:**
  - RTA
  - Business leaders representing job hubs
- **Supporting partners:**
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - Workforce development partners
  - NOACA
  - Cuyahoga County
  - Human resources departments
  - Municipalities

**OUTCOMES**
- Outcomes include:
  - Reduction of social inequities
  - Reduced travel time for workers
  - Increased attraction and retention of workers in regional job centers
  - Increased economic output for northeast Ohio
Key Initiatives Recap

- Improve Where and When Buses Travel
- Improve How Streets Function
- Improve How Customers Pay
- Improve Passenger Safety and Comfort
- Engage with Emerging Technology, Data, and New Mobility
- Address Funding Challenges
- Partner to Support Vibrant Communities and Access to Job Centers
Strategic Plan: Framework for the Future

Customer Focused
Community Engaged
Staff Recommendation

External & Stakeholders Relations & Advocacy Committee Approves the Framework for the Future, GCRTA Strategic Plan 2020-2030 for Action to the GCRTA Board of Trustees