

Appendix J: Newspaper Articles and Comments



Campus District to RTA: Don't close rapid station, community is on a roll

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Uncertainty about the future of the East 34th Street rapid station brought community leaders of the nearby Campus District to an RTA meeting Tuesday to make the case that the station is needed. RTA is looking into the costs of updating this low-ridership station and two on East 79th Street to make them handicapped accessible.

(Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer)

Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer By **Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer**

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on July 15, 2014 at 4:06 PM, updated July 15, 2014 at 5:39 PM

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Representatives of anchor institutions in the Campus District told RTA board members Tuesday that now is the time for the transit agency to invest in their neighborhood, not close the rail station at East 34th Street.

RTA has made no decision to do so. A consultant is **in the midst of studying** what it would cost to update the rapid station and two others, along East 79th Street.

But RTA also has made no secret of the fact that the East 34th and East 79th Street stations have the lowest ridership of any stations in its system – and that RTA faces hard choices about whether to sink tens of millions of dollars into updating them.

Bobbi Reichtell, executive director of Campus District Inc., urged a longer view instead of concentrating on how many riders are using the rail stops today.

Reichtell said the district east of Cleveland's downtown business core has been undergoing a renaissance, with over \$190 million in recent, current and planned investments. It's population is expected to keep growing for the next five to 10 years, she said.

"There is a new energy in the ... neighborhood," she said. "This is not the time for RTA to disinvest in the neighborhood. ... This is the time for future investment."

Among the coming projects is a \$5.8 million upgrade of East 22nd Street between Cleveland State University and Cuyahoga Community College, putting down new paving and adding bike lanes, lighting and landscaping. Construction is to start next summer and take about a year.

Other projects include a \$20 million redevelopment of Cedar Estates subsidized housing and an \$11 million Care Alliance Health Center clinic opening next spring.

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

The Campus District, along with the Central neighborhood near St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, have more than 12,000 full-time employees, more than 26,000 students between Cuyahoga Community College and Cleveland State, and more than 9,100 people within a half-mile walk of the 34th Street rapid station that has the Blue, Green and Red lines.

"Our concern is we don't stop a service that can't be restarted," said Claire Rosacco, Tri-C vice president. "It needs to be looked at comprehensively, not just the one-off."

But RTA General Manager Joe Calabrese said it doesn't really matter how many people are in the vicinity of a rapid stop. "It's how many people use the station," he said. Recent surveys show that fewer than 240 people a day frequent the three in question.

Institutions with transit-friendly policies and the kind of transit-oriented development spurred by construction of the HealthLine bus rapid transit along Euclid Avenue can make a difference, Calabrese said.

"If they value the station there, what can they do?" he said.

RTA years ago said it would make its Red Line stations handicapped accessible, an in-house pledge that the Federal Transit Administration later said is a must-do if the stations are to stay open.

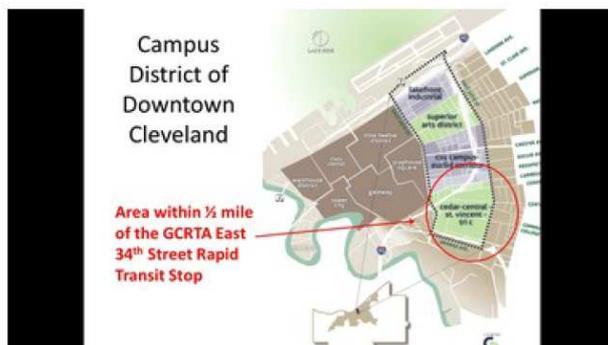
Both the 34th Street and East 79th Street heavy rail stations are at the bottom of long flights of stairs leading from bridge overpasses, in neighborhoods with low pedestrian traffic.

It would cost \$5 million to \$8 million to make improvements to the East 34th station, and perhaps three times as much — \$16 million to \$18 million — to modify the East 79th station, Calabrese has said.



Coming investments in the Campus District east of downtown Cleveland include this overhaul of East 22nd Street. Construction begins next summer on a \$5.8 million project to repave the street and add bike lanes, lighting and streetscaping.

Campus District Inc.



[View full size](#)

The Campus District and Central neighborhoods served by RTA's East 34th Street rapid station have more than 12,000 full-time employees, more than 26,000 students and more than 9,100 people who live within a half-mile walk of the station, according to the community development corporation Campus District Inc.

Campus District Inc.

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

The director of project development for the Opportunity Corridor, Marie Kittredge, is also concerned about the East 34th and East 79th stops. She said last month that hanging on to them is a top priority in her new job, because public transit links will assure that the \$331 million corridor is more than a commuting track between Interstate 77 and University Circle.

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E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

Comments:

-Eat Righteous
Jul 15, 2014

The streetscape on E 22nd looks nice but it's terrible trying to bike south of Cedar with all the highway ramps. In fact every major North-South street east of the river and south of Carnegie has some kind of freeway ramps. Is this really necessary? It would be nice to have one safe north-south connection for cyclists near downtown.

Also, these seem to be some of the most desolate parts of town. Large roads and ramps take away from any possible economic development or housing, which would make money for the city... I'm not anti-car, but we need some kind of balance...

-NRWM
Jul 15, 2014

Fire up that money printing machine!!!!

-Eat Righteous
Jul 15, 2014

Maybe they could use some of that \$331 million dollars to at least keep the stations open, or better yet build new ones closer to more potential users and development, i.e. move East 79th Redline stop a few blocks to Buckeye/Woodland, develop the area around East 79th blue/green,, there is already some new housing near the stop.

Here's a link from All Aboard Ohio:

<http://allaboardohio.org/2014/01/09/odot-urged-to-add-transit-tod-in-clevelands-opportunity-corridor/>

-kjp
Jul 15, 2014

Relocate the East 34th station to near the new Commercial Road/East 9th Extension, along with East 22nd extended through to Broadway by relocating the USPS Carrier Unit and Inspectors. This will create a street grid in that area -- ripe for development. And... Relocate East 79th Red Line station to between Woodland-Buckeye as part of a revitalized Hungarian Hill neighborhood. An at-grade station might even be possible here, accessible from a new connector street between Buckeye and Woodland. These options were originally recommended by GCRTA in its Dual Hub Transitional Analysis which is still being implemented (ie: the relocated East 120th station to Mayfield). The ideas were outlined by All Aboard Ohio, appearing on its blog in a January posting, as well as on UrbanOhio's forum in the Transportation section. See the TOD thread.

-Eat Righteous
Jul 15, 2014

@kjp Have you made any suggestions to Marie Kittredge?

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

-Dieselbuck
Jul 16, 2014

@kjp relocating the USPS Carrier Unit and Inspectors.

How much would that cost? Are you referring to the entire Post Office there?

-NRWM
Jul 15, 2014

There is nothing within walking distance to the 34th station besides the women's prison and the Post Office. Postal employees drive cars and prisoners can't. I doubt if 50 people use this station a day. It would be a crime to spend 8

million on this whistle-stop when there are so many better ways to spend it

-FromMetoWe
Jul 15, 2014

In general thriving cities have MANY transit options including rail, so shutting it down should be the last option. Having said that, neighborhoods should encourage as much TOD (Transit Oriented Development) as possible because it cannot and should not stay if it is not adequately utilized. I believe in passenger rail and would hate to see it go.

More info on TOD:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transit-oriented_development

-Dieselbuck
Jul 15, 2014

If it is not used by that many riders, shut it down. That is way too much money to be tossing at a underutilized station. As for \$20 million redevelopment of Cedar Estates subsidized housing, who cares? How much will be spent at the steel mill? That has about as much in connection with the rapid station as does the Project

-that is mindless drivel
Jul 16, 2014

@Dieselbuck toss the comment below?



RTA weighs fate of outdated East 34th, East 79th rapid stations, seeks public comment Wednesday

East79thSt.JPG

The deteriorated Red Line rail station at East 79th Street could cost \$16 million to \$18 million to overhaul and make accessible to handicapped customers. Its fate is in limbo. *(Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer)*

Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer By **Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer**

Email the author | Follow on Twitter

on November 04, 2014 at 1:24 PM

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority holds a community meeting tomorrow to gather public comment on rapid stations at East 34th Street and East 79th Street that could be renovated or closed.

The stations are deteriorated and among the least used in the transit agency's rail network. **Overhauling them could cost** a total of more than \$25 million, RTA General Manager Joe Calabrese has said.

Yet the stations are considered critical links between the upcoming 3.2-mile Opportunity Corridor and the neighborhoods the urban boulevard will go through.

"Absolutely, they're a priority," Opportunity Corridor Project Director Marie Kittredge said Tuesday. "RTA obviously has a huge challenge in trying to identify funding. I'm optimistic, but it's going to take a lot of work by stakeholders."

Critics have characterized the 35-mph boulevard as a cut-through for suburban commuters that allows them to avoid driving street-by-street through some of Cleveland's poorest sections. But Kittredge and other proponents say the roadway can provide positive economic spin-off for the neighborhoods, and that maintaining robust public transit is key to doing that.

Tomorrow's meeting is at 6 p.m. at the Cuyahoga Community College Metro Campus, Campus Center Building, first-floor lounge, 2900 Community College. You can ride bus lines 11, 14 or 15 to get there. Staff from RTA and project consultant Parsons Brinckerhoff will be on hand.

The stations are the East 34th Street station, which serves the Red, Blue and Green lines, the East 79th Blue-Green Line station and the Red Line station slightly further north on East 79th.

The East 34th location has the lowest ridership of all major (non-Shaker Boulevard) stations, RTA said. It averages 288 weekday boardings (Red, 182; Blue, 51; Green, 55). Known as the Campus Rapid, it serves Cuyahoga Community College. Calabrese said the improvements it needs might cost \$5 million to \$8 million

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

The East 79th Blue/Green Line station has 145 weekdays boardings, on average (Blue, 92; Green, 53).

The East 79th Red Line station has 155 average weekday boardings. It originally served nearby factories, including the long-shuttered Van Dorn Co. Use of the station dropped off with the decline of industry in the area. As far back as 1999, RTA considered closing it.

It must be made handicapped-accessible if it stays open, which requires overhauling the boarding platform that sits between eastbound and westbound tracks. Since that would require more space, the tracks would have to be torn up for a quarter mile in each direction and moved slightly apart.

The cost could run to \$16 million to \$18 million, Calabrese has said.

Kittredge, the project director for the public-private Opportunity Corridor Steering Committee, said the boulevard connecting Interstate 490 to University Circle is supposed to incorporate good public transit connections.

She pointed to the "record of decision" for the corridor -- the **signoff the federal government gave** in May that allowed the Ohio Department of Transportation to proceed with the \$331 million project.

Among the objectives spelled out in the 94-page document from the Federal Highway Administration are improving connectivity among transit facilities, including RTA stations, and supporting redevelopment along the corridor that "could increase patronage within the transit system."

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The abandoned Van Dorn Co. plant on East 79th Street. In its heyday, the maker of injection molding machines and other nearby factories employed hundreds of Clevelanders. When they closed, use of the East 79th Street Red Line station declined.

Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer

Damage to the aging East 79th Street rapid station is extensive. Part of its overhaul, if the station is kept open, would involve replacing stairs and making the train platform accessible to passengers in wheelchairs.

Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

Comments:

-pjrlab

Nov 4, 2014

This is MRS. This same argument was used to try to close down the East 120th Street station, which has been rebuilt. That station always had problems because the stairwell was so steep. Glad to see that it was redone. HOWEVER, why no money is being spent to completely rebuild Brookpark station is beyond me. This is the first station that people see when they travel from Cleveland Hopkins. They have TWO parking areas because it is so heavily used. East 79th St. station on the Shaker line has been dangerous for many years--dangerously crumbling in structure and dangerous to stand to wait for a train without fear for one's life. Yes, I'm going back to the 1970s for that one. It was in the vicinity of that station that someone took a potshot at the train I was riding and on which my father was the operator. That potshot took a swath of hair off the top of my father's head. In that split moment, I realized I may not have had my father come home ever again. That was in 1975. Close that station down. There is not enough use. East 34th Street? No man's land, again. Move it to East 30th Street and now you would have something.

-hlma-1

Nov 4, 2014

The 79th St. stations didn't have much ridership 50 years ago, either. The rapid often sailed right by them without stopping. But there was an actual neighborhood there. Today there is almost nothing left. I'm very skeptical whether the OC will create anything resembling new housing or industry but if it (hopefully) does, that would be the time to think about reinvestment. In the meantime, mothball the stations while leaving the existing infrastructure up, just in case.

-jamesinstow

Nov 4, 2014

@hlma-1 You nailed it. Just as an aside, is there some kind of rule that you can only become an urban planner or a transit planner if you were the most clueless kid in your high school class? These are some of the least talented people on earth. RTA should put the genius that came up with the Waterfront Line right on this project.

-thinkthntalk

Nov 4, 2014

@hlma-1 When I rode that line regularly (years ago now) it was true that the rapid rarely stopped there. Job locations and populations shift. The station has been fixed. If it is possible to wait on rebuilding in this area it might be better to wait and see what development occurs and then plan for a new station. 79th might not be the best place for it.

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

-yugamrap
Nov 4, 2014

I'd rather see some investment go toward closing a Downtown loop that incorporates the Waterfront Line. The loop could come south through the CSU / Playhouse Square area, and continue through the St. Vincent Quadrangle and meet the line at a new, improved E. 30th station. I think that continuing to enhance Downtown's infrastructure will be a better return on investment than hoping to spur growth from the Opportunity Corridor because it will connect more parts of Downtown where there are already residents, students, commuters and attractions. Eventually, I'd like to see some rail service come southeast and southwest to serve more of the County's bigger, inner-ring suburbs.

-jamesinstow
Nov 4, 2014

@yugamrap The Waterfront Line dead-ending at the Muni Parking Lot was an incredible waste. I know the saying about throwing good money after bad, but NOBODY rides the thing except to Browns games. Surely a loop back to Tower City would be worth serious consideration. I don't know whether connecting the loop at E30th would be the best way to do it or not, but something should be done. I'm thinking going south along E 17th and keeping it well within the central business district would be best.

-thinkthntalk
Nov 4, 2014

I imagine there are other stations along the rapid lines that need replacement or serious upgrades. It would be irresponsible to rebuild greatly underused stations until more heavily used stations are updated. In the meantime let the opportunity corridor project begin and we shall see what kind of redevelopment is spurred. Maybe those stations will be needed, and maybe they should be shut down for good. I'd rather see the money go towards better surveillance cameras and security guards anyway.

-inhope
Nov 4, 2014

@thinkthntalk keeping these stations open without upgrading them is not possible. if we want to keep these stations open we MUST update them. Its mandated by law (mainly the ADA).

-thinkthntalk
Nov 4, 2014

@inhope @thinkthntalk D'oh. Sorry, I didn't get it. Now that I get it I would say close the stations. If they are that poorly used, it is an utter waste of limited construction funds to pour \$25 million into a station no one uses. Scarce resources require tough decisions. Put the money where the riders are.

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

-bigbritx1
Nov 4, 2014

That E79th station looks like a good place for a mugging !

-homeboy1986
Nov 4, 2014

I have a better idea. Let's instead buy a new car for all the 155 riders(some counted twice as they both enter here and are dropped off later when they come back) and save many millions of dollars. If any are handicapped we will buy them a handicapped accessible van or a lifetime driver service.

-hungadunga
Nov 4, 2014

\$18,000,000.00 for 1440 passengers/week?

Beyond insane. All the more reason they will approve the expense.

"For the people".

-ilovemylife
Nov 4, 2014

@hungadunga Why would RTA spend money on stations that are barely used? Just shut them down. There are RTA buses that run in that area constantly. Plus making them new and pretty won't make them any safer.

-marcpmiller
Nov 4, 2014

Please use the money for something more productive. There is so much more opportunity for further rail advances in Cleveland then spending millions on stations that people dont use.

-krazyk47
Nov 4, 2014

This is a bit of a chicken and egg problem, because while the stations aren't necessary at the moment, they will be in ten years. building a highway to university circle some very undervalued land will logically spur redevelopment in that area, the question is what kind of development? Low rent industrial or high rent residential? Having the mass transit links will go a long way to push the equilibrium toward dense residential development... which means the 30 million dollar investment will be well worth it... but if we just build a couple warehouses there, then obviously its a waste of money.

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

-ilovemylife
Nov 4, 2014

@krazyk47 Try low rent Section *.

-ilovemylife
Nov 4, 2014

@krazyk47 I meant Section 8.

-Clevebear-again2
Nov 4, 2014

@krazyk47

Krazyk47, great comments. It's nice to know at least a few commenters are thinking beyond the end of their nose. Cleveland's deterioration stems in part from a mindset that can't grasp the concept of investment in infrastructure rather than bare maintenance of infrastructure.

-Gun owners Vote!
Nov 4, 2014

\$18 million for E79th renovation to server 155 people daily? You know it's already a done deal for RTA's contractor friends. No kickbacks there. wink wink. I guess that means finally the E78th station with the bullet holes in the top of it won't be there anymore. Been there for at least 8 years and never repaired.

-inhope
Nov 4, 2014

@Gun owners Vote! regarding kickbacks, do you have any proof? examples?

-schmange19
Nov 4, 2014

Are we really arguing it's important to save these two stations because they'll be near a big new road? Ugh. That is very backwards. Isn't there a transit rider we could have interviewed here? For the price of the Opportunity Corridor we could have rebuilt 30 stations.

-terminalcorruption
Nov 4, 2014

Dear FBI: You know all that corruption you found in county government? It's time you peered into the transit authority and see what you find there. In fact, I'm shocked that the county corruption didn't lead directly to the RTA..oh, maybe that line was crumbling and down for repair.

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

-use the sidewalk-it's free
Nov 4, 2014

oh geez, gosh by gollly and zzzzz.

Rapid raid is an absolute must. Studies say so. All development ton Euclid and by corollary E 105, 'E 79th, E 34th is because of busra..er a rapid. The OC cannot exist with out it. Some say studies say so.....

but in all seriousness. these stations need to be saved and improved for the 21th century...as does the neighborhood. There is left over ca\$h from 3-c deadrail to do it, right ? Some shovel ready money must still be around, right? Where be joe-the-biden when you need him? he spoke at the railyard nearby....he did...say it's so, joe

-inhope
Nov 4, 2014

@use the sidewalk-it's free no cash leftover from 3-C. Governor Kasich gave it back.

-use the sidewalk-it's free
Nov 4, 2014

@inhope @use the sidewalk-it's free then joe has it...its election day.. so say its so joe.

joe said he wanted to invest in rail infrastructure..so give it a go..

-use the sidewalk-it's free
Nov 4, 2014

@use the sidewalk-it's free @inhope

we kno everything about 3-c deadrail: It does not exist.

That is all.

-Clevebear-again2
Nov 4, 2014

@use the sidewalk-it's free Then why do you keep bringing it up?

-Clevebear-again2
Nov 4, 2014

@use the sidewalk-it's free

In all seriousness, because you don't seem to know anything about the cancelled 3-C Rail, you also obviously don't know that the money was forfeited to another state's long-distance rail project. Ohio never got the money. (I never realized that some commenters are apparently THAT bereft of knowledge about transportation.)

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

You also clearly don't know enough to refute actual studies that underline the multifaceted success of the Healthline; hence your continued non sequiturs that unsuccessfully attempt to diminish the Healthline's proven success.

Here, again, is the national report and study you glaringly fail to even begin to disprove:

Bus Rapid Transit Spurs Development Better Than ... - Forbes

-use the sidewalk--it's free
Nov 4, 2014

@use the sidewalk-it's free

is that all?

meaningless drivel

-Clevebear-again2
Nov 4, 2014

@use the sidewalk--it's free @use the sidewalk-it's free That aptly describes your response.

-Clevebear-again2
Nov 5, 2014

@use the sidewalk--it's free @use the sidewalk-it's free I also noticed you still use multiple monikers to pretend other people "like" your posts.

-wildcuyahoga
Nov 4, 2014

Substantial, confirmed housing development along the corridor would be the only rationale to justify the renovation outlay of \$15-25m. Otherwise, only disreputable data would suggest near and medium-term ridership utilization to support the stations.

-ilovemylife
Nov 4, 2014

@wildcuyahoga More Section 8 housing along the Opportunity Corridor. CMHA would love that. Make the neighborhoods safe and just maybe folks would move there.

-NRWM
Nov 4, 2014

Get rid of E79th. The Green/Blue line station is a few blocks away. There are many other bus options also easily available. It would be insane to spend \$18million dollars to rebuild this hole in the ground.

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

Move E34 down the road to E30th Street. That would place it right across the street from the Main Post Office, a major employer. It would also be much closer to Tri-C. Ridership has a chance to grow here.

RTA has to evolve to serve what exists today, not what existed in the past or is hoped for in the future. Kittredge seems to have no problem spending our money on her dream.

-use the sidewalk-it's free
Nov 4, 2014

@NRWM its possible, its possible...as long we have busrapid on the OC.....

-Clevebear-again2
Nov 4, 2014

@use the sidewalk-it's free @NRWM

It's probable; it's probable you don't seem to know what you are talking about.

-use the sidewalk-it's free
Nov 4, 2014

@NRWM some are smarter than the average bear...but we are way smarter...we kno dis.

-Clevebear-again2
Nov 4, 2014

@use the sidewalk-it's free @NRWM

Uh, nope: As evidenced in your earlier posts, you didn't even know how the grant for the killed 3C rail worked. That's just one of your many obvious examples that prove "some" don't have anywhere near the intelligence of an average bear.

-use the sidewalk--it's free
Nov 4, 2014

@use the sidewalk-it's free @NRWM #obsessive #compulsive 3-c rail response.

#we kno better.....buh,bye

-Clevebear-again2
Nov 4, 2014

@use the sidewalk--it's free @use the sidewalk-it's free @NRWM

Yes, your comments that bring up 3C rail all the times DOES strike some in the way you aptly describe it yourself.

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

We know how to spell "know."

Buh Bye ..

-terminalcorruption

Nov 4, 2014

@NRWM Agree with evolution to meet today's needs...that said, the post office may not be a larger employer too much longer.

I would like to see micro population numbers for the areas served by RTA. Are they really putting their money where the people are? Even in some bizarro world where the opportunity corridor pays off and empty neighborhoods start to re-fill, that only hurts the neighborhoods left behind..which leads to more useless government spending.

Neighborhood building, just like nation building, doesn't work unless people want to be there. Stop wasting tax dollars on neighborhood building that will never work. Save and bolster the little engines that are working so hard to keep other neighborhoods going.

The only people neighborhood building benefit are developers and government employees who work on the projects.

-ilovemylife

Nov 4, 2014

@NRWM Kittredge came from a CDC. That pretty much sums up her story.

RTA stations at E. 34th and E. 79th may close

BY: [Faith Boone \(mailto:faith.boone@wews.com\)](mailto:faith.boone@wews.com)

POSTED: 8:17 AM, Nov 6, 2014

CLEVELAND - Some RTA rapid stops could soon become a thing of the past.

Wednesday night, Cleveland's Regional Transit Authority board held a second meeting regarding the need for the rapid stations located at East 34th Street and East 79th Street.

The stations are two of the most underutilized rapid stations. Also, RTA would need \$25 million in upgrades and updates to make the stations accessible to riders with disabilities.

The RTA board will decide what to do with the stations sometime next year.

What do you think should happen to these two rapid stations? Join the conversation on Facebook! (<https://www.facebook.com/WEWS5>)

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LIKE Jackie Zabielski on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/JZabielski?fref=ts>) **and** FOLLOW Jackie on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/JackieTraffic>) **and** Vine (<https://vine.co/u/1020492825416323072>)!

LIKE WEWS on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/WEWS5>) **and** FOLLOW WEWS on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/WEWS>). **You can also find WEWS on Instagram** (<http://instagram.com/wews5>), **Pinterest** (<http://www.pinterest.com/wews/>), **YouTube** (<http://www.youtube.com/wewstv>) **and** Vine (<https://vine.co/u/1020492825416323072>)!

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Keep rail stations at East 34th and East 79th, riders tell RTA officials

IMG_0002.JPG

The Blue/Green/Red Line at East 34th Street is among the low-ridership stations that RTA is considering closing. A decision is expected in January or February. *(Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer)*

Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer By **Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer**

Email the author | Follow on Twitter

on November 06, 2014 at 11:15 AM, updated November 06, 2014 at 12:44 PM

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Modernizing the **crumbling and underused rail stations** at East 34th and East 79th streets is a better choice than eliminating them from Cleveland's transit network, students, politicians and neighborhood leaders told RTA officials at a hearing Wednesday evening.

"To me, to even think about closing them is unthinkable. It would say to the community, 'We don't care about you,'" said Richard Andrews, who said he rides public transit daily.

At the same time, Andrews said the rail platforms at East 34th and East 79th are "the ugliest stations. They're the most depressing stations. They're the stations that say to you 'I'm not safe getting off here because there's nothing around here.'"

RTA General Manager Joe Calabrese says changing the "nothing-around-here" equation by spurring more transit-oriented development around the East Side rail stops is what could make them viable going forward.

Because based on past and present use, the stations – at least the Red Line station at East 79th -- are candidates for closing, he said.

"There's nothing there today," Calabrese said.

Upcoming **construction of the 3.2-mile Opportunity Corridor** linking the freeway system and University Circle represents "a chance for development, and provides us a new way to look at this (East 79th Red Line) station," he said.

That potential and other prospects for commercial and residential growth – which Calabrese said are not nailed down but rather "based on the good faith comments of the city and developers" – point to expanded ridership demand, he said.

The three stations have the lowest use in RTA's system and all are in poor repair.

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

To fix them and make them handicapped-accessible would cost \$7 million for the 34th Street station that serves the Red, Blue and Green Lines; \$6 million for the East 79th Blue/Green station; and \$12 million for the Red Line station at East 79th.

Wednesday's public forum at Cuyahoga Community College was **intended to collect comment** in particular about the East 34th Street station near the school. RTA expects to hold another hearing in early December closer to the 79th Street stops.

"This isn't a dog and pony show," Parsons Brinckerhoff consultant Tim Rosenberg said. "It's real, it's genuine and we're extremely interested in your input."

Michael Randle, manager of Oriana House, a community corrections and chemical dependency treatment agency, said about 50 residents use the rail stops every day to get to school and jobs.

"I wanted the men to come with me tonight so you could see who would be affected by the closing," Randle said, indicating 10 residents from the treatment center who came to the meeting.

Others talked about changes already underway they said would heighten demand for the rail connections.

Bobbi Reichtell, executive director of Campus District Inc., said the neighborhood just east of downtown **has about \$190 million in investments going on right now**, including a \$5.7 million upgrade of East 22nd Street.

Tri-C Campus President Michael Schoop said the pressure on downtown housing, with occupancy rates of 97 percent, will push new residential projects – and more commuters -- into the campus district.

Councilwoman Phyllis Cleveland talked about working hard to bring residents back to the Central, North Broadway and Kinsman Union neighborhoods in her ward.

Others questioned the either-or proposition of renovating the stations or closing them. RTA should explore moving the East 79th Street Red Line stop, which today is surrounded by vacant industrial land "and is going to stay that way, unfortunately," said transportation activist Chris Stocking.

Ken Prendergast, executive director of All Aboard Ohio, said he, too, would like RTA to evaluate different sites.

"At East 79th-Red Line for example, a \$16 million investment for 155 riders (the current average daily use) is \$103,225.81 per rider. Instead, perhaps GCRTA could save money by buying for each rider at this station a new Kia Soul economy car every four years for the next quarter century," Prendergast said in an email.

"Or, more reasonably, these stations could be moved a short distance away to sites where station-area

E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

development is more likely to occur and, indeed, may actually be attractive to development if a rail station was located there."

A final analysis with recommendations on what to do with the rail stops is expected to go to RTA's board in December, with a vote on their future in January or February.

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E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

Comments:

-use the sidewalk-it's free
Nov 6, 2014

LMAO ! All the b....c....about rapid bus causing all the development on Euclid and then they want to get rid of RTA on the OC !! Where does rapid cause development or doesn't it?????

Can't have it both ways !!!!

216 fackkts are the rapid doesn't cause all development on Euclid or anywhere else ! The mo-ro-ns writers and the flawed litt(le) studies at the pd can acknowledge that, as well as beardeadbrain posters on this site, then CLE will move forward.

On the other hand rail can help many types of development and to abandon it on the OC would be foolish. Rail is already there, it has to be used effectively .The comments about have a station at tri-c/Quad/post office may be a good one and then getting a more functional station around E 79th at the OC may be too, provided there is development that would drive its use.

You know how all the suppliers now built close to the auto assembly plant. CLE should support the development of the med suppliers and service providers close to the Health District. Maybe some of this development should occur along the OC and the rapid.

The neighborhoods suffer from lack of investment, even from under performing casinos.

Yah the station cost money and money is scarce. Planning and development of the service is key.

-NRWM
Nov 6, 2014

It is easy to pack a public meeting with people who will be in favor of anything. But the numbers don't lie. Transit dollars are not intended to be welfare dollars. Spend the money where it is needed and will benefit the most riders.

-hungadunga
Nov 6, 2014

No, it says "We are introducing fiscal sanity to the RTA.

Close 'em. "For the people".

-terminalcorruption
Nov 6, 2014

Who is this Ken Prendergrast? I may be in love! What an honest, clear way to make your point --
\$103,225.81 per rider

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I wonder if he has similar numbers for all aspects of RTA!

-tshirtgenes

Nov 6, 2014

@terminalcorruption Ken's a great guy and a huge advocate for public transit. It's a shame someone with common sense like him doesn't run RTA....

<http://allaboardohio.org/>

-ebbtide08

Nov 6, 2014

I use the E.79th as park and ride all the time....not.

-erocc

Nov 6, 2014

Look at the area around the E. 105th street station, indeed between it and Cleveland Clinic. I recommend using Google Maps. If this newly rebuilt station, the closest to CC, isn't spurring any development, why do we think these decrepit stations will.

Close them and make 55th and 105th mini-hubs.

-Mendo

Nov 6, 2014

The East 105th station is boxed in by the massive RTA maintenance center to the southeast, industrial wasteland and rail lines to the south, and County Juvenile court to the west. That is precisely why there is no development near the station and why people are advocating moving the East 79th station to somewhere that isn't bounded by low density industry that is not walkable.

The answer is not to close the station(s) outright, but move them somewhere that has development potential.

-erocc

Nov 6, 2014

@Mendo You didn't mention "north", which is indeed the area "between it and the Cleveland Clinic". The Quebec avenue area. I've seen smaller "yards" in Brunswick.

The numbers don't justify heavy rail for either of these stations, though 34th at least shares with the light-rail Shaker Rapid.

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-Mendo
Nov 7, 2014

@erocc The station is surrounded on 3 sides by non-transit supportive uses. You aren't going to see real ridership improvement from existing residential north of the station simply by rebuilding the station. The other potential development areas are too far away for people to walk.

I don't see your point. We agree rebuilding the station on East 79th would be a waste of money because that station and East 105th have the same issues. Lack of future development potential.

I just think building a new station instead further northeast would be a better use of money.

-WhoDooVoodoo12
Nov 6, 2014

"That potential and other prospects for commercial and residential growth – which Calabrese said are not nailed down but rather "based on the good faith comments of the city and developers"

We'll don't go borrowing any money based on THAT.

-Mendo
Nov 6, 2014

Rebuilding the East 79th in its current location would be the biggest waste of money. The amount of low density industry immediately around the station guarantees the station will never see the ridership improvements RTA needs to make it worthwhile.

Prendergast has advocated moving the East 79th station 1,000 feet northeast to near Woodland and Buckeye Ave. There is vacant land near that intersection that would support more transit oriented development. And it would likely have higher usage from the residential neighborhood already there.

-fooledbyasmile
Nov 6, 2014

There might be an argument for East 34th, but it's time to close East 79th.

-wildcuyahoga
Nov 6, 2014

If Prendergast's data is correct at \$103,225/rider, there's no real discussion. Resources would be better used elsewhere or moving stations to where there would be more ridership.

We don't have a city per capita income higher than Dubai!



Should low ridership rail stops at East 79th, East 34th be kept open? RTA holds 3rd meeting seeking comment

east79thunderneath.jpg

The Red Line East 79th Street station has low ridership -- 155 average weekday boardings -- and would cost \$12 million to upgrade. Is it worth keeping? RTA seeks public input at a meeting next Thursday. *(Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer)*

Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer By **Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer**

Email the author | Follow on Twitter

on November 13, 2014 at 12:19 PM, updated November 13, 2014 at 12:25 PM

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority will hold a third community meeting to **gather public comment** on whether three underused rail stations at East 34th Street and East 79th Street should be renovated or closed.

The meeting will be a week from today, Thursday, Nov. 20, at 6 p.m. at Mt. Sinai Baptist Church, 7510 Woodland Avenue. It will likely be the last meeting where the public can weigh in before RTA's board votes on the stations in January or February.

The focus of the upcoming meeting will be on the Red Line stop at East 79th Street.

RTA suggests you ride the Red Line to the East 79th Street station to get to the community hearing. If you do, you'll disembark at the station that would be the costliest to renovate and make handicapped-accessible among the three low-ridership rail connections under review.

According to recent estimates, it would take \$12 million to upgrade the East 79th Red Line station.

Also up in the air is the status of the Blue/Green Line light rail at East 79th, and the station at East 34th that is served by all three Rapid lines -- Red, Blue and Green.

Earlier community meetings were held Nov. 1 and **Nov. 5**.

"It's important that we hear from as many of our customers as possible," General Manager Joe Calabrese said in a posting on RTA's web site. "We encourage people to attend, as the issues we are discussing are vital to the community."

Riders are also encouraged to complete **an online survey**.

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E. 34th Street Campus/E. 79th Stations Transit Services Alternatives Analysis

Comments:

-Snake_Plissken
Nov 13, 2014

Farifax is ripe for redevelopment as it is basically empty anymore... I say leave it... either that or spend the money to expand RTA into the suburbs...

-NRWM
Nov 13, 2014

There can never realistically be any development around E79th Red Line. Formerly an industrial zone, this 'hole in the ground' is surrounded by cemeteries, railroad lines and brownfields. Cleveland is full of areas that would be much easier to develop than this.

tshirtngenes Nov 13, 2014

@NRWM Agreed. If RTA rebuilds the station at 79th then someone is wasting 16mil dollars.....

-Snake_Plissken
Nov 13, 2014

@tshirtngenes

When Millenials were still in Grade School RTA spent \$69 Million to build the Waterfront Line... it was finished in 1996... 18 years later it is still underutilized... so what if they waste a little more money.. I thought if you build it they will come....

-fooledbyasmile
Nov 13, 2014

@Snake_Plissken And now they actually have developers for the lakefront, making the waterfront line relevant again.

Whereas there isn't a developer in sight for East 79th.

-ilovemylife
Nov 13, 2014

@NRWM You are absolutely right. Best to close it. Not a safe area either.

-FromMetoWe
Nov 13, 2014

I'm no expert but the cost-benefit here seems quite low. In general, one viable alternative to a station with extremely low usage would be to create more transit-oriented development around the sites. Other cities have had success with TOD but is that even a viable option here given the expense?

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Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer
junior_moderator
Nov 13, 2014

@FromMetoWe RTA says it's exactly that -- transit-oriented development -- that would help make these stations viable going forward. Part of the vetting process as the agency weighs the stations' future is trying to gauge what kind of commercial, residential and institutional development could occur near the stations.

-FromMetoWe
Nov 13, 2014

@Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer @FromMetoWe Thanks AG. It would be nice if TOD worked at those locations. I don't like seeing any public transit close anywhere.

-ilovemylife
Nov 13, 2014

@FromMetoWe @Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer Looks to me like you have no idea about the area around East 79th. There will never be new residential in that location. Plus that is one of the most dangerous parts of the City.

-NRWM
Nov 13, 2014
@FromMetoWe Even if it serves no real purpose?

-FromMetoWe
Nov 13, 2014

@NRWM @FromMetoWe I said it 'would be nice if TOD worked.' Obviously if it's too costly the money should be spent elsewhere. That's why I also asked if TOD was even a viable option. I know that particular area isn't great, which is why I asked the question in the first place.

-tshirtgenes
Nov 13, 2014

@Alison Grant, The Plain Dealer If they want true TOD then they need to move the station to e89th. Please explain how RTA thinks they can make the area around e79th TOD?

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-ilovemylife
Nov 13, 2014

@FromMetoWe No it is not. Not safe and most folks in that neighborhood ride the bus and not the train.