



MEETING MINUTES

Operational Planning & Infrastructure Committee

May 5, 2026

Committee Members: Mr. Sleasman (Chair), Ms. Pacetti (Vice Chair), Mayor Gallo, Mr. Love

Also Present: Mayor Koomar, Ms. Elder, Ms. McPherson, Mayor Weiss, Ms. Whigham

Staff/Other: Dave Basso, Shawn Becker, Nick Biggar, India Birdsong Terry, Janet Burney, Louis Catalusci, Floun'say Caver, Brent Charnigo, Nick Davidson, Shashelia Degraffinried, Dan Dietrich, Drew Dimmick, Traci Ext, George Fields, Mary Flannery, Bob Fleig, Joel Freilich, Catherine Galla, Lawrence Jupina, Dan Kerg, Carl Kirkland, Andrew Korman, Jonathan Laule, Jeffrey Macko, Glenville Manning, Matt Marotta, Jennifer Martin, Kathleen McGervey, Sheila Miller, Josh Miranda, Charles Morgan, Allen Polly, Mike Schipper, Spencer Smith, Kay Sutula, Wendy Talley, John Togher, Eric Vukmanic, Carolyn Young

Public: 7

I. Roll Call

Mr. Sleasman called the meeting to order at 11:11 a.m. with roll call. A quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes – April 7, 2026

Mr. Sleasman moved to approve the minutes; Mayor Gallo seconded. The motion carried.

III. FB Procurement – a competitive procurement to replace the existing rail crossing, including crossing panels, brick pavers, rail, ties, and undercutting ballast at the Waterfront Transit Line - Overlook.

Kathleen McGervey, Engineering Project Manager, explained the need for a full rehabilitation — replacing panels, rails, and ties to ensure safe and reliable transit.

Jonathan Laule, Program Contract Manager, stated that three bids were submitted and that staff recommends Railworks Track Services, LLC for the rehabilitation of the Overlook in an amount not to exceed \$1,192,000.

IV. IFB Procurement – a competitive procurement to rehabilitate the Shaker Square Substation building's exterior veneer system due to water infiltration issues. The new substation brick will match the refaced brick veneer guard walls at road level along Shaker Blvd.

Matthew Marotta, Resident Engineer II, described ongoing water infiltration issues and outlined the plan: demolish and rebuild the exterior veneer, replace coping caps, tuckpoint brick, repair concrete,

and upgrade lighting and ventilation. This project is the final phase of a multi-year effort to restore Shaker Blvd's infrastructure.

Jonathan Laule, Program Contract Manager, stated that staff requests the Committee to recommend award to Northeast Ohio Trenching Service, Inc., for this project in amount not to exceed \$715,000.

V. IFB Procurement – a competitive procurement for a contractor to install fiber optic cable infrastructure for the GCRTA Trunk Line.

Andrew Korman, Engineer Project Manager, Electrical, stated that this procurement is a continuation of the fiber project, following a project on the Red Line. Fiber will be installed from the Kinsman Road bungalow to Shaker Junction, and represents an improvement, as there is no fiber on this part of the rail section.

The scope of work is to install fiberoptic cables along the trunk line. The contractor will provide all hardware to install the cable.

Lou Catalusci, Contract Administrator II, stated that three firms submitted a bid and staff requests That the Committee recommend award to Edgar Trent Construction Company LLC for the trunk line fiber optic fiber optic cable network construction project in an amount not to exceed \$848,605.

Ms. Pacetti requested more context. Mr. Korman explained that due to grant money, the fiber projects are being carried out in phases. The Red Line was first, followed by the trunk line and the Blue and Green lines will follow. Currently

VI. 2027 – 2031 Capital Improvement Plan Presentation

Eric Vukmanic, OMB Manager of Budgets, stated that the Capital Improvement Fund budget is split into two separate categories: the Capital fund and asset maintenance.

Two committees review and evaluate submitted capital requests. The capital program working group (CPWG) reviews project submissions and prioritizes projects. The Capital Oversight Committee reviews CPWG recommendations, assess how projects align with the strategic plan and makes a final decision based on funding availability and return on capital investment.

The capital improvement plan started back in September 2025 when we opened the apex system to collect project submissions from project managers across the authority. The Budget Office reviewed and organized the projects. In February, recommendations were made to the CPOC.

In March, the CPOC reviewed the projects and put together a five-year Capital Improvement Plan. Staff's goal is to submit the plan to NOACA for review and approval in June. The ranking criteria used based on their weights are the state of good repair, health and safety mandates, ridership, TOD, the operating budget impact and environmental impact.

The five-year proposed CIP of \$732.4 million with \$180.2 million in 2027 is led by the railcar program, facility improvements and buses.

Mike Schipper, Deputy General Manager, Engineering & Project Management, summarized projects slated for 2027. He added that GCRTA will have more money in 2027 due to winning several competitive grants. The major programs will include railcar replacement, lift replacements and facility improvements. This is the beginning of a multi-year program to look at that for bus garages.

The vehicle program includes the procurement of 40-foot CNG buses and twenty (20) paratransit vehicles to expand the fleet to 100. Facility projects include the track bridge over Canal Road, roofs, paving and elevators and escalators. Rail projects are a significant piece of CIP and include design work supporting light rail, the signal system, reconstructing the Blue Line and ADA-complaint stations.

Mr. Schipper advised that there are more projects than money available and the CIP includes unfunded necessities.

Mary Flannery, Grants Management Administrator, stated that federal funding is by far the largest component of GCRTA project funding at 48%. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding is set to expire in September 2026. Proposed federal budget cuts may hit GCRTA by \$15–\$18 million in the out-years, causing the agency to budget conservatively and maintain an unfunded needs list. GCRTA is having internal discussions on how to proceed if competitive grant funding is reduced or eliminated in 2028.

Ms. Flannery advised that total grant awards in 2025 were \$28 million. Competitive grants awarded to date in 2026 include \$10 million for light rail track rehabilitation through the ODOT track program and \$250,000 in Community project funding and the bus improvement program \$16.74 million from NOACA over two years.

GCRTA has \$49 million in pending grant applications, including \$20.5 million for the MetroHealth BRT and \$20 million to rehabilitate seven Green Line rail platforms. Staff intends to apply for additional grants for various projects, including the Triskett roof replacement, replacement buses, the Kinsman Road corridor TOD planning project and Ohio Workforce Mobility enhancements.

Mr. Love noted that the MetroHealth West 25th BRT had a \$21 million funding gap and questioned how staff would address that financial shortfall. Mr. Schipper explained that staff has requested \$20.5 million in small starts grant for construction and already has \$12 million plus the match from ODOT. The small starts grant is highly rated by the FTA and if Congress acts GCRTA would be in a position to go out to bid this fall. If grant funding is unsuccessful the project could be bid in segments.

Mr. Love referenced the Triskett roof replacement and questioned its long-term solar readiness. Mr. Schipper advised that staff unsuccessfully submitted for a grant last year. The grant application was highly rated but not funded. Staff will again apply for a grant this year. He noted that due to the building's original design, the roof may only be 30% utilized for solar.

Mayor Koomar stated that there were suggestions that transit funding may be curtailed by the current administration and questioned whether the CIP would be affected by changes. CEO Terry stated that nearly 100% of the CIP is fully funded, although a couple other areas are in limbo.

Mr. Schipper stated that there's only about 15 agencies around the country that are eligible. with the grant Mary turned in last week, if we were to receive that, that would be the last time we would need a grant like that because every one of our rail stations will be ADA accessible. if we lose this year and it disappears, that's a problem for. that's why we are going to make at the federal level, our two big pushes are to get MetroHealth and to get the ASAP.

Mr. Love moved and Ms. Pacetti seconded to suspend the Committee meeting. The motion passed.

Public Hearing

Mr. Vukmanic read the official budget statement, indicating that this is the official public hearing on the proposed Capital Improvement Budget for the fiscal year 2027 to 2031. He explained that the CIP budget process started in September 2025 wherein requests were submitted for review. The projects

were reviewed by the Capital Program working group and Capital Program Oversight Committee. The fiscal year 2027 to 2031 CIP was completed in April 2026 to comply with NOACA's revised project planning review schedule, which ensures that funding will be aligned with the fiscal years of NOACA, ODOT and FTA.

The fiscal year 2027 to 2031 CIP totals \$732.4 million, of which \$180.2 million is budgeted in fiscal year 2027. The Authority's focus continues to be on replacement of rail vehicles and rail infrastructure projects. The 2027 to 2031 CIP includes projects that are not fully funded, where funding sources are yet to be determined. Unfunded projects total approximately \$285 million where the local match has been reserved but total federal funding has not been identified.

Sales tax is the funding source for 100% locally funded projects as well as the local match for federal and State awards. The Authority's financial goal is to transfer a minimum of 10% of the annual sales tax receipts into the CIP.

Public Comments

Members of the public addressed the Board regarding both agenda and non-agenda items. Public comments submitted through the webform will appear in their original form and have not been edited for grammar or content. GCRTA reserves the right not to publish any explicit language, derogatory remarks, or personal attacks against individuals.

1. Loh (in-person)

Lon referenced the reality of an aging population and stressed that paratransit alone is insufficient due to booking and cancellation lag times. She urged GCRTA to design all future fixed-route buses and railcars with robust ADA compliance so riders with spontaneous needs can use the standard rapid and bus networks.

2. Brian Hagar (phone)

Mr. Hagar expressed concern regarding non-functional wheelchair ramps on existing vehicles and relayed passenger complaints regarding drivers passing up riders in wheelchairs along Routes 3, 10, and 11.

Ms. Pacetti moved and Mr. Love seconded to adjourn the public hearing and reconvene the Committee meeting. The motion carried.

Mr. Vukmanic stated that staff recommends that the Committee present the 2027 to 2031 CIP resolution to the Board of for approval.

Ms. Pacetti moved to advance the item to the Board of Trustees; Mr. Love seconded. The motion carried.

VII. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Sleasman moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Pacetti. The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.


Rajan D. Gautam
Secretary/Treasurer


Brent Charnigo
Board Administrator