

## Chapter I. *Transit 2025* Long-Range Plan Vision, Purpose and Strategic Initiatives

### *Transit 2025 - Vision*

RTA's *Transit 2025* Long-Range Plan envisions a sustainable, balanced transportation system for Greater Cleveland, with public transit playing a vital role in that system. Accounting for people's choices for where they live, work, shop, and spend leisure time, *Transit 2025* encourages transit-supportive land-use patterns that improve mobility and access for area residents and visitors.

RTA's day-to-day operations and future plans must directly reflect the enabling legislation that created the Authority in 1975. Both state (Ohio Revised Code Section 306) and municipal legislation enabled the creation of RTA. A key part of that legislation is City of Cleveland Ordinance #2390-B-74 Section 1:

*"That it is hereby determined that the creation of a regional transit authority is necessary to provide a coordinated, consolidated, comprehensive public mass transportation system, to enable residents of the City and County to travel to and from their homes, jobs, and other destinations in a convenient, safe, and economical manner, to facilitate and advance the commercial and economic development of the City and County, and to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the City and County."*

This legislative mandate for the Authority's purpose is expanded in RTA's Motto, Mission, and Priority Policy Goals. *Transit 2025* embodies these legislative and strategic directives.

**MOTTO**        *"Quality Service: Every Customer, Every Day."*

**MISSION**        RTA enhances the quality of life in Greater Cleveland by providing outstanding, cost-effective public transportation services.

### **PRIORITY POLICY GOALS**

#### **I. CUSTOMER FOCUS**

Provide quality service to all customers, and support our employees in that endeavor.

#### **II. EXPAND AND REORGANIZE SERVICE**

Expand and reorganize services to retain our current riders and attract new riders by providing service that meets customer and community needs.

#### **III. PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE**

Prepare for the future by forging new partnerships and strengthening existing ones with the public and private sectors to establish policies, funding, and technologies that support cost-effective public transportation.

#### **IV. IMPROVE FINANCIAL HEALTH**

Improve the agency's financial health through efficient use of resources and the pursuit of new revenue sources.

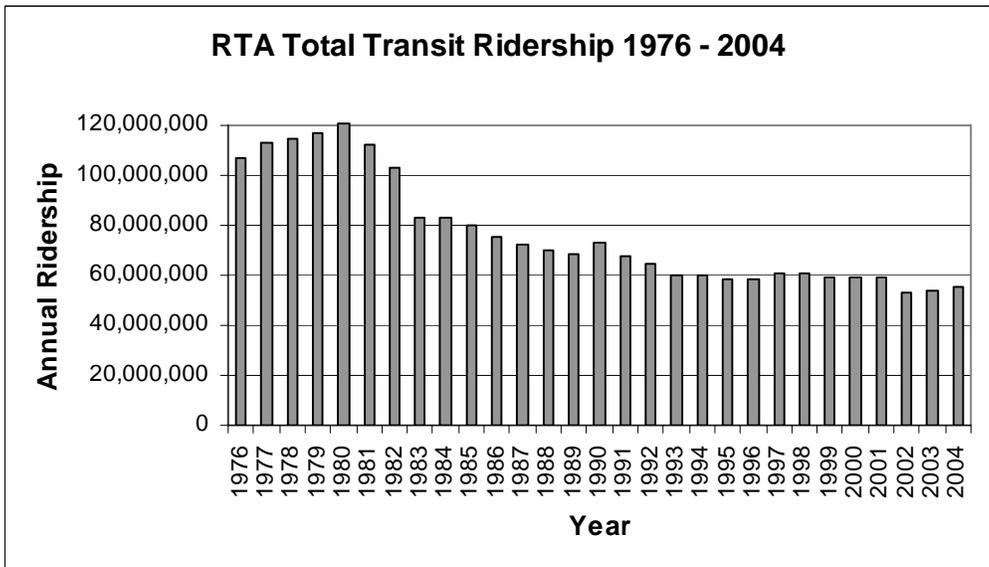
#### **V. PROVIDE COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

Provide social, economic and environmental benefits to the community through system improvements.

Table 1.1 RTA At-A-Glance in 2004

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Annual Operating Budget                  | \$224.5 million   |
| Employees                                | 2,660   |
| Ridership                                | 55.5 million (unlinked) trips   |
| Service Area                             | 458 square miles<br>59 municipalities<br>1.4 million people                       |
| Bus Service                              | 650 buses<br>1,500 shelters<br>8,423 bus stops<br>101 routes<br>1,666 route miles |
| Red Line Rapid Transit                   | 60 heavy-rail cars<br>18 stations<br>19 route-miles of track                      |
| Blue/Green/Waterfront Line Rapid Transit | 48 light rail cars<br>34 stations<br>15 route-miles of track                      |
| Community Circulators                    | 55 vehicles, 10 routes  |
| Paratransit                              | 77 vehicles   |
| Park & Ride Lots                         | 8,500 spaces  |
| Bridges                                  | 47 RTA-owned structures   |
| RTA Answerline: 216.621.9500             | Over 1 million calls  |
| RTA Web Site: www.RideRTA.com            | 4.6 million hits  |
| Source: GCRTA 2004 Annual Report         |   |

Table 1.2 RTA Ridership



## ***Transit 2025 - Purpose and Need***

The purpose of *Transit 2025* is to maximize the near-term and long-term quality, safety and productivity of RTA services. To achieve this, RTA is targeting two policy goal areas: Customer Focus and Financial Health. Through this framework, *Transit 2025* guides RTA towards an affordable future transit system, one that meets customer needs and complements other elements of the region's transportation system, including bicycling and walking.

Metropolitan planning organizations typically prepare the federally-mandated comprehensive long-range transportation plans. Such plans serve as the basis for federal funding of capital projects for transit, ports, waterways and highways. The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) prepares and updates this region's long-range transportation plan update covering Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties. Because RTA is the largest transit operator in Northeast Ohio, its projects comprise the major portion of the NOACA long-range plan transit element. In order to expedite updating of the region's long-range plan by NOACA, it was agreed that RTA, with assistance from NOACA, would develop a long-range transit plan that could serve as input into the NOACA long-range plan.

Since the adoption of RTA's first long-range plan in 1993 and revision of that plan in 1998, freedom of travel for Greater Cleveland's residents remains hindered by many factors adversely affecting the quality of life in RTA's service area. They include:

- Insufficient development in urban areas, with accelerated creation of suburban job centers and residential areas,
- Increasing travel delays for autos and buses due to road projects, road capacity, and traffic accidents;
- Transit-dependent persons, especially current/former welfare clients unable to reach jobs/job training;
- More families throughout the region with income below poverty levels;
- Increasing auto ownership costs;
- Regional development patterns and community facilities that fail to accommodate public transit, resulting in places that are difficult or impossible to reach by transit;
- Loss of downtown Cleveland as the sole commercial/job area, which increased the importance of access to suburban destinations.

Additionally, NOACA, the 5-county region's metropolitan planning organization, provides the following "big picture" trends as background for future expectations in its five-county region.

### ***From 1960 to 2000:***

- Population of the Cuyahoga, Lake, Geauga, Medina, and Lorain area has grown 1%.
- Population has declined in Cuyahoga County but has grown in the four other counties.
- More than 100 of the 175 communities in the region grew in population between the 1990 and 2000 Census. These are typically communities in outlying areas of the region.
- Two-thirds of the region's population live in communities that have lost population. These are typically communities that are closest to the heart of the region.
- The number of households has grown more than 40%.
- The number of registered passenger vehicles and non-commercial trucks has more than doubled.
- Freeway lane-miles in the 5-county region have increased from 250 miles to 1500 miles.
- Annual vehicle miles of travel in the region have increased from 6.9 billion to 15.9 billion.
- Vehicle emissions declined from 345 tons per day to 73 tons per day.

### **From 1980 to 2000:**

- Automobile fuel consumption declined 10% from 1980 to 1990, but increased by 12% from 1990 to 2000.
- Automobile crashes declined 25%, and crash fatalities declined 50%.
- Air quality improved from a moderate non-attainment for ozone to a maintenance area
- 2,047 Cleveland housing permits issued (1990-2000).

Job availability in Cuyahoga County is a major determinant of RTA's success. Between 1970 and 1999, overall employment in the region increased by 25%. But the majority of those jobs were not located in the City of Cleveland or Cuyahoga County. This is reflected in U.S. Census figures that show major changes in the number of commuters going from residence to workplace. From 1970 to 1980 in the 5-county NOACA region, the number of people leaving Cuyahoga County to work in the 4 adjoining counties increased by 44%. From 1970 to 1990, while there was only a 12% increase in people traveling to work, those leaving Cuyahoga County for work in the 4 adjoining counties increased by 82%, nearly double the amount in the 1970 to 1980 period. As jobs continue to move outward, the region's transit authorities will need to improve service coordination to better accommodate inter-county trips. However, transit will likely lose market share once people relocate their homes closer to their jobs in outlying areas.

According to the 1980 Census, public transportation carried 10.6% of all trips made by Cuyahoga County residents. The 1990 Census reported this number at about 8%. The 2000 Census indicates that public transit's share of work trip travel has fallen to 6%. These and other factors adversely affect the quality of life in RTA's service area. This update of RTA's Long-Range Plan takes a thorough, systematic look at what major changes are needed in this area's transit network in the years ahead to address these factors.

### **Future Plans by Others**

The need to update any plan becomes apparent when major changes occur in key elements of that plan and/or the issues the plan is intended to address. Plans are also revised by federal mandate, as is the case with the five-county region's long-range plan, which must be updated by NOACA every three years.

RTA last updated its first long-range plan, *Transit 2010* (1993) during 1996 and 1997, in conjunction with NOACA's updating of the region's long-range plan. The following are among the principal reasons for the current update.

#### *Framework for Action 2025 NOACA Region Long Range Plan 2005 Update*

*Framework for Action 2025* is the transportation plan for the NOACA region, which includes Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties. It is a goal-oriented plan that addresses specific federal requirements by including air-quality conformity analysis, a fiscally-constrained list of transportation projects and other required elements. Most recently updated by NOACA in 2005, guides all major transportation improvement projects sponsored by RTA, the Ohio Department of Transportation, and counties and municipalities in the NOACA region. Homeland security, transportation safety and energy conservation were major additions to the plan's goals with this update.

*Framework for Action 2025* includes major regional projects that are proposed for implementation over a 20-year time frame. These projects are included in one of four project tiers:

- *Tier I* – Projects that are in an advanced state of planning whose funding has been identified. With the exception of the Turnpike projects, all are expected to use federal funds. These projects are on the fiscally balanced part of the Plan and are used to perform the federally required air-quality analysis. These projects are expected to be constructed within the next five years. RTA's Euclid Corridor Transportation Project is found in this category.
- *Tier II* – Tier II projects are those at an advanced stage of planning whose funding has been guaranteed by the project sponsor, but no federal funds have been identified at this time. Since the project sponsor has agreed to find a way to finance the project, they are also on the fiscally balanced part of the Plan and are used to perform the federally required air-quality analysis. The projects are expected to be constructed within the next 20 years.
- *Tier III* --Tier III projects are those undergoing a Major Investment Study (MIS) or equivalent, or needing an MIS or equivalent. RTA's rapid transit extension and remaining transit center projects fall into this category.
- *Tier IV* – Tier IV projects are projects or concepts that are part of a visionary plan. The NOACA Governing Board approved the current four-tier listing of regional investments in summer 2002 along with the *Framework for Action 2025 plan*. The Solon Transit Center, North Coast Intermodal Transportation Center, and commuter rail are found in this category.

A key element of the region's transportation plan is air quality attainment. For National Ambient Air Quality Standards, the NOACA region is in "monitored attainment" for 6 key emissions standards, including ozone. Thus, the 2030 plan is in conformity with federal requirements. However, the United States Environmental Protection Agency has updated its standards for ozone and particulate matter to an eight-hour standard. Although these standards are still being challenged in court, current measurements by NOACA indicate that Northeast Ohio will be a non-attainment area in ozone and particulate matter by the new standards. This suggests a greater role for public transit as the revised standards take effect.

A copy of the NOACA plan and the project tier list may be obtained from NOACA or at <http://www.noaca.org/2030connections.pdf> and <http://www.noaca.org/tiers1-4.pdf>

#### *Civic Vision 2010 Citywide Plan*

The City of Cleveland has begun revising its comprehensive master plan. When completed, it will serve as a long-term plan for neighborhood development and revitalization, a guide for evaluating development proposals, and a tool for marketing Cleveland's neighborhoods for new development. The Citywide Plan will analyze current conditions and prepare goals and policies concerning neighborhood development and quality of life. Key elements of the plan will be land use, transportation, zoning and capital improvements. For more information, see <http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/cwp/whatis.html>.

#### *Connecting Cleveland: The Lakefront Plan/ Waterfront District Plan*

The City of Cleveland is working on a development plan for the roughly eight-mile long Lakefront between West Blvd. and Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd. Both the land development and the transit service to support it are expected to occur gradually over several decades. In cooperation with the City, the RTA has sketched out a transit plan to support an intense level of development with a constrained parking supply.

Major components of this transit plan are:

- Extension of the Waterfront Line from its current terminus at South Harbor/Municipal Parking Lot along the railroad corridor to a new terminus near E. 88<sup>th</sup> St., with intermediate stations at E. 18<sup>th</sup>, E. 40<sup>th</sup>, E. 55<sup>th</sup>, and E. 72<sup>nd</sup> Streets. An extension to the Collinwood area is also a consideration.
- A tram route or other line-haul service along the lakefront boulevard linking the Waterfront Line's eastern terminus with a transit center near Public Square.
- A Bus Rapid Transit line along what is now the West Shoreway, between the transit center near Public Square and a terminus in the western suburbs.
- Extension of crosstown routes (e.g., #2, #45, and #807) to serve lakefront venues.
- Relocation of selected bus routes (e.g., Route #39) to serve Lakeside Avenue between E. 18<sup>th</sup> and E. 9<sup>th</sup> Streets.
- A system of community circulator routes to feed trips to, and distribute trips from, the Waterfront Line and other line-haul services.

For more information, see <http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/lakefront/> and <http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/lakefront/finalgraphics/concept05-flash.htm>



### Cleveland Innerbelt Plan (Underway)

The purpose of this plan is to develop a strategy for the intelligent renewal of the transportation infrastructure within the Innerbelt Corridor. The majority of this infrastructure was constructed over a 10-year period that began in the late 1950s. This corridor has endured nearly 40 years of traffic and an equal number of Northeast Ohio winters. As a result, the bridge decks and pavements are approaching the end of their useful lives and will require major rehabilitation or replacement before the end of this decade. Working in partnership with numerous public, private, neighborhood and community organizations, the Ohio Department of Transportation and its consultants are investigating the physical and operational deficiencies of the Innerbelt Corridor infrastructure.

In conjunction with the renewal of bridge and roadway infrastructure within the Innerbelt Corridor, the Innerbelt Plan includes four other key elements for improving mobility in and through downtown Cleveland, the Flats and University Circle areas. These are being addressed by the following Innerbelt Plan subarea studies: Cuyahoga River Valley Intermodal Connector Study, Cleveland Lakefront West, Opportunity Corridor and Quigley Road Connector. The Lakefront West and Opportunity Corridor elements would have the greatest potential benefits to RTA, as these areas presently support a significant amount of public transit service. For more on the Cleveland Innerbelt Study and its related elements see <http://www.innerbelt.org/>

### *Cuyahoga County Planning Commission and Other Initiatives*

There are numerous major planning initiatives underway at the county level that RTA will play an important role in. **The Cuyahoga Valley Initiative** seeks to influence development patterns, construction practices and industrial processes for the next generation using a sustainable development approach based on the integration of economic, social and ecological systems. The **County Greenspace Plan** is aimed at preserving the county's greenspace as well as enhancing and increasing what exists. Reducing automobile dependence and increasing public transit access will be an important element in the success of these two projects sponsored by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission. The County Planning Commission is also engaged in developing and updating master plans for numerous municipalities in Cuyahoga County. These plans set key development patterns throughout RTA's service area, and it is important that future public transit services and future land use plans are developed in concert. For more information about County Planning initiatives see <http://planning.co.cuyahoga.oh.us/>.

### *Senior Transportation*

The Cuyahoga County Department of Senior & Adult Services and the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission have undertaken a comprehensive study to develop a strategic plan that will provide for the availability of, and access to, sufficient transportation services for older adults in Cuyahoga County. This study is known as the "Cuyahoga County Strategic Plan for Senior Transportation." Seniors, defined as persons over 60 years of age, comprise 19.6 percent of Cuyahoga County's population, according to the 2000 Census of Population. Surveys of this population consistently reveal that transportation is a critical need necessary to maintain basic living standards.

Without access to safe, reliable, efficient and affordable transportation, seniors may be unable to obtain medical care, groceries, banking services, or entertainment. This can put added burden on family members who must assume responsibilities for elder transportation, even if a senior is able-bodied and capable of handling their affairs. Where family members are unable to assist, this transportation problem isolates seniors and diminishes their quality of life.

RTA is among the major partners assisting Cuyahoga County in implementing its senior transportation strategic plan. In early 2006 service will be provided by a new non-profit Senior Transportation Organization (STO) dedicated to accommodating up to an estimated 1.26 million annual senior trips. RTA will provide the STO with a license to its service scheduling software, and will eventually provide business incubator service to the STO for things like accounting and finance, personnel and labor relations, marketing and public relations and purchasing and procurement.

### *Ohio and Erie Canal and Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad*

The Ohio and Erie Canalway, stretching 110-miles from New Philadelphia to Cleveland is comprised of three key linkages that touch RTA's service area: the Towpath Trail, Scenic

Byway, and Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad. Through various initiatives including its Bicycles on Transit program, RTA is improving access to the Cleveland Metroparks System and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Many RTA routes intersect the Scenic Byway, Towpath Trail and Scenic Railroad. While the Scenic Byway can be accessed in Cleveland's Flats area in downtown, both the Towpath Trail and Scenic Railroad stop short of downtown Cleveland. Efforts are underway to extend both of these important elements of the Canalway into downtown Cleveland in coming years. See <http://planning.co.cuyahoga.oh.us/towpath/> and <http://www.cvsr.com/index.shtml>.

#### *Ohio Hub Study*

The Ohio Rail Development Commission has embarked upon a major study to determine the feasibility of establishing intercity passenger rail service linking Ohio's major cities. The Ohio & Lake Erie Regional Rail Ohio Hub Study is being conducted in cooperation with neighboring states to the east and west to develop a coordinated passenger rail network for the Midwest. At full build-out this system could provide a viable alternative to other travel modes by supporting an estimated 2 million to 3 million annual passenger trips by train. Intercity train stations proposed for Cleveland Hopkins Airport and downtown Cleveland's lakefront would provide unsurpassed intermodal connectivity for Greater Cleveland's residents and visitors. See [http://www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail/Programs/Passenger/Ohio\\_Hub\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail/Programs/Passenger/Ohio_Hub_Executive_Summary.pdf)

### **Other Challenges for Public Transit**

RTA has profound effect on the region's quality of life. To maintain and extend its success, RTA needs to adapt service to the changing needs of the community and provide regional solutions valid through 2025. However, RTA, like many transit service providers, is at a cross-roads. National surveys have found that most trips taken in the U.S. are for family and personal business or socializing/recreation, rather than for work. Also, auto use has continued to climb because of the auto's inherent advantage in serving the auto-oriented land development patterns that prevail in this country. The challenge for RTA and other public transit providers may best be met by focusing more closely on customer needs. The role of transit may need to be broadened, as suggested by a group of national transit leaders, to become: "managers of mobility." The mobility manager's role is to oversee a portfolio of services, encourage competition as appropriate, coordinate systems, and ensure that the entire system is convenient and user-friendly."

RTA must diversify its services in response to its customers' travel needs. Future RTA options can include flexible routing, more community circulators and suburb-to-suburb routes, longer-distance bus and rail services, and state-of-the-art travel information systems. For example, the US Department of Transportation's National Household Travel Survey has found that in the past 15 years, the average length of a work trip has grown from roughly 9 to 11 miles. In contrast, trips taken in Ohio by auto are now 10 miles long on average, while trips taken via typical U.S. transit buses and rapid transit trains average between 3 and 5 miles in length. For U.S. commuter rail service, trips average about 20 miles. This means that these longer-distance trips cannot easily be served by RTA's traditional bus and rapid transit lines, and that more freeway-based transit services are needed.

RTA continues to provide service to downtown Cleveland for jobs and special events. As the suburbs and outlying areas continue to grow, Cleveland's downtown core is increasingly becoming less of a focus for trips. In the future, RTA must meet the challenges of providing public transit in lower density areas. To serve lower density auto-oriented areas, and to provide longer-distance services will require increased funding, since cost per passenger will rise.

To counteract sprawl, RTA and many other U.S. transit providers are turning to Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Joint Development. TOD focuses a mix of land-uses, such as residential, office, shopping, civic uses and entertainment within a 5 to 10 minute walking distance from a transit station. This mix of uses, combined with pedestrian-friendly community spaces, helps create vibrant places where people enjoy living, working and playing. RTA's role in TOD is to proactively work with local communities and developers to encourage this type of development around its rail and bus hubs. A key benefit is the greater use of transit and less reliance on the automobile. TOD is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

*Louis Stokes Station at Windermere ·  
Grand Re-Opening in 1997*



*The Council of Economic Opportunities of Greater Cleveland (CEOGC) Childcare Center adjacent to the Louis Stokes Station at Windermere opened in 2002. In 1996 RTA received a \$3.2 million Livable Communities Initiative grant, the nation's largest that year, to jointly develop the center with CEOGC.*

## Customer Focus

The “Customer Focus” RTA Policy Goal represents the Authority's commitment to "provide quality service to all customers, and support our employees in that endeavor." With respect to the Long-Range Plan, Total Quality at RTA means understanding and meeting the needs of persons within RTA's service area.

To achieve this understanding, RTA requested input from its employees, the public, elected officials, citizen groups, and municipal and private sector planners, through a series of surveys and meetings. These needs include short-distance trips taken just in neighborhoods, medium-distance trips taken between suburbs, and longer-distance, two-way trips taken between Cleveland's and Cuyahoga County's neighboring suburbs and counties, and downtown Cleveland.

The need for travel depends upon many factors, but Greater Cleveland, like many other developing regions, has numerous destinations, including work, education, entertainment, shopping and recreation. The overriding desires heard from participants in the process to update RTA's long-range plan included:

- Service quality and the environment of RTA vehicles/facilities are very important
- All components of the Long-Range Plan are important (e.g. circulators, park-n-ride lots, transit centers). But in spite of their relatively high costs, rapid transit and commuter rail should not be completely excluded from long-term planning consideration
- RTA should extend service further out, but must consider sprawl impacts
- Transit service must be coordinated with other service providers
- Service coordination should occur with new developments, and at municipally-preferred hubs
- The Long-Range Plan must support and encourage core area reinvestment
- RTA should provide better access to jobs, and support welfare reform
- Rapid transit extensions, commuter rail, park & ride lots/transit centers, and community circulators were important elements to consider including or expanding in the future transit network.

## Conclusion and Strategic Initiatives

In shaping the future transit system, RTA is focused on the basics: excel in customer safety and service while controlling costs. RTA will also pursue transit-oriented joint development around its key bus and rail hubs, and advocate strongly for transit-supportive land use tools. *Transit 2025* supports these initiatives by providing a cost-effective blueprint for meeting Greater Cleveland's future travel needs.

Projects to bring RTA's vehicles and facilities up to a state of good repair represent the vast majority of *Transit 2025* major investments. Other projects are service related, including improving the suburban transit network and providing flexible routing (route deviation) for selected bus lines. Better transit circulation in the suburbs as well as Cleveland, strengthening service to Cleveland's lakefront, and developing compact land uses with transit oriented design near RTA passenger facilities are other priorities of the *Transit 2025* plan.

To address its many future challenges, RTA will pursue the following strategic initiatives.

## **TRANSIT 2025 Long Range Plan Strategic Initiatives**

The Census and travel data presented in the Long Range Plan identifies less population, fewer jobs in the central city and continued expansion of “ex-urban” areas in regions across the U.S., including Greater Cleveland. This creates a major challenge for public transit authorities to provide cost-effective service. RTA’s strategic vision must acknowledge this likely future of its market and adjust its services to meet the changing demands. A number of initiatives outlined in later chapters of the *Transit 2025* Long Range Plan document are intended to help address projected ridership patterns and establish new transit markets. They are summarized below.

### **1. Optimize Existing GCRTA Services.**

RTA has been working to increase the efficiency of existing bus service through its service planning efforts. The bus system undoubtedly will continue to be refined to meet changing customer demands efficiently. Becoming aware of travel needs and adjusting schedules to meet these demands is part of this initiative. An example is to ensure bus schedules are compatible with work and school dismissal times to gain ridership.

Maximizing connections with community circulator and rapid transit routes is also essential for improved effectiveness of all modes in RTA’s service network. Trading the reduction of competing and unnecessary services for the provision of new services to capture new travel markets is part of this assessment.

#### Objectives:

1. Complete the Downtown On-Board Survey passenger needs assessment for the Cleveland downtown area. Revise route systems as necessary to reflect more efficient service based upon the survey results.
2. Continue analyzing bus service in a systematic and programmed manner to assess the level of existing service to meet current and future demands.
3. Review new developments, as they occur, to determine what, if any, levels of RTA service should be provided.
4. Review RTA service to eliminate as much service duplication as possible while still meeting customer demand.
5. Work with municipal boards of education, colleges and universities to make transit a more viable travel option for students. This includes expanding RTA’s U-Pass program.
6. Encourage growth in Commuter Advantage membership and develop a transit validation program with merchants.
7. Maximize transit efficiency through technology applications like traffic signal priority.

## 2. Complete the Park-n-Ride/Transit Center Network.

RTA has been actively engaged in developing a network of suburban park-n-rides/transit centers since the 1993 adoption of its first Long Range Plan *Transit 2010*. RTA now owns six such facilities in Strongsville, Euclid, Westlake, Fairview Park, Maple Heights, and North Olmsted. The completion of this network and deployment of the local, commuter, and regional services through these hubs will provide RTA with an opportunity to more efficiently increase its services to suburban residents. The network can also substantially improve reverse-commute opportunities for urban residents. The capital and service elements can assist RTA in meeting the increasing demands of suburban patrons and also decrease the redundancy of service into the urban core. Part of this effort could include new service initiatives such as flexible routing and increased demand responsive services for more suburban routes.

### Objectives:

1. Accelerate the Park-n-Ride/Transit Center Program per the long-range plan and in accordance with 5-year Capital Improvement Plan. Six facilities are proposed in Parma, Brecksville, Independence, Oakwood, Solon, Mayfield/Highland Heights.
2. Consider additional park-n-ride/transit centers, perhaps in collaboration with other Transit Agencies in the region (Metro RTA of Summit County, Laketran, Lorain County Transit, etc.)
3. Review capacity of existing park-n-ride lots and if necessary, program the costs for expansion in the capital budget. In particular, high-use lots in North Olmsted, Strongsville and Westlake should be reviewed. Continue working with the Ohio Department of Transportation to identify how RTA's park-n-ride lots can support Cleveland Innerbelt Corridor reconstruction.



*RTA's North Olmsted Transit Center/Park-n-Ride Lot opened in 2003 and reached full capacity shortly thereafter. Expansion plans are underway.*

### **3. Coordinate with Other Transit Agencies in the Region.**

As growth continues in the neighboring counties, inter-county travel will continue to grow. It is essential for all of the region's transit authorities, e.g. Summit County's Metro RTA, Lake County's Laketransit, Lorain County Transit, and Portage Area RTA, to work cooperatively to provide high-quality public transit. Coordination of transfer points, schedules, fare media, and services can improve transit's overall ability to serve the entire region more effectively.

#### Objectives:

1. Convene interagency meetings as needed to discuss service and common transit issues.
2. Review and evaluate projects that may have regional transportation benefits such as park-n-ride locations, transfer policies, service opportunities, and transfer points.
3. Support other transit authority project proposals at the Metropolitan Planning Organization, State, and Federal levels.
4. Pursue opportunities to develop a more regional approach to public transit in Northeast Ohio to reduce duplication of expenses and services and to leverage regional expertise. For example, this would include participating in Cuyahoga County's Strategic Plan for Senior Transportation.

### **4. Upgrade Existing Bus and Rail Passenger Facilities and Fleet.**

Red, Blue and Green Line rapid transit stations were initially built between the 1930s and 1950s. Since 1980, ten Red Line stations and twenty-six Blue and Green Line stations have received major renovation, including Tower City. Previously renovated Red Line Stations are: Airport, West Park, Triskett, Cudell/West Boulevard, West 25<sup>th</sup>, E. 105<sup>th</sup> & Quincy, Superior, Stokes/Windermere, and West 65<sup>th</sup> St. EcoVillage.

ADA station improvements have been made at University/ Cedar, Brookpark, Warrensville, and Green Road. However, some stations are past their useful life. They require substantial reconstruction to meet current ADA and safety requirements, and to provide an attractive image for the riding public. Red Line stations at W. 117<sup>th</sup>, Puritas/W. 150<sup>th</sup>, Brookpark, University/Cedar and E. 120<sup>th</sup> St. and Blue/Green Line stations at Shaker Square, E. 93<sup>rd</sup>/Woodhill and Lee/Van Aken are slated for major improvements next. General station upgrades are recently completed or underway at several other Blue/ Green line stations like E. 116<sup>th</sup> St. and Drexmore.

These investments will increase the attractiveness of RTA's facilities and enhance the image of our services. RTA will also continue to modernize its bus and rail fleet. With both rail fleets at their mid-life, planning the replacement of the fleet is essential given the possible capital cost.

#### 4. Upgrade Existing Bus and Rail Passenger Facilities and Fleet. – continued-

RTA must decide if the acquisition of a uniform fleet of new Red and Blue/Green Line rail cars would be more cost effective than maintaining two separate fleets, given the number of facilities that would require modification. The size of RTA's future fleets and facilities must also be more closely scaled to the amount of funds it can reasonably expect to receive in the future for rehabilitation, operations, and maintenance.

Additionally, RTA is designing improvements to the transit waiting environment at transit stops throughout the service area. A pioneering Transit Waiting Environments project is underway in Cleveland Heights. Other TWE projects will be implemented over time.

##### Objectives:

1. Expedite the Station Rehabilitation program as outlined in the ADA Key Station Plan and contained in the Capital Improvement Plan.
2. Review needs of all stations and complete maintenance/ renovation plans for those stations that are not covered by ADA or need rehabilitation prior to their ADA deadline. Create a Comprehensive Preventive Maintenance Program to keep RTA's stations and facilities in a good state of repair.
3. Continue the Bus Fleet Improvement Program (BIP) and Rail Vehicle overhaul Program as per the Capital Improvement Plan.
4. Establish an inter-divisional committee to review all aspects of fleet replacement and plan for the replacement of the rail fleet, specifically, vehicles and the cost implications on the Capital Improvement Plan.
5. Actively pursue Transit Waiting Environments (TWE) opportunities in partnership with municipalities, local development corporations and private businesses. Coordinate the TWE and Arts-In-Transit programs to the greatest extent possible.



*West 65<sup>th</sup> Lorain EcoVillage Rapid Transit Station – Grand Re-Opening in 2004.*



*In 2002 RTA began taking delivery of 225 new low-floor buses.*

## **5. Support Others on Transportation Planning Projects and Issues.**

RTA must continue to work with ODOT, Cuyahoga County, the City of Cleveland, all other municipalities in the County, local development corporations, planning commissions, et al. The purpose of this effort is to ensure the needs of public transit are addressed in planning efforts of others and not precluded. Examples include Cleveland's Lakefront and Citywide Plans, the Innerbelt Study, Crocker Park in Westlake, and the Shaker Heights Strategic Investment Plan. Supporting Cleveland's initiative for 500,000+ residents by 2010 is another example of an important RTA partnership contribution.

### **Objectives:**

1. Continue to represent RTA issues on the various committees for on-going projects such as the Innerbelt Study, the Lakefront Plan, Opportunity Corridor, etc.
2. Continue strategizing on what RTA divisions and/or departments take the lead on the various project planning efforts.
3. Proactively promote RTA in projects at the City, Region, and State level. Become more active in transit alternative planning in NOACA; take full advantage of NOACA's Regional Transportation Investment Policy transit planning section, requiring transit to be considered in all major investments.
4. Continue the close coordination of RTA Paratransit service plans with the Countywide Senior Planning and Transportation initiative. Minimize duplication of services and maximize efficiencies to seniors creating a comprehensive network. Also continue to support Cuyahoga County's Work Access Transportation Program.

**6. Complete the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project (ECTP). Investigate Bus Rapid Transit in other areas.**

This hallmark project will increase the efficiency and enhance RTA's service network in the most heavily traveled corridor in the system. The land use and economic development generated by this project will ensure the growth of this corridor and become a national example of the link between land use and transit service.

RTA has other corridors that may benefit from such service, however with less investment in roadways or streetscapes. The service levels, population, and density along portions of major arterial roads like Broadway, Clifton, Detroit, Lorain, and Mayfield may be better served by a bus rapid transit-like operation. Increasing the quality and speed of the service can increase ridership in these areas. RTA should study these corridors and others to determine the feasibility of significant, yet cost-effective, service enhancements.

Objectives:

1. With the ECTP Full Funding Grant Agreement now in place, complete the project by 2008.
2. Review high-density bus service corridors as potential candidates for BRT-like services, e.g. increased service frequencies all day, strict no parking enforcement in bus stops and curb lanes during rush hour/special events; traffic signal priority, off-board fare payment, etc.



*Euclid Corridor Transportation Project renderings; project completion is slated for 2008.*

## 7. Pursue Joint Development and Transit Oriented Development Projects (TOD).

RTA has been working on TOD projects for years. Westlake's Crocker Park, Cleveland Heights' Severance Town Center, Tower City and CEOGC's Head Start Center at the Louis Stokes Station at Windermere are examples. **TOD should be widely promoted across the region, especially in places like Chagrin Highlands.** All rail station renovations are being planned collaboratively with the active involvement of local development corporations, planning agencies, and developers to enhance the neighborhoods and to increase the vitality of the transit station. Station designs should include land use and development planning that is consistent with the land use and zoning of the area. Station designs should also help increase housing density and expand commercial activity directly adjacent to transit stations. Creating redevelopment opportunities near RTA stations will help meet the demand for urban housing while promoting easy access to transit, resulting in higher RTA ridership.

Objectives:

1. Create a development strategic priority plan for RTA /TOD sites.
2. Update joint development procedures used within RTA to streamline the process and enable RTA to respond to private developers in a more timely manner without violating any state, federal guidelines, regulations, statutes, or procedures; integrate station planning efforts.
3. Promote and maximize the benefits of RTA's Location Efficient Mortgage® (LEM) program, called The Smart Commute Initiative.

*(Location Efficient Mortgage® is a registered trademark of the Institute for Location Efficiency, a California Not-For-Profit organization).*



**Kamm's Youth Education Center**



*Youth center proposed for thr area adjacent to RTA's West Park Red Line Station.*

## **8. Invest in Capital Expansion of RTA System Elements that are Cost-Effective and Increase Ridership and Market Share.**

RTA has studied the extension of the Red Line into Berea, the Blue Line into Chagrin Highlands, and the extension of the Waterfront Line. The Southwest Corridor Study reviewed extension of the Red Line to serve Hopkins International Airport and surrounding business parks. An Intermodal Hub Study analyzed the site of a Greyhound/Amtrak intercity bus/rail hub to serve the area. Commuter rail has also been studied extensively by the region, and would be incorporated into this hub as well. Although these projects require significant resources to develop, they still represent important opportunities for RTA. Ridership forecasting models indicated that, while a Red Line extension into Berea would not make economic sense, a Red Line spur to the Hopkins Car Rental campus would gain a significant ridership base at a modest cost. Yet, the uncertainty of the future Hopkins master plan creates uncertainty for this transit project. A possible Blue Line extension, with branches to Warrensville Heights and/or North Randall, would only make sense if planned land use and development is transit friendly. Waterfront Line potential extension planning should be completed in concert with Cleveland's Lakefront Plan.

These expansions may help RTA reach new ridership markets to its benefit. But projects must be selected carefully to maximize the investment and outcome to RTA.

### Objectives:

1. Review planning projects that have been completed and rank in priority of cost-effectiveness and value-added to GCRTA.
2. Develop list of potential projects with low-cost alternatives that may assist in creating new market segments for GCRTA to serve.

## **9. Invest in Technology Upgrades to Assist in System Performance.**

Strategic investment in technological advances such as GIS, AVL and other technology that will upgrade the efficiency of RTA's service product would greatly enhance RTA's service delivery ability. This will also enhance communication of transit information to customers. Such investment should be strategic and cost effective as to provide the best product for the expense. RTA should continue to explore and deploy state-of-the-art technology systems.

### Objectives:

1. Investigate innovative methods to use existing technology to increase efficiency and service delivery.
2. Invest moderately in obtaining data and information that assists GCRTA in making good decisions on future projects and opportunities.

**9. Invest in technology upgrades to assist in system performance. – continued -**

3. Investigate and invest in signal prioritization programs with communities in areas where transit would benefit from increased travel speeds. Ensure that NOACA-funded signal projects include transit prioritization.
4. Expand the incorporation of Green Building (LEED) techniques/applications in RTA facilities and projects.
5. Expand RTA's real-time passenger information electronic sign network throughout the region.

**10. Configure the Downtown Bus/Rail Network and Interface to Achieve a Proper Downtown Distribution System.**

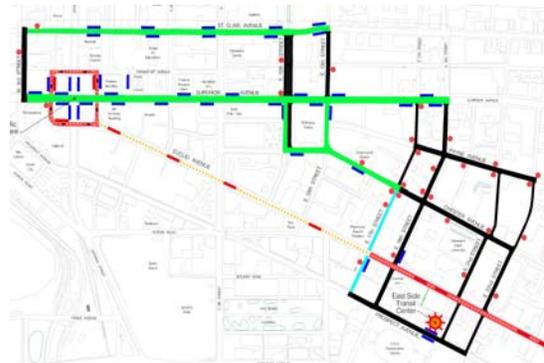
Downtown Cleveland has always suffered from a poor distribution system serving the Central Business District (CBD). A single main rail station and inefficient road and development patterns have been main causes. Over the years, RTA has struggled to provide loop bus services, over-lapped bus routes, etc. all to more evenly distribute passengers to their downtown destinations. With the advent of the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project (ECTP) service network, it is essential that RTA work with the business community and its services to provide high-quality transit access throughout the CBD.

Objectives:

1. Complete the downtown bus network planning efforts underway to more efficiently serve the central business district, including the emerging tourist and entertainment venues.
2. Complete the bus network planning necessary for ECTP and the East Side and West Side Transit Centers.
3. Continue reviewing existing bus network to ensure new downtown residents have adequate reverse commute services.



*RTA is investigating use of Trolley Vehicles to replace downtown Loop Buses*



*ECTP Transit Zone Vehicle Stops and Routes*