

November 12, 2025, at 5:00 PM



# STARK AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MEETING

**Stark Area Regional Transit Authority  
Board of Trustees  
October 22, 2025, at 5:00 PM  
Regular Meeting**

Mr. Macala called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

**Attendance**

**Board** (Quorum Present)

Ronald Macala (President), James Reinhard (Vice-President), Gregory Blasiman, NaSheka Combs-Lemon, Margaret Egbert, Rex Morey, Christopher Nichols, Chet Warren, and Myra Watkins

**Staff**

Ralph Lee (Interim Executive Director/CEO), Mark Finnicum (Chief Operating Officer), Tammy Marie Brown (Director, HR), Craig Smith (Director, IT), Clayton Popik (Director, Development & Special Projects), Latrice Virola (Director, Planning), Michael Brand (Interim Director, Finance), Jenna Anderson-Warner (Payroll & Accounting Manager), and Sheila Gines (HR Administrator)

**Other**

Stacie Roth (Schulman, Roth and Associates CO., L.P.A.), Bill Green (Superintendent of Stark DD) and Robert Wang (the Repository)

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**Approval/Correction of Minutes**

*September 18, 2025 – Special Meeting*

Ms. Egbert moved to adopt the minutes of September 18, 2025. Ms. Combs-Lemon seconded the motion, the vote passed unanimously.

*September 24, 2025 – Regular Meeting*

Mr. Morey moved to adopt the minutes of September 24, 2025. Mr. Blasiman seconded the motion, the vote passed unanimously.

*October 8, 2025 – Regular Meeting*

Ms. Egbert moved to adopt the minutes of October 8, 2025. Mr. Combs-Lemon seconded the motion, the vote passed unanimously.

**Public Speaks**

Bill Green (Superintendent of Stark DD) – Mr. Green expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to speak. Mr. Green is requesting that SARTA support Issue 1 to help cover

increased provider costs and fix the budget deficit. Mr. Green then stated he appreciates the relationship between SARTA and Stark DD and wanted to recognize the importance of the service SARTA provides for the Stark DD individuals and Stark County. Mr. Green thanked the Board for their service.

### **Board Committee Communication & Updates**

- Mr. Reinhard expressed his appreciation for Michael Brand, Jenna Anderson-Warne and their co-workers diligently working to find a solution(s) that would create a balanced SARTA budget.

### **Departmental Reports**

- **Transportation & Maintenance**

- The Board received a paper report of charts from Mr. Finnicum showing the condition of the fleet, the year-to-date status of the operation and maintenance savings, and the benefit to our finances from changing services.
- The report data shows how the previous Proline structure was unsustainable. It does not show how the changes impacted the communities. Directed by the Board, we are meeting as a team and figuring out how we can expand Proline Plus. Ralph, Clayton, and I were in Canal Fulton today posing the question of what their needs are as a community and how we can structure Proline Plus to assist. We are hopeful that any changes we can make will be incorporated in the February bid.

- **Finance**

- Mr. Brand introduced Jenna Anderson-Warner, who has been shadowing him and will step in when he is out of the office, and bring the reports to tonight's meeting.
- We drew down \$396,000 in operating for some grantee pass-through, along with some of the TDP funding and the current \$287,000 PM money, which we will have for the remainder of 2025 until we can draw down again later next year.
- The Air Products tank we are using is funded by the 2022 hydrogen expansion grant, which is 100% covered by state funding.
- The budget summary shows that we are continuing to operate with about a \$500,000 surplus. This has decreased somewhat due to the receipt of buses that we just sent a final payment out, along with the Union payment processed a couple of weeks ago.

- Even though the government is shut down, we can still pull down some current grants. (The ones that have already been processed.) Any new ones that have not been placed in the system cannot be until the government is back up and running.
  - Sales tax is up to \$1.7 million for the year. We are approximately \$800,000 higher than we were in the same last ten (10) months of last year.
  - Mr. Brand spoke to the Board about his gratitude for the team and the Board working together to secure a solid budget for 2026. **The overall 2026 budget summary:** Operating Expenses Budget, \$32.6 million. Capital Expense Budget, \$6.7 million. Grant Funding for that is just under \$5.7 million, so our local share is \$982,000, which is generally 20% for 2026.
- **Special Projects & Development**
    - SARTA's Transportation Development Plan (TDP) is complete.
    - The hydrogen tank swap project is now complete, and the old tank will be hauled out by Friday.
    - We will talk more at the next board meeting about Proline Plus by bringing a more formal presentation, including all the ideas we have collectively been discussing and what we would like to see happen.
    - A couple of minor projects we are working on: at our Belden Village Transit Center, we had eight (8) pillars ground down and painted. We had Bowen visit Cornerstone Transit Center a couple of weeks ago with a tour, looking at how we can improve the building so that we can enjoy it for the next twenty (20) years.
- **Customer Relations**
    - Ms. Virola shared the marketing campaign "SARTA me," which we just started and will run through the second quarter of next year. We have commercials, radio spots, streaming, social media, and a website featuring testimonials from riders and quotes from SARTA employees about how we do our job, the community we serve, and the pride we take in our work.
    - Ms. Virola has spoken with and presented to Stark Aging Friendly, an initiative to examine Stark County and ensure it is aging friendly. Ms. Virola informed the organization about the SARTA Proline program and its vital role in serving the aging population.
    - Ms. Virola and Mr. Popik worked with Leadership Stark County to do Stark County Day.

- **Information Technology**

- IT is continuing the work on the new Enterprise Resource Planning software replacement (ERP) and the Trapeze EAM and Genfare integrations. We remain on course to go live in January. The next step is the system integration testing. IT will continue the configurations and test the integrations, which will be November 10<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup>. Including testing all of our integrations, as well as training at the same time. We want to make sure that GForce our implementation team, our consultant, Mr. Shaw, and the company who owns the software, along with our team that the financial software is operating as it is expected and giving the correct results. When completed, we will move along to production in January.
- Workforce Management is the software that was affected by the Union contract implementation. We are now applying those rules to the implementation that we are doing. This will elongate the progress, which will be completed early next year. We will lose some features due to the way the bid interacts with the software.
- The Yard Management is complete, however it will not be operational until all the Workforce Management software is operational showing where all the buses are and if they are operational. It all flows together.
- We are working with our vendor, Quality IP, on SARTA's cybersecurity in light of legislation that changes how you respond to cybersecurity incidents. We are working to ensure SARTA remains incident-free, and if we encounter an incident, we handle it appropriately.

- **Human Resources**

- We made some job offers. A Service Technician, who started this past Monday. Another offer was made for a Service Technician, and two (2) CSRs, as well as a Building and Grounds Technician. The start date for those individuals will be November 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Tomorrow we will be hosting our health fair. Lauren Barnes has really done an excellent job coordinating the event. We have eleven vendors coming, including OPERS, which has not been here on site in about five (5) years.
- Open Enrollment for Healthcare begins as well and runs until November 17<sup>th</sup>. This is very important for our employees with all the changes that have come with the signing of the union contract.
- HR is working to update policies that have changed as a result of the negotiations and would like to invite the Board to collaborate on ensuring the updated policies are well-written.

- The changes in the organizational chart require updating job descriptions, which will tie to employee evaluations. I will be delegating a lot of my time for the remainder of the year.
- Ms. Brown stated that we are continuing to nurture a very positive relationship with the union. We have met with the union on two different occasions since the signing of the contract. Ms. Brown is pleased with the positive working relationship with the union.
- **Executive Director/CEO Communications & Updates**
  - Senator Jane Timken will tour SARTA on October 27<sup>th</sup>.
  - Mark, Clayton, and I will be attending the OPTA conference at the end of November.
  - I attended the Transforming Tusc Project Presentation at the Performing Arts Center in New Philadelphia, Ohio. SARTA and Aultman Hospital were integrated into the planning and design process.
  - The meeting with Mount Union this week will need to be rescheduled due to the injury of the President of Mount Union.
  - We are the pregame sponsor for the Canton McKinley versus Massillon Tigers game. This week we are allowing all employees to show their pride by wearing their teams' shirts.
  - We will be holding a series of SARTA Town Hall Meetings this coming week for union and administration staff.
  - CFO update meeting tomorrow.

## **Resolutions**

### **#31 – A Resolution To Apply For Section 5307 Federal Grant Funding For Fiscal Year 2025**

Ms. Egbert moved to adopt the resolution. Mr. Warren seconded the motion; the vote passed unanimously.

### **#32 – A Resolution To Apply For Section 5310 Federal Funding For Fiscal Year 2026**

Mr. Warren moved to adopt the resolution. Ms. Egbert seconded the motion; the vote passed unanimously.

### **#33 – A Resolution To Apply For Section 5339 Federal Grant Funding For Fiscal Year 2026**

Mr. Warren moved to adopt the resolution. Mr. Blasiman seconded the motion; the vote passed unanimously.

**#34 – A Resolution To Apply For Ohio Transit Partnership Program State Grant For Fiscal Year 2027**

Mr. Morey moved to adopt the resolution. Mr. Warren seconded the motion; the vote passed unanimously.

**#35 – A Resolution Certifying Meeting Dates And Times For Calendar Year 2026**

Ms. Egbert moved to adopt the resolution. Ms. Watkins seconded the motion; the vote passed unanimously.

**#36 – Approving Changes Within SARTA’s Organizational Structure**

Mr. Warren moved to adopt the resolution. Ms. Egbert seconded the motion; the vote passed unanimously.

**#37 – A Resolution Of Approval For The Transit Development Plan 2030, A Five-year Short Range Service Plan For The Stark Area Regional Transit Authority**

Mr. Warren moved to adopt the resolution. Ms. Egbert seconded the motion; the vote passed unanimously.

**#38 – 2026 Operating & Capital Budget Approval**

Mr. Morey moved to adopt the resolution. Mr. Blasiman seconded the motion; the vote passed unanimously.

**#39 – A Resolution To Support The Forever R Children Organization By Providing Obsolete Buses Including A Bus Provided By Laketrans**

Ms. Egbert moved to adopt the resolution. Mr. Blasiman seconded the motion; the vote passed unanimously.

**The Executive Session began at 6:36 PM and ended at 6:40 PM.**

Mr. Macala called for an Executive Session for:

- Appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee.

Ms. Egbert moved to exit the executive session. Mr. Warren seconded the motion; the vote passed unanimously.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Warren moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:41 PM. Ms. Egbert seconded; the vote passed unanimously.

# Transportation & Maintenance

Mark Finnicum  
Director



## SARTA RIDERSHIP REPORT

October 2025

2025 Operating Days 23 Weekdays, 4 Saturdays

2024 Operating Days 23 Weekdays, 4 Saturdays

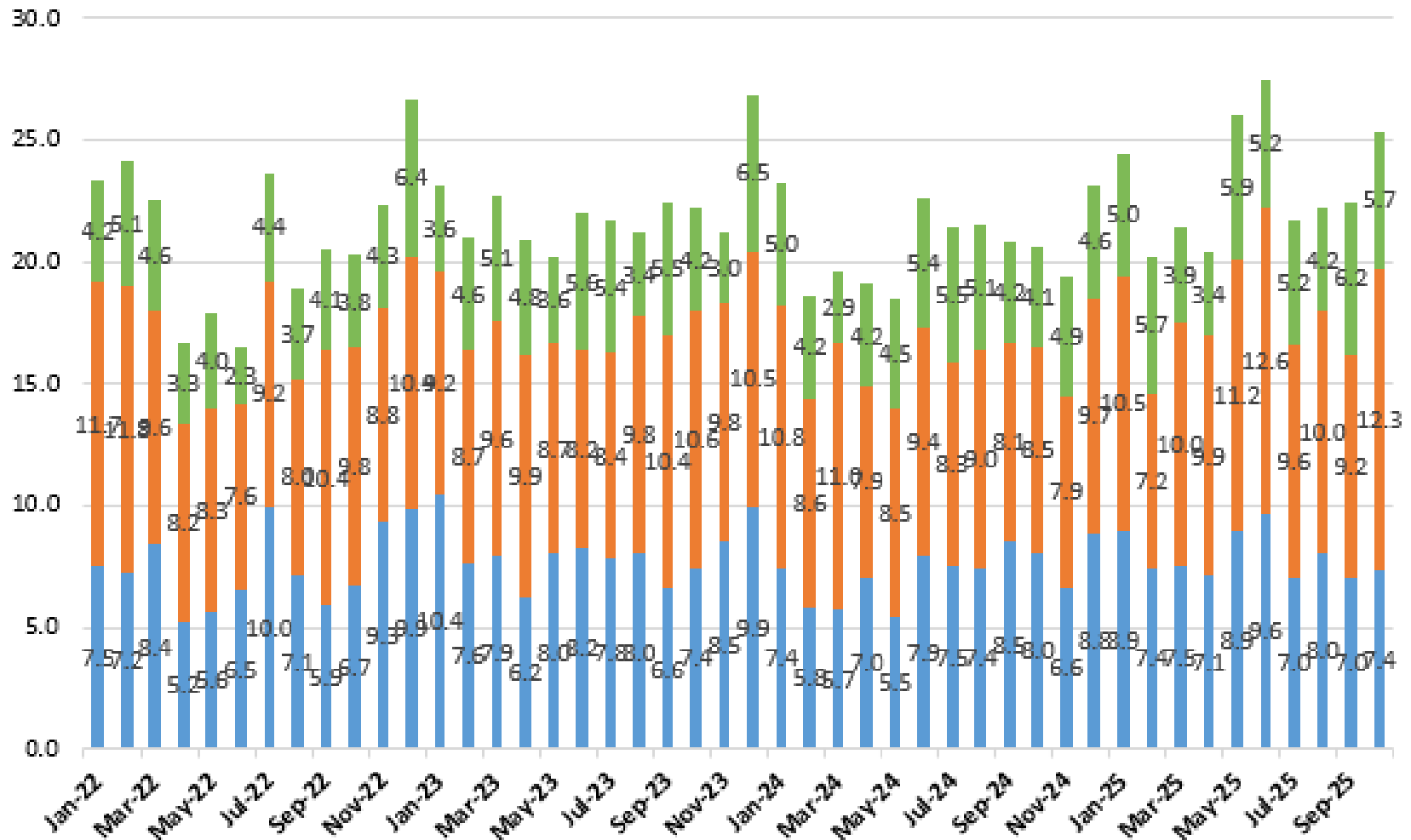
<i><b>Ridership</b></i>	CURRENT MO.				YTD			
	2025	2024	change	%	2025	2024	change	%
Fixed Route	124,849	125,783	-934	-0.74%	1,116,595	1,101,516	15,079	1.37%
Other Revenue	581	795	-214	-26.92%	4,820	13,801	-8,981	100.00%
Paratransit	6,833	11,517	-4,684	-40.67%	66,981	103,536	-36,555	-35.31%
CS-Out of county	0	0	0	0.00%	0	5,885	-5,885	100.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>132,263</b>	<b>138,095</b>	<b>-5,832</b>	<b>-4.22%</b>	<b>1,188,396</b>	<b>1,224,738</b>	<b>-36,342</b>	<b>-2.97%</b>

<i><b>Vehicle Operations</b></i>	CURRENT MO.				YTD	PRIOR YTD		
	2025	2024	change	%	2025	2024	change	%
Fixed Route	196,745	210,821	-14,076	-6.68%	1,899,156	2,010,796	-111,640	-5.55%
Other Revenue	1,487	2,238	-751	-33.56%	12,270	18,569	-6,299	100.00%
Fixed Deadhead	8,978	10,081	-1,103	-10.94%	87,090	95,655	-8,565	-8.95%
Paratransit	64,047	115,719	-51,673	-44.65%	637,362	1,007,551	-370,189	-36.74%
CS-Out of county	0	0	0	100.00%	0	74,611	-74,611	100.00%
Para Deadhead	9,338	16,433	-7,095	-43.18%	36,309	253,184	-216,875	-85.66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>280,595</b>	<b>355,292</b>	<b>-74,698</b>	<b>-21.02%</b>	<b>2,672,187</b>	<b>3,460,366</b>	<b>-788,180</b>	<b>-22.78%</b>

<i><b>Hours</b></i>	CURRENT MO.				YTD			
	2025	2024	change	%	2025	2024	change	%
Fixed Route	12,068	12,831	-763	-5.95%	116,458	122,477	-6,019	-4.91%
Other Revenue	32	78	-46	-58.97%	361	1,353	-992	100.00%
Paratransit	3,806	6,370	-2,564	-40.25%	37,236	59,029	-21,793	-36.92%
CS-Out of county	0	0	0	100.00%	0	5,308	-5,308	100.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,906</b>	<b>19,279</b>	<b>-3,373</b>	<b>-17.49%</b>	<b>154,055</b>	<b>188,167</b>	<b>-34,112</b>	<b>-18.13%</b>

# PROLINE INFRACTIONS DARA - PER 1000 ATTEMPTS

■ NO SHOW - RATE    
 ■ LATE CANCEL - RATE    
 ■ CANCEL AT THE DOOR - RATE



## 2025 Proline "Shared Ride" Service Statistics

Month	Trips Scheduled	Advanced Cancels	Same Day Cancels	No - Shows	Late Cancels	Cancels at the Door	Total Performed Trips	Vehicle Miles	Miles per Trip
January	10,196	864	969	91	107	51	8,114	109,207	13.46
February	7,955	1,229	629	59	57	45	5,936	77,672	13.08
March	7,090	976	481	53	71	28	5,481	68,876	12.57
April	7,069	849	444	50	70	24	5,632	70,949	12.60
May	6,956	811	528	62	78	41	5,436	67,305	12.38
June	6,340	848	408	61	80	33	4,910	62,716	12.77
July	6,590	848	482	46	63	34	5,117	64,757	12.66
August	6,627	829	427	53	66	28	5,224	68,791	13.17
September	6,418	808	409	45	59	40	5,057	68,258	13.50
October	7,058	859	488	52	87	40	5,532	73,414	13.27
November	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
December	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Year to Date Totals</b>	<b>72,299</b>	<b>8,921</b>	<b>5,265</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>56,439</b>	<b>731,945</b>	<b>12.97</b>

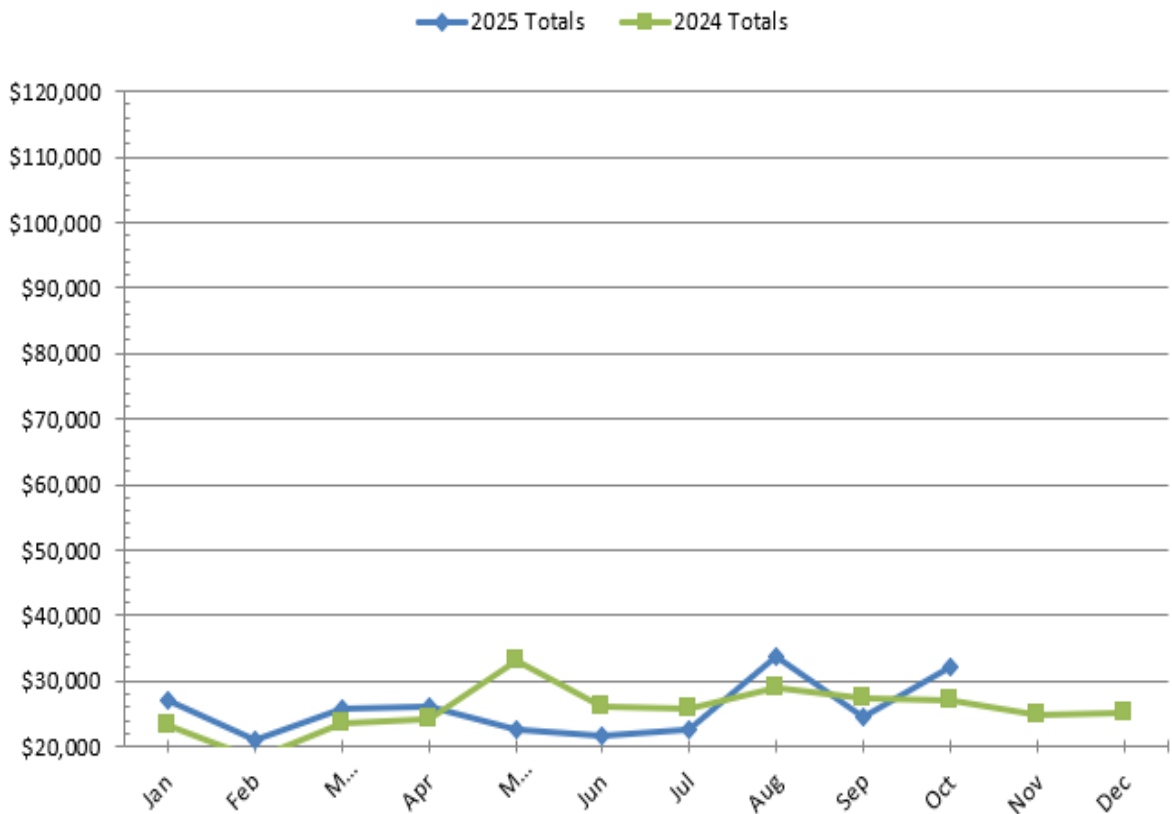
### Proline "Shared Ride" Service Statistics for the month of

Month	Trips Scheduled	Advanced Cancels	Same Day Cancels	No - Shows	Late Cancels	Cancels at the Door	Total Performed Trips	Vehicle Miles	Miles per Trip
October	7,058	859	488	52	87	40	5,532	73,414	13.27

### Pass/Ticket Sales Comparison, 2025 - 2024

2025	2025 Totals	2024	2024 Totals	Percent changed
Jan	\$27,086.00	Jan	\$23,389.25	15.81%
Feb	\$21,117.00	Feb	\$18,265.50	15.61%
Mar	\$25,658.80	Mar	\$23,526.50	9.06%
Apr	\$26,145.55	Apr	\$24,087.50	8.54%
May	\$22,690.30	May	\$33,029.75	-31.30%
Jun	\$21,630.20	Jun	\$26,048.00	-16.96%
Jul	\$22,512.50	Jul	\$25,691.28	-12.37%
Aug	\$33,824.27	Aug	\$29,097.20	16.25%
Sep	\$24,471.21	Sep	\$27,216.48	-10.09%
Oct	\$32,231.55	Oct	\$27,024.85	19.27%
Nov		Nov		#DIV/0!
Dec		Dec		#DIV/0!
Year-to-Date	\$257,367.38	Year-to-Date	\$257,376.31	0.00%

### Pass/Ticket Sales Comparison, 2025 - 2024



## 2025-2024 Month to Month Ridership by Route

Route	October 2025	October 2024	Difference	Percentage Change
4	366	233	133	57.08%
45	2,744	2,843	-99	-3.48%
81	7,408	7,171	237	3.30%
101	5,120	5,435	-315	-5.80%
102	22,617	22,219	398	1.79%
103	4,012	4,919	-907	-18.44%
105	8,881	7,800	1,081	13.86%
106	8,425	8,325	100	1.20%
107	3,843	3,904	-61	-1.56%
108	5,770	5,572	198	3.55%
110	6,874	6,793	81	1.19%
111	4,732	4,522	210	4.64%
113	4,023	2,870	1,153	40.17%
114	2,460	2,234	226	10.12%
117	5,057	4,842	215	4.44%
118	2,602	2,769	-167	-6.03%
119	4,961	4,902	59	1.20%
121	2,065	2,018	47	2.33%
122	0	0	0	0.00%
124	1,671	1,932	-261	-13.51%
125	1,814	1,729	85	4.92%
126	1,327	1,010	317	31.39%
128	2,072	1,708	364	21.31%
130	1,270	1,290	-20	-1.55%
131	4,115	4,912	-797	-16.23%
132	1,338	1,786	-448	-25.08%
133	0	0	0	0.00%
139	8,168	8,342	-174	-2.09%
151	0	490	-490	-100.00%
152	0	961	-961	-100.00%
153	0	613	-613	-100.00%
157	0	224	-224	-100.00%
158	0	379	-379	-100.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>123,735</b>	<b>124,747</b>	<b>-1,012</b>	<b>-0.81%</b>

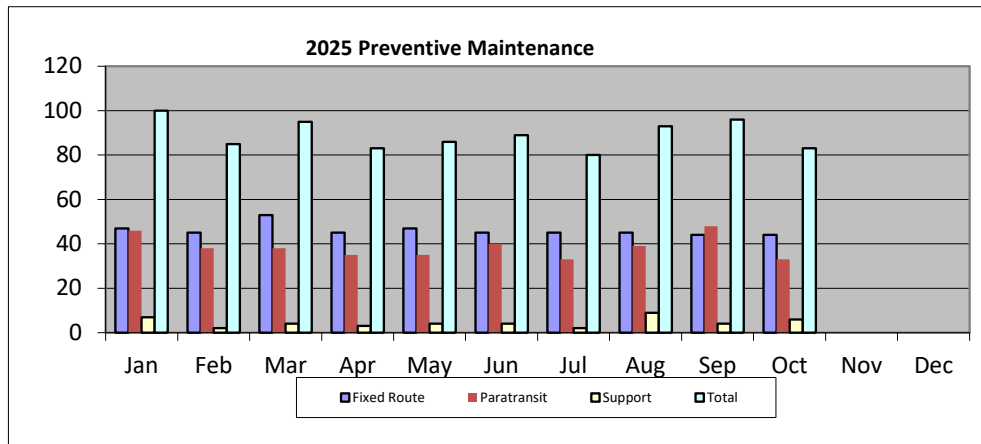
<b>2025-2024 Year to Date Ridership by Route</b>				
<b>Route</b>	<b>October 2025</b>	<b>October 2024</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
4	2,575	2,389	186	7.79%
45	22,681	23,003	-322	-1.40%
81	66,477	59,545	6,932	11.64%
101	46,954	45,938	1,016	2.21%
102	203,321	202,775	546	0.27%
103	38,078	40,938	-2,860	-6.99%
105	81,227	68,490	12,737	18.60%
106	73,756	76,077	-2,321	-3.05%
107	35,343	39,615	-4,272	-10.78%
108	49,398	52,673	-3,275	-6.22%
110	64,303	63,382	921	1.45%
111	41,282	39,433	1,849	4.69%
113	34,036	27,112	6,924	25.54%
114	19,805	17,709	2,096	11.84%
117	44,362	42,055	2,307	5.49%
118	24,014	25,161	-1,147	-4.56%
119	45,512	45,346	166	0.37%
121	17,771	16,729	1,042	6.23%
122	0	0	0	0.00%
124	16,588	14,585	2,003	13.73%
125	16,808	15,064	1,744	11.58%
126	11,210	9,322	1,888	20.25%
128	17,496	14,247	3,249	22.80%
130	10,543	13,980	-3,437	-24.59%
131	38,965	36,482	2,483	6.81%
132	11,919	10,193	1,726	16.93%
133	0	0	0	0.00%
139	72,208	77,875	-5,667	-7.28%
151	706	4,932	-4,226	-85.69%
152	736	7,336	-6,600	-89.97%
153	661	5,830	-5,169	-88.66%
157	259	2,062	-1,803	-87.44%
158	264	3,534	-3,270	-92.53%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,109,258</b>	<b>1,103,812</b>	<b>5,446</b>	<b>0.49%</b>

**STARK AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
**MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT**  
**October 2025**  
**Submitted by: Mark Finnicum**

1. There was a total of 83 Preventive Maintenance Inspections
  - 44 Fixed Route Buses
  - 33 Paratransit Buses
  - 06 Support Vehicle
2. There was a total of 83 Wheelchair Inspections
3. There was a total of 02 Heat & Air Conditioning Inspections
4. There was a total of 10 Farebox Inspections
5. There was a total of 08 Front End Alignments
6. There was a total of 155 Bus Exchanges
7. There was a total of 00 CNG Recertification Inspections
8. There was a total of 14 Avail System Inspections
9. There was a total of 05 Bi-Monthly Camera Inspections
10. There was a total of 11 Road Calls
  - 10 Fixed Route Buses – 10 Towed
  - 00 Non-Revenue Vehicle – 00 Towed
  - 01 Paratransit Buses – 01 Towed
11. There was a total of 05 Warranty Repair
12. There were 00 job related injuries reported.

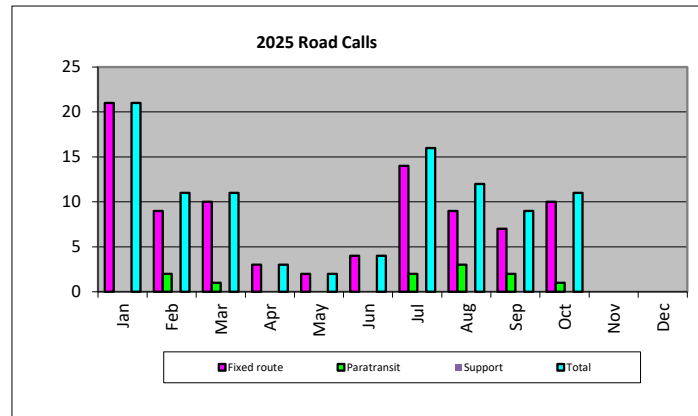
**Preventive Maintenance Inspections**

2025	Fixed Route	Paratransit	Support	Total
Jan	47	46	7	100
Feb	45	38	2	85
Mar	53	38	4	95
Apr	45	35	3	83
May	47	35	4	86
Jun	45	40	4	89
Jul	45	33	2	80
Aug	45	39	9	93
Sep	44	48	4	96
Oct	44	33	6	83
Nov				0
Dec				0



**Road calls**

2025	Fixed route	Paratransit	Support	Total
Jan	21	0	0	21
Feb	9	2	0	11
Mar	10	1	0	11
Apr	3	0	0	3
May	2	0	0	2
Jun	4	0	0	4
Jul	14	2	0	16
Aug	9	3	0	12
Sep	7	2	0	9
Oct	10	1	0	11
Nov				0
Dec				0



<b>2025</b>	<b>Preventive Maintenance Costs</b>	<b>Repair Costs</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Diesel Gallons Used 2024</b>	<b>Diesel Gallons Used 2025</b>	<b>SARTA CNG GGE Used 2024</b>	<b>SARTA CNG GGE Used 2025</b>	<b>CNG Public Use GGE 2024</b>	<b>CNG Public Use GGE 2025</b>	<b>Hydrogen Usage KG 2024</b>	<b>Hydrogen Usage KG 2025</b>
Jan	\$19,519.99	\$82,638.79	\$102,158.78	9,412	547	43,362	56,647	862	2,781	5,588	2,995
Feb	\$12,700.85	\$64,314.97	\$77,015.82	9,356	14	40,253	48,790	680	1,354	4,991	4,006
Mar	\$19,815.61	\$74,213.06	\$94,028.67	8,349	4	43,397	47,588	848	979	5,551	5,841
Apr	\$12,224.94	\$75,914.49	\$88,139.43	8,137	12	43,383	48,261	1,603	552	4,771	5,220
May	\$15,439.51	\$70,722.01	\$86,161.52	6,750	130	48,526	47,564	1,110	983	5,201	3,649
Jun	\$19,075.41	\$85,746.79	\$104,822.20	5,989	110	46,442	50,844	957	1,397	6,677	5,367
Jul	\$19,617.08	\$76,903.47	\$96,520.55	5,901	144	50,655	53,791	1,078	1,849	4,920	4,443
Aug	\$21,588.14	\$71,332.43	\$92,920.57	5,381	41	56,321	50,313	785	3,044	6,101	4,545
Sep	\$27,571.78	\$60,207.49	\$87,779.27	4,459	160	48,660	50,900	753	1,884	5,039	3,792
Oct	\$16,012.91	\$116,214.62	\$132,227.53	4,074	61	54,561	51,282	861	1,812	4,554	6,653
Nov				2,559		50,116		819		4,845	
Dec				1,807		55,330		2,490		3,116	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$183,566.22</b>	<b>\$778,208.12</b>	<b>\$961,774.34</b>	<b>72174.00</b>	<b>1223.00</b>	<b>581007.15</b>	<b>505980.28</b>	<b>12844.93</b>	<b>16635.82</b>	<b>61354.68</b>	<b>46511.00</b>
<i>Month Avg.</i>	<i>\$18,356.62</i>	<i>\$77,820.81</i>	<i>\$96,177.43</i>	<i>6,780.80</i>	<i>122</i>	<i>47,556</i>	<i>50,598</i>	<i>953.63</i>	<i>1,664</i>	<i>5,339</i>	<i>4,651</i>

GGE - Gasoline Gallon Equivalent

# Finance

Michael Brand  
Interim Director



Project Name	Grant Number	Deadline to Use	Federal Share	Year	Funded Amount	Total Draws	Remaining Balance	Remaining Local Share
FY22 OTPP- bus	OH-2021-001-00	12/31/2027	80%	2022	\$ 108,000.00	\$ (76,046.00)	\$ 31,954.00	\$ 7,988.50
FY22 OTPP- Expansion of Hydrogen Tank	OH-2021-001-00	12/31/2027	80%	2022	\$ 1,280,000.00	\$ (233,135.00)	\$ 1,046,865.00	\$ 261,716.25
FY23 OTPP2 TVM Machines	OH-2021-001-00	12/31/2027	80%	2023	\$ 148,000.00	\$ (128,230.00)	\$ 19,770.00	\$ 4,942.50
FY23 CR Hydorgen Paratransit Bus and Add-ons	OH-2021-001-00	12/31/2027	79%	2023	\$ 422,650.00	\$ -	\$ 422,650.00	\$ 112,350.00
FY24 OTP2 Gateway Construction/Renovation	OH-2021-001-00	12/31/2027	80%	2024	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ (1,973,973.00)	\$ 26,027.00	\$ 6,506.75
FY24 OTP2 Garage Safety Harness/Portable Lifts	OH-2021-001-00	12/31/2027	80%	2024	\$ 160,000.00	\$ (74,290.00)	\$ 85,710.00	\$ 21,427.50
					<b>\$ 4,118,650.00</b>	<b>\$ (2,485,674.00)</b>	<b>\$ 1,632,976.00</b>	<b>\$ 414,931.50</b>
FY24 OWMP Regional Pass Feasibility Study	OH-2021-001-00	3/30/2029	80%	2029	\$ 158,240.00	\$ (9,854.00)	\$ 148,386.00	\$ 9,080.83
					<b>\$ 158,240.00</b>	<b>\$ (9,854.00)</b>	<b>\$ 148,386.00</b>	<b>\$ 9,080.83</b>
FY25 OTP2 Transit Development Plan	OH-2021-001-00	3/30/2029	80%	2029	\$ 160,000.00	\$ (12,782.00)	\$ 147,218.00	\$ 24,022.50
					<b>\$ 160,000.00</b>	<b>\$ (12,782.00)</b>	<b>\$ 147,218.00</b>	<b>\$ 24,022.50</b>
FY21 5307 CNG FACILITY	OH-2021-046-00	9/30/2026	80%	2021	\$ 1,877,740.00	\$ (1,874,625.00)	\$ 3,115.00	\$ 778.75
FY21 5307 HYDRO STATION	OH-2021-046-00	9/30/2026	80%	2021	\$ 366,936.00	\$ (89,212.00)	\$ 277,724.00	\$ 69,431.00
FY21 5307 TRANSIT ENHANSMENT	OH-2021-046-00	9/30/2026	80%	2021	\$ 167,260.00	\$ (128,893.00)	\$ 38,367.00	\$ 9,591.75
FY21 5307 SOFTWARE	OH-2021-046-00	9/30/2026	80%	2021	\$ 244,000.00	\$ (164,648.00)	\$ 79,352.00	\$ 19,838.00
FY21 5307 HARDWARE	OH-2021-046-00	9/30/2026	80%	2021	\$ 28,000.00	\$ (19,392.00)	\$ 8,608.00	\$ 2,152.00
					<b>\$ 2,683,936.00</b>	<b>\$ (2,276,770.00)</b>	<b>\$ 407,166.00</b>	<b>\$ 101,791.50</b>
FY 2021 FCC BUS REPLACEMENT	OH-2021-036-00	3/31/2026	100%	2021	\$ 71,239.00	\$ -	\$ 71,239.00	\$ -
FY 21 MERCY OPERATING	OH-2021-036-00	3/31/2026	100%	2021	\$ 37,894.00	\$ (3,675.00)	\$ 34,219.00	\$ -
					<b>\$ 109,133.00</b>	<b>\$ (3,675.00)</b>	<b>\$ 105,458.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
FY22 5307 Tools - COMPLETED	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2022	\$ 130,000.00	\$ (130,000.00)	\$ -	\$ -
FY22 5307 Software	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2022	\$ 869,600.00	\$ (636,366.00)	\$ 233,234.00	\$ 58,308.50
FY22 5307 Phone Service upgrade	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2022	\$ 96,000.00	\$ (80,118.00)	\$ 15,882.00	\$ 3,970.50
					<b>\$ 1,095,600.00</b>	<b>\$ (846,484.00)</b>	<b>\$ 249,116.00</b>	<b>\$ 62,279.00</b>
FY23 5307 Transit Enhancements	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2023	\$ 52,304.00	\$ (43,511.00)	\$ 8,793.00	\$ 2,198.25
FY 23 5307 Hardware	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2023	\$ 96,000.00	\$ (74,661.00)	\$ 21,339.00	\$ 5,334.75
FY 23 5307 Software	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2023	\$ 724,741.00	\$ (1,400.00)	\$ 723,341.00	\$ 180,835.25
					<b>\$ 873,045.00</b>	<b>\$ (119,572.00)</b>	<b>\$ 753,473.00</b>	<b>\$ 188,368.25</b>
FY24 5307 Hardware	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2024	\$ 80,000.00	\$ (32,389.12)	\$ 47,610.88	\$ 11,902.72
FY24 5307 Software/ERP	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2024	\$ 792,906.00	\$ (736,115.00)	\$ 56,791.00	\$ 14,197.75
FY24 5307 35'Bus Replacement	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2024	\$ 457,759.00	\$ -	\$ 457,759.00	\$ 114,439.75
FY24 5307 Transit Enhancements	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2024	\$ 64,000.00	\$ (1,964.00)	\$ 62,036.00	\$ 15,509.00
FY24 5307 Security	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2024	\$ 54,383.00	\$ (51,113.00)	\$ 3,270.00	\$ 817.50
FY 24 5339 35' Bus Replacement	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2024	\$ 476,646.00	\$ -	\$ 476,646.00	\$ 125,633.25
FY25 5339 35 Ft Bus	OH-2022-030-00	3/30/2029	80%	2025	\$ 502,533.00	\$ -	\$ 502,533.00	\$ 125,633.25
					<b>\$ 2,428,227.00</b>	<b>\$ (821,581.12)</b>	<b>\$ 1,606,645.88</b>	<b>\$ 408,133.22</b>
FY23 5310 SARTA Van	OH-2022-036-00	8/28/2026	80%	2023	\$ 100,000.00	\$ -	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
					<b>\$ 100,000.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 100,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 25,000.00</b>

FY24 5310 ABCD Capital	OH-2022-036-00	8/28/2026	100%	2024	\$ 58,502.00	\$ -	\$ 58,502.00	\$ -
<b>FY24 5310 ABP Operating - COMPLETED</b>	OH-2022-036-00	8/28/2026	100%	2024	\$ 18,984.00	\$ (18,984.00)	\$ -	\$ -
FY24 5310 FCC Operating	OH-2022-036-00	8/28/2026	100%	2024	\$ 72,750.00	\$ (43,042.00)	\$ 29,708.00	\$ -
FY24 5310 SARTA	OH-2022-036-00	8/28/2026	80%	2024	\$ 125,000.00	\$ -	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 31,250.00
FY24 5310 Admin	OH-2022-036-00	8/28/2026	100%	2024	\$ 46,222.00	\$ (6,533.00)	\$ 39,689.00	\$ -
					<b>\$ 248,708.00</b>	<b>\$ (141,309.00)</b>	<b>\$ 252,899.00</b>	<b>\$ 31,250.00</b>
FY23 LoNo 2 -40' Electric Buses	OH-2023-016-00	3/30/2027	85%	2023	\$ 2,077,527.71	\$ -	\$ 2,077,527.71	\$ 366,622.54
FY23 LoNo Gaseous Monitors	OH-2023-016-02	3/30/2027	90%	2023	\$ 287,118.00	\$ (271,954.00)	\$ 15,164.00	\$ 3,791.00
FY 23 LoNO Workeforce Development	OH-2023-016-00	3/30/2027	80%	2023	\$ 62,400.00	\$ -	\$ 62,400.00	\$ 15,600.00
FY LoNo Electric Chargers	OH-2023-016-00	3/30/2027	90%	2023	\$ 271,544.00	\$ -	\$ 271,544.00	\$ 30,171.56
					<b>\$ 2,698,589.71</b>	<b>\$ (271,954.00)</b>	<b>\$ 2,426,635.71</b>	<b>\$ 416,185.09</b>
IBI Group EZConnect	OH-2023-030-00	10/30/2026	100%	2023	\$ 95,000.00	\$ (77,151.00)	\$ 17,849.00	\$ -
EZConnect Project	OH-2023-030-00	10/30/2026	100%	2023	\$ 1,025,000.00	\$ (62,693.85)	\$ 962,306.15	\$ -
					<b>\$ 1,250,000.00</b>	<b>\$ (269,844.85)</b>	<b>\$ 980,155.15</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
FY23 SMART Grant Accident Avoidance	69A3552441029		100%	2029	\$ 1,975,000.00	\$ (945,698.18)	\$ 1,029,301.82	\$ -
					<b>\$ 1,975,000.00</b>	<b>\$ (945,698.18)</b>	<b>\$ 1,029,301.82</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
FY25 OWMP Bus Replacement 40ft	OH-2025-013-00	6/30/2030	80%		\$ 549,570.00	\$ -	\$ 549,570.00	\$ 137,392.50
FY25 OWMP Bus Replacement 35ft	OH-2025-013-00	6/30/2030	80%		\$ 2,165,086.00	\$ -	\$ 2,165,086.00	\$ 541,271.50
FY25 OWMP Bus Replacement <30ft	OH-2025-013-00	6/30/2030	80%		\$ 660,000.00	\$ -	\$ 660,000.00	\$ 165,000.00
FY25 OWMP Transit Enhancement-transit stations	OH-2025-013-00	6/30/2030	80%		\$ 240,000.00	\$ -	\$ 240,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
FY25 OWMP ADP Hardware	OH-2025-013-00	6/30/2030	80%		\$ 328,500.00	\$ -	\$ 328,500.00	\$ 82,125.00
FY 25 DERG 35ft CNG	OH-2025-013-00	6/30/2030	80%		\$ 531,530.00	\$ -	\$ 531,530.00	\$ 132,882.00
FY25 OWMP Micro Transit( Pro-line plus)	OH-2025-013-00	6/30/2030	50%		\$ 500,000.00	\$ (49,899.00)	\$ 450,101.00	\$ 450,101.00
<b>FY 25 5307 PM - COMPLETED</b>	OH-2025-013-00	6/30/2030	80%		\$ 2,767,401.00	\$ (2,767,401.00)	\$ -	\$ -
FY 25 5307 Transit Enhancements(17m grant)	OH-2025-013-00	6/30/2030	80%		\$ 56,478.00	\$ -	\$ 56,478.00	\$ 14,119.50
					<b>\$ 7,798,565.00</b>	<b>\$ (2,817,300.00)</b>	<b>\$ 4,981,265.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,582,891.50</b>
Fy 24 Lono Gateway Main Office Upgrades	OH-2025-016-00	6/1/2029	80%	2024	\$ 4,343,629.60	\$ -	\$ 4,343,629.60	\$ 1,085,907.40
Fy 24 LONO Hillside Driveway Facility Upgrade	OH-2025-016-00	6/1/2029	80%	2024	\$ 887,228.00	\$ -	\$ 887,228.00	\$ 221,807.00
FY 24 LONO Electrolyzer System Installation	OH-2025-016-00	6/1/2029	80%	2024	\$ 419,318.40	\$ -	\$ 419,318.40	\$ 104,829.60
FY 24 LONO Gateway Asphalt/Circulation Upgrades	OH-2025-016-00	6/1/2029	80%	2024	\$ 712,496.80	\$ -	\$ 712,496.80	\$ 178,124.20
FY 24 Lono Gateway Roof Repair and upgrade for Solar	OH-2025-016-00	6/1/2029	80%	2024	\$ 1,644,414.40	\$ -	\$ 1,644,414.40	\$ 411,103.60
Fy24 LoNo Cornerstone Roof Repair and upgrade for Solar	OH-2025-016-00	6/1/2029	80%	2024	\$ 960,000.00	\$ -	\$ 960,000.00	\$ 240,000.00
FY 24 Lono Solar System Procuremnt and Installation	OH-2025-016-00	6/1/2029	80%	2024	\$ 2,939,766.40	\$ -	\$ 2,939,766.40	\$ 734,941.60
Fy 24 LoNo Workforce Development	OH-2025-016-00	6/1/2029	80%	2024	\$ 699,193.60	\$ -	\$ 699,193.60	\$ 174,798.40
FY 24 LONO Bus and Bus Facilities Admin Cost	OH-2025-016-00	6/1/2029	80%	2024	\$ 454,992.80	\$ -	\$ 454,992.80	\$ 113,748.20
Fy 24 LoNo Electrolyzer System Installation	OH-2025-016-00	6/1/2029	80%	2024	\$ 4,193,189.60	\$ -	\$ 4,193,189.60	\$ 1,048,297.40
					<b>\$ 17,254,229.60</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 17,254,229.60</b>	<b>\$ 4,313,557.40</b>
FY22 UTP- Upgrade Hydrogen Tank- Local Match	TUTP-0084-GRF-221		100%	2022	\$ 500,000.00	\$ (209,303.52)	\$ 290,696.48	\$ -
					<b>\$ 500,000.00</b>	<b>\$ (209,303.52)</b>	<b>\$ 290,696.48</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
FY-24 UPT Administration Facility Furniture (Mass&Gate)	TUTP-0084-GRF-242		100%	2024	\$ 260,000.00	\$ (256,308.91)	\$ 3,691.09	\$ -
					<b>\$ 260,000.00</b>	<b>\$ (256,308.91)</b>	<b>\$ 3,691.09</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

FY 25 UTP Accounting System (ERP)	TUTP-0084-GRF-251	100%	2024	\$ 691,365.00	\$ (460,302.60)	\$ 231,062.40	
				<b>\$ 691,365.00</b>	<b>\$ (460,302.60)</b>	<b>\$ 231,062.40</b>	\$ -
FY26 OTP2 LONO Match	OTPP-0084-GRF-261	100%		\$ 294,468.00	\$ -	\$ 294,468.00	
FY26 OTP2 Operating Match	OTPP-0084-GRF-261	100%		\$ 650,000.00	\$ -	\$ 650,000.00	
FY26 OTP2 PM Match	OTPP-0084-GRF-261	100%		\$ 350,000.00	\$ (274,379.75)	\$ 75,620.25	
				<b>\$ 1,294,468.00</b>	<b>\$ (274,379.75)</b>	<b>\$ 1,020,088.25</b>	
FY28 CR Hydorgen Paratransit Bus and Add-ons	Awarded	79%	2028	\$ 422,650.00	\$ -	\$ 422,650.00	\$ 112,350.00
				<b>\$ 422,650.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 422,650.00</b>	<b>\$ 112,350.00</b>
FY25 5310 Operating Awards	Awarded	100%		\$ 30,000.00	\$ -	\$ 30,000.00	\$ -
FY25 5310 Capital Awards	Awarded	100%		\$ 298,048.00	\$ -	\$ 298,048.00	\$ -
FY25 5310 SARTA Van	Awarded	80%		\$ 125,000.00	\$ -	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 31,250.00
FY25 5310 MM	Awarded	50%		\$ 7,739.00	\$ -	\$ 7,739.00	\$ 7,739.00
				<b>\$ 460,787.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 460,787.00</b>	<b>\$ 38,989.00</b>
FY26 OTP2 LoNo A&E	Awarded	80%		\$ 312,500.00	\$ -	\$ 312,500.00	\$ 78,125.00
FY26 OTP2 PM	Awarded	80%		\$ 1,462,685.00	\$ -	\$ 1,462,685.00	\$ 365,671.25
				<b>\$ 1,775,185.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 1,775,185.00</b>	<b>\$ 443,796.25</b>
FY28 CMAQ 3 CNG Paratransits	Awarded	79%+10% TRC	2028	\$ 667,500.00	\$ -	\$ 667,500.00	\$ 82,500.00
FY29 CMAQ 3 CNG Paratransits	Awarded	79%+10% TRC	2029	\$ 667,500.00	\$ -	\$ 667,500.00	\$ 82,500.00
				<b>\$ 1,335,000.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 1,335,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 165,000.00</b>

	Local Share to be		
	Remaining Grant Funding	provided by SARTA	Local Share from Grants
Operating			\$ 650,000.00
PM	\$ 1,462,685.00	\$ 365,671.25	\$ 75,620.25
Mobility Management	\$ 7,739.00	\$ 7,739.00	
Buses	\$ 9,751,916.71	\$ 2,098,601.59	
Neoride-Pass through	\$ 2,220,242.97	\$ 24,680.83	
5310-Pass through	\$ 521,716.00		
5310-Sarta administration( Employee time)	\$ 39,689.00		
17 Million Lono Project	\$ 17,652,925.69	\$ 4,412,308.65	\$ 294,468.00
Transit Enhancements	\$ 349,196.00	\$ 87,299.00	
Tools	\$ -	\$ -	
IT(software+Hardware)	\$ 1,534,427.88	\$ 383,606.97	\$ 231,062.40
Planning( TDP)	\$ 147,218.00	\$ 24,022.50	
Pro-Line plus Operating( New service- can not reapply for)	\$ 450,101.00	\$ 450,101.00	
Hydrogen Tank	\$ 1,324,589.00	\$ 331,147.25	\$ 290,696.48
CNG	\$ 18,279.00	\$ 4,569.75	
Security	\$ 3,270.00	\$ 817.50	
Garage harness/Lifts	\$ 85,710.00	\$ 21,427.50	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 35,569,705.25</b>	<b>\$ 8,211,992.80</b>	<b>\$ 1,541,847.13</b>

# Planning

Clayton Popik  
Director





## PLANNING REPORT NOVEMBER 2025

### Transit Development Plan (TDP) Update

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#### Project Description and Scope:

The FTA requires all recipients to produce a Transit Development Plan (TDP). SARTA worked with a consultant to produce a 5-year plan in 2020. This plan provided a picture of the services SARTA provided at the time, as well as laid out a series of nine (9) recommendations and strategies on how to improve upon and expand those services. This update, scheduled for completion at the end of 2025, will evaluate what changes were made in the last five (5) years and how those changes align with the 2020 recommendations. The 2025 plan will also provide SARTA with recommendations to carry forward from 2020, as well as new recommendations that may better serve the community, while acknowledging changes in transit usage starting in 2020.

<b>Project Approval:</b>	03/01/2025	<b>Project Manager:</b>	Clayton Popik
<b>Estimated Project Cost:</b>	\$200,000 (Est. time & supplies)		
<b>Notice to Proceed:</b>	03/01/2025		
<b>Project Commencement:</b>	03/03/2025		
<u>Funding Source for Project Cost</u>		<u>Vendor(s)</u>	
STBG (Federal) \$160,000		Internal	
Local \$40,000			

#### Project Status:

While the Transit Development Plan is technically complete, much work has been done to update SARTA's mission and vision statements and to develop SARTA's Cornerstone Values. This will be brought before the board as a resolution to both accept the new statements and values and to serve as an addendum to the TDP.

### Projects

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#### Belden Village Transit Center:

Belden Village was power-washed this past Sunday, giving the building and sidewalks a fresh look for Fall.

### **Cornerstone Transit Center:**

Belden Village was power-washed this past Sunday, giving the building and sidewalks a fresh look for Fall.

### **LoNo Projects Update:**

We also engaged Bowen again to help determine a timeline and path to move some of these on-hold projects forward. We have laid out the following tentative timeline:

1. 2025 – Begin a long-term strategic planning process.
2. 2026 – Garage roof replacement & asphalt replacement in the older parking lot.
3. 2027 – Hillside Driveway and Operations Building Renovation
4. 2028 – Carryover year of any of the above-named projects.

All projects will be subject to a local match for the LoNo grant. We have decided to continue with this initiative while also strategizing what drives projects at SARTA.

### **Hillside Driveway:**

Part of SARTA's recent 5339c LoNo award will go toward constructing a second Gateway Boulevard entrance for visitors and staff coming to the Administration Building. The new entrance will help separate conflict points between cars and buses, creating a second point of ingress and egress from the property. This project was originally intended to be part of the Gateway Early Sitework project, but due to funding constraints, it was delayed.

### **Garage Roof Replacement:**

Another part of the 5339c LoNo award is for replacing the garage roof, which is nearing the end of its warranted life. Over the last year, minor repairs were necessary.

### **Parking Lot Paving:**

With the continual construction traffic over the last three years and our use, the asphalt portions of the parking lot have experienced significant wear and tear. Pavement grinding and replacement is another project that has received funding through the 5339c LoNo award.

### **Operations Building Renovation:**

As we complete the Administration Building and move staff into it, we will gain a deeper understanding of the current Operations Building's needs. It will continue to house two departments – Operations and Customer Relations. We have been working with Bowen to come up with a renovation plan that will allow the building to contain some of the same features that were incorporated into the new building, such as increased break space for employees, upgraded restrooms, a new elevator, and more workspaces to reduce the number of shared workspaces where there may be 2-4 people working at a time. The centralized call center is also essential to renovating this building to create space for the staff who would help operate it. This renovation also received its total Federal share from the 5339c LoNo award.

### **Strategic Plan**

Once the TDP is finished, we will turn our planning initiatives toward writing a Strategic Plan for SARTA. This will enable us to better understand the organization's and the community's needs. With a strategic plan in place, we can develop maintenance plans for the buildings, implement service goals from the TDP, and have a clear vision of what SARTA should look like ten or more years into the future.

## Service Planning

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### **Proline Plus:**

We have been going out into the community to discuss service needs in areas impacted by the Proline reductions earlier this year. First was a discussion with the mayor of Canal Fulton. He had been vocal throughout our public hearing process and raised concerns during the Stakeholder Breakfast we held. We reached out to the mayor, who was delighted to hear we wanted to help his community. We first met to discuss what the needs are in Canal Fulton. One of their biggest needs is an aging population who could use help getting out for social events, grocery shopping, and medical appointments. We presented him with three options that will go before the city council on November 18th. These options include access to our Community Coach service and dedicating one or two days per week to prioritized Proline Plus services.

This effort has led to the creation of a Village and Rural Service proposal as a point of discussion when seeking input on how SARTA can better strengthen service in the outlying regions of Stark County. To date, we have met with Canal Fulton, Strengthening Stark, Jackson Township, Cleveland Clinic Mercy Hospital, and Commissioner Harold of the Stark County Commissioners.

SARTA will also focus on Proline Plus as one of the first goals from the TDP. Beginning with the February bid, we will extend service hours from 7am to 7pm to 6am to 8pm, Monday through Friday. We will also be offering this service to the public, not just to those with disabilities. SARTA will finally have true public transportation options available in Stark County. Additional phases will launch throughout 2026. By summer, we hope to add Saturdays back to the Proline Plus service, followed by limited Sunday service at the end of 2026/beginning of 2027. This will be a little more difficult, as there are additional operational logistics to figure out due to adding back a service day when SARTA has typically been closed.

operational logistics to figure out due to adding back a service day where SARTA has typically been closed.

### **Fixed Route Adjustments:**

The following routes have been updated for the next bid beginning November 9<sup>th</sup>:

1. Time Adjustments – 114, 128
2. Route Adjustments – 107, 111, 126
3. Combined Routes – 130/132 to become 130 (This was part of a service suggestion for Alliance, carrying over from the previous TDP.)

We did host informational meetings, and social media advertisements have been made.

## Procurement

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### HVAC Preventive Maintenance:

We have received a proposal in response to our recent RFP for HVAC preventive maintenance. It was reviewed by the Maintenance Department, and it was decided that Standard Plumbing and Heating will hold our contract for quarterly preventive maintenance at all five properties. This will include filter changing, coil cleaning, inspections, and emergency services.

# Customer Relations

Latrice Virola  
Director



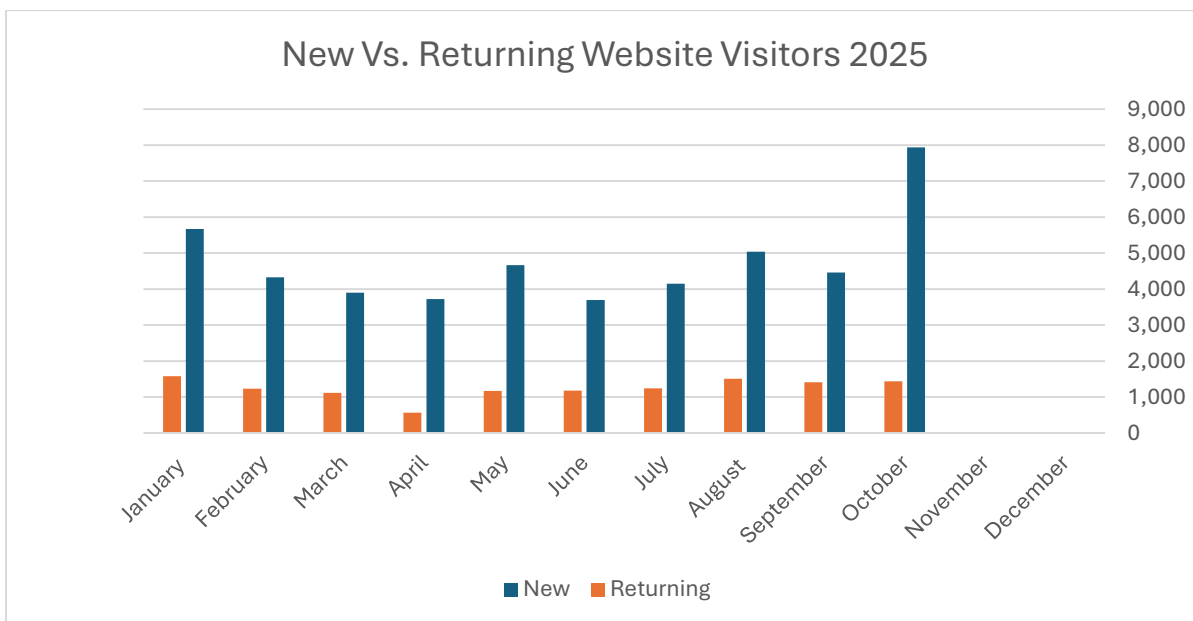
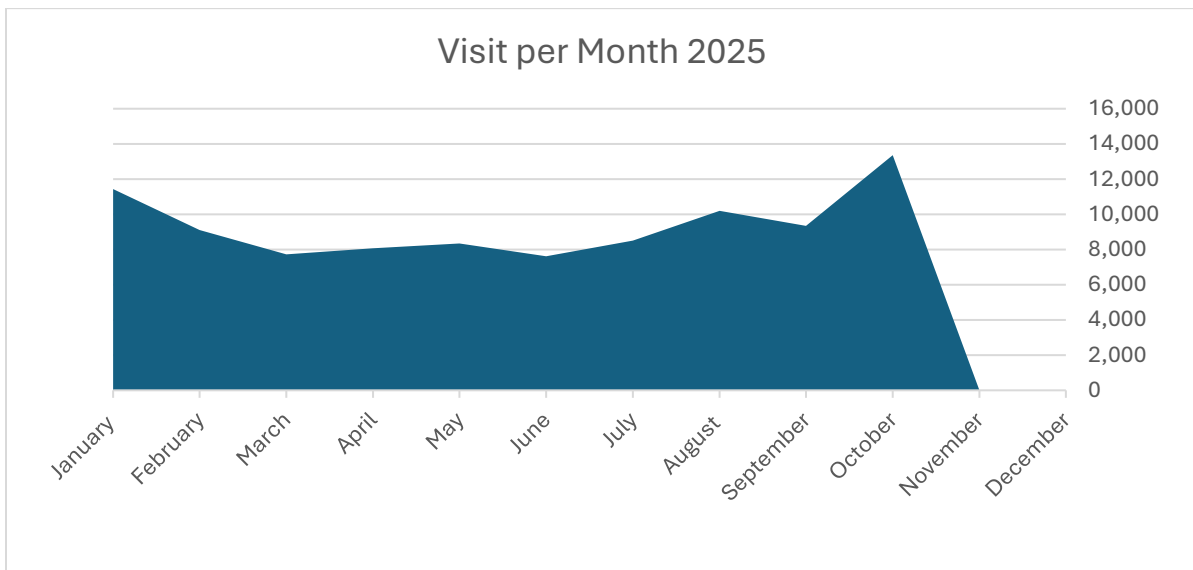
# October 2025

## Marketing & Public Outreach

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- SARTABuzz
  - 2 New Subscribers, 1 message
  
- EZFare Sales:
  - One-Way: \$1,847.25
  - Passes: \$24,750.00
  - Mixed: \$22.25
  - Pass Count:
    - All Day – 5,727
    - Cleveland – 55
    - Proline – 301
    - Proline 10-Ride - 459
    - Regular 31-Day – 170
  
- Social Media Activity:
  - Facebook
    - 4,973 likes to our page
    - 5,556 followers to our page
    - 32 new likes
    - 37 posts
    - 18 mentions
    - 1,089 Reactions
    - 68 Comments
    - 153 Shares
    - 2,655 Link Clicks
  - Twitter
    - 921 followers
    - 3 re-tweets
    - 0 likes
    - 0 Link clicks
    - 320 impressions
    - 8 tweets
    - 2 mentions
    - 5 profile visits
    - 0 media engagement
  - Instagram
    - 915 total followers
    - 5 new followers

- 15 images
- 73 image/video likes
- LinkedIn
  - 919 total followers
  - 1,531 impressions
  - 8 new followers
- YouTube
  - 303 subscribers
  - 62 views this month
  - 2,997 total views to page
  - 138 minutes watched



## Community Outreach & Training

---

In the month of October, our Outreach Specialist has been working to get information out to the public about updates related to operations. Some of the things that have been done are:

- Community Outreach
  - Swap Meeting- Canton City Public Health Dept.
  - Touch a Bus- Frazer Elementary School
  - Touch a Bus- Middlebranch Elementary School
  - Senior Fair- Lake YMCA
  - SARTA Presentation- North Canton Library
  - Trunk or Treat- JRC
  - Resource Fair- Stark High School
  - SARTA Employee Health and Wellness Fair
  - Stark County Sherriff's Office Trunk or Treat- Stark County Fairgrounds
  - Massillon's Trunk of Treat- Massillon Rec Center
  - Harvest Festival- Edward "Peel" Coleman Community Center
- Social Media Post and Web Updates
  - Route Detours

Answering questions via the phone about using SARTA services

# Information Technology

Craig Smith  
Director





**PROJECT REPORT**  
October 2025

PROJECT NAME	PURPOSE	PHASE	COST	% COMPLETE
Enterprise Resource Planning Software Replacement	SARTA will be replacing its current ERP system (Microsoft Dynamics GP 2016 R2) with a modern, intuitive, and customizable system. Currently, the RFP for the ERP is out, and those proposals are due by Feb. 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2024.	Active	\$1.9 M	68%
Onsite Yard Management	SARTA will be implementing Trapeze’s state-of-the-art Ultra-Wideband (UWB) yard location technology. The features provided by this real-time location system (“RTLS”) technology enable vehicle location throughout the fixed-bus parking and maintenance facility coverage areas, as well as augmentation of vehicle position at Gateway.	Active	\$704,000	90%
Trapeze Workforce Management (OPS)	Trapeze Workforce Management is a solution that is fully optimized to manage the transit workforce, empowering our team to meet ever-changing service and rider demands, and will maximize operational and cost controls.	Active	\$558,325	59%

# Enterprise Resource Planning Software Replacement

---

## Project Description and Scope:

SARTA will be replacing its current ERP system (Microsoft Dynamics GP 2016 R2) with a modern, intuitive, and customizable system.

<b>Project Approval:</b>	10/25/2023	<b>Project Manager:</b>	Craig Smith
<b>Estimated Project Cost:</b>	\$1,900,000.00	(Est. planning, execution, close-out)	
<b>Est. 3 Future Yrs. Operational Cost:</b>			
<b>Execution Project Cost:</b>	N/A	<b>Execution Cost to Date:</b>	\$645,500.00
<b>Execution Start:</b>	8/28/2024	<b>Execution End:</b>	TBD
<b><u>Funding Source for Project Cost</u></b>		<b><u>Vendor(s)</u></b>	
Federal award	80%	Infor	Trapeze Group
Local match	20%	GForce	

## Project Status:

With the proof-of-concept completed in April, the Conference Room Pilot (CRP) completed in July. Even though CRP is complete, there were a few questions and concerns that are being addressed. However, we are continuing to configure and test the integrations the Infor CloudSuite will have with various other software packages that SARTA utilizes. This is a very important and time-consuming process, as each integration is subject to vigorous testing to ensure logic and accuracy.

The team has been working on the Trapeze EAM and Genfare integrations. This testing will prove the validity of the integrations from these various systems. Trapeze EAM contains information regarding SARTA's fleet, such as the costs for repairs, work orders, or fluids, etc... for all of SARTA's vehicles. Genfare software encapsulates SARTA's fare sales from the APOS, fareboxes, TVMs, etc.... The integration with these software systems will bring this data into the ERP and help give SARTA a complete and clear depiction of its finances.

The team is still working on the integrations. We are closer to goal of Go Live by January 2026. The testing phase should be completed during the month of October.

## Onsite Yard Management Solution

---

### Project Description and Scope:

The primary goal of this project is to implement the Yard Management solution at our Gateway facility, which will be accomplished by deploying new Yard Manager RTLS Software and Hardware. This solution will allow vehicle locating technology inside the Gateway facility, providing real-time vehicle location data.

At the Gateway facility, the Yard Manager solution will strengthen the overall efficiency of SARTA's transit operation by:

- Providing accurate location information for vehicles inside the Gateway facility parking and maintenance areas, thus eliminating the need for manual yard walks and enabling staff to quickly find assigned vehicles for pull-out or maintenance
- Automatically populating the parking grid in Workforce Management/OPS with the locations of parked vehicles inside the Gateway facility, eliminating the need to manually enter vehicle locations
- Providing at-a-glance situational awareness by displaying vehicle positions in map and grid views and styling them based on status information
- Tracking key status elements that drive garage performance and service readiness such as fuel and wash status

<b>Project Approval:</b>	4/24/2024	<b>Project Manager:</b>	Craig Smith
<b>Estimated Project Cost:</b>	\$705,819	(Est. planning, execution, close-out)	
<b>Est. 3 Future Yrs. Operational Cost:</b>			
<b>Execution Project Cost:</b>	\$705,819	<b>Execution Cost to Date:</b>	\$272,988.00
<b>Execution Start:</b>	10/31/2024	<b>Execution End:</b>	10/08/2025
<b><u>Funding Source for Project Cost</u></b>		<b><u>Vendor(s)</u></b>	
Federal award	80%	Trapeze Group / Vontas	
Local match	20%	Hilscher-Clarke	

### Project Status:

The Onsite Yard Management project is mostly complete. This software is tied to the Workforce Management software and cannot be fully implemented until it is fully implemented.

# Trapeze Workforce Management Software (OPS)

---

## Project Description and Scope:

Trapeze Workforce Management is a solution that is fully optimized to manage the transit workforce, empowering SARTA's team to meet ever-changing service and rider demands, and will maximize operational and cost controls. Trapeze's Workforce Management solutions help agencies minimize unnecessary time at the garage and also helps an agency be more agile, by providing flexibility and real-time updates to support our changing business needs.

Below are a number of ways in which Trapeze Workforce Management will be helpful to SARTA's workforce:

- *Sign in with contactless badge scans eliminating walking up to the window to check in, waiting to verbally ask what work you have, and face to face communication with dispatch*
- *Display boards showing pullout time, vehicle assignments, vehicle location and extra board assignments*
- *Allow employees to access information 24/7 remotely – work assignment details, review paddles, request absences, check accruals, sign up to volunteer, and even complete bids.*
- *Can eliminate the need for SARTA's operators to call dispatch or travel to the garage to fill out paper, minimizing the time commitment for operators, and letting dispatchers focus on ensuring service is delivered on time.*
- *Push alerts and notifications using email, text/SMS, and online messages to ensure everyone is updated in real-time.*
- *Keep SARTA's employees informed at all times with messages, detours, and documents.*

<b>Project Approval:</b>	12/23/2023	<b>Project Manager:</b>	Craig Smith
<b>Estimated Project Cost:</b>	\$558,325	(Est. planning, execution, close-out)	
<b>Est. 3 Future Yrs. Operational Cost:</b>			
<b>Execution Project Cost:</b>	\$558,325	<b>Execution Cost to Date:</b>	\$0.00
<b>Execution Start:</b>	10/7/2024	<b>Execution End:</b>	12/08/2025
<b><u>Funding Source for Project Cost</u></b>		<b><u>Vendor(s)</u></b>	
Federal award	80%	Trapeze Group	
Local match	20%		

## Project Status:

SARTA and Trapeze are still working on the test environment. This is a complex phase of the design, as this system will interact with SARTA HRIS system and operations, as well as the new Yard Management system that is being implemented. We are still testing and setting up the software how SARTA management has desired.

Given the changes to the original scope of the project, more time will be needed to accommodate for the additional programming and configuration for SARTA's workforce bid process.

# Human Resources

Tammy Marie Brown  
Director



## Human Resources

### New Hires

Name	Position	Start Date
Camren Slaughter	Service Technician	11-3-25
Christopher Smer	Customer Service Representative	11-3-25
Wanda Barth	Customer Service Representative	11-10-25

### Promotions/Realigned

Bunyan White	Buildings & Grounds Technician	11-3-25
Robin Wagner	Route Coordinator	11-3-25
Christopher Tyson	Grants Manager	11-3-25
John Michaels	Procurement Administrator	11-3-25
Sheila Gines	Executive Assistant	11-3-25

### Current Job Openings

Position	Status
CFO	Interviewing
Non CDL Coach Operators	Offered (7)
Receptionist	Interviewing
Dispatcher	Interviewing

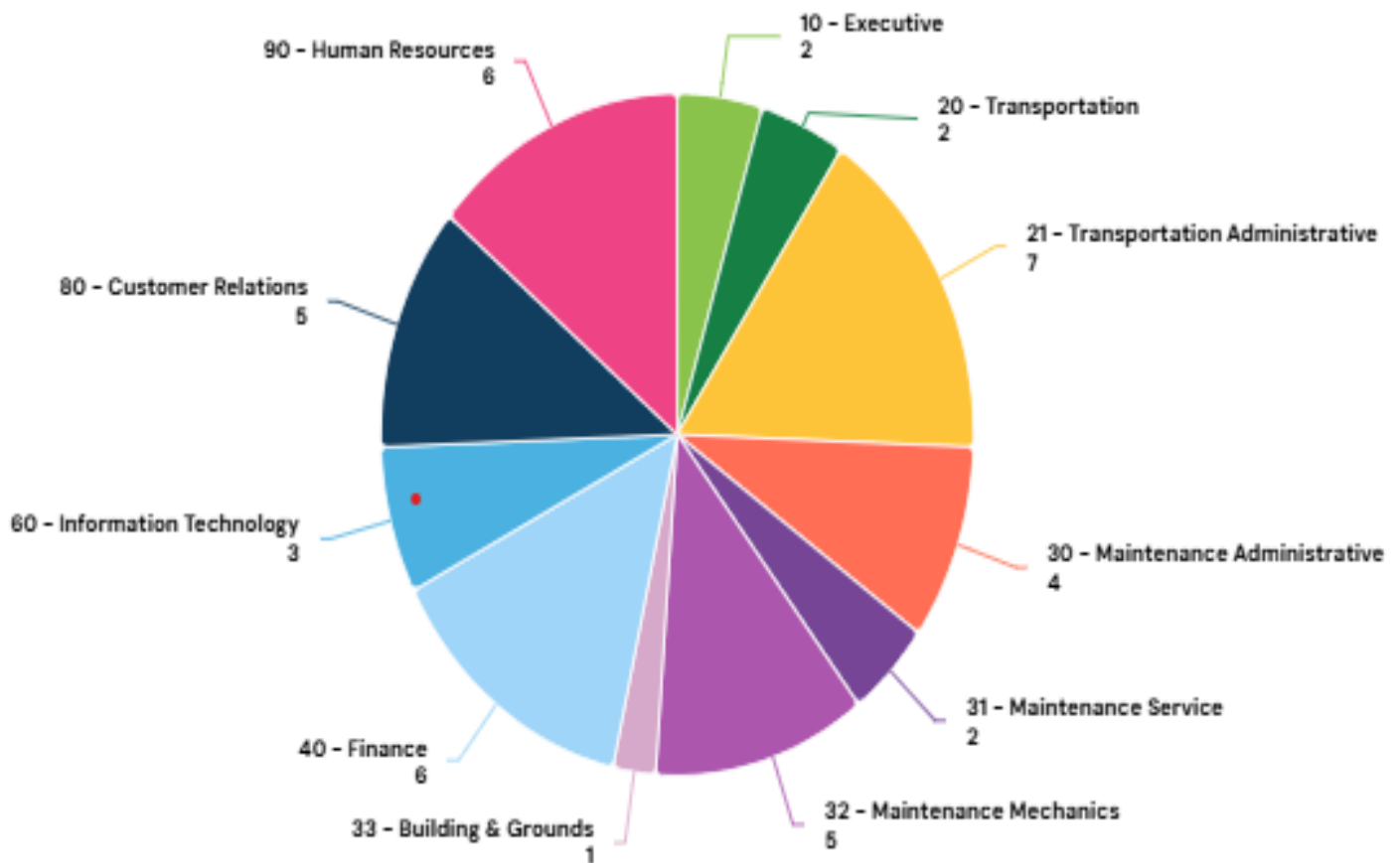
### Resignations, Terminations, and Probation Releases

Retirement	Termination	Layoff	Resigned	Death
0	1	0	0	0

### Total Number of Current Employees, 200

Executive	Non Union	2
Human Resources	Non Union	5
Customer Relations	Non Union	10
Information Technology	Non Union	3
Finance	Non Union	6
Building & Grounds	Non Union	3
Maintenance Mechanics	Union	15
Maintenance Service	Union	8

Maintenance Admin	Non Union	7
Transportation Admin	Non Union	16
CDL Coach Operator	Union	97
Non CDL Coach Operator	Union	24
	Total	196



## FMLA / Short-Term Disability

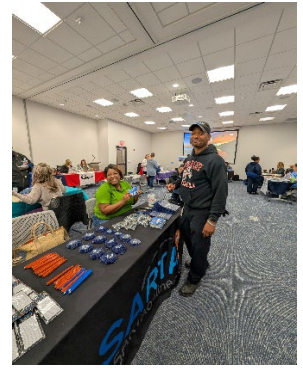
FMLA/Continuous Leave/Transitional work

- 0 on transitional work
- 5 employees on FMLA continuous leave
- 6 employees on FMLA intermittent leave
- 4 employees on Short-Term Disability

---

## General Human Resources Functions

- On October 23, 2025, SARTA hosted a Health and Wellness Fair for our team members. We had 131 team members attend the event.



- Open Enrollment is underway and will close on November 7, 2025. With the introduction of tier options for our healthcare, each team member must enroll through Open Enrollment.
- We are planning an appreciation event for our team members on November 21, 2025. We will be serving grilled chicken quarters along with a fish option.

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## Training

- CPR training will continue for all drivers whose licenses expire within the coming months.
- One (1) New Maintenance Tech tested for his CDL 11-3-2025 and passed.
- Currently training one new Service Tech on driving the coaches in the garage.
- Annual refresher training for all Coach Operators who have been employed for at least a year have begun and will continue throughout the remainder of the calendar year.

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## Stark County Safety Council

The Safety Council's November Session will be presented in December's board report.

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# Resolutions



Stark Area Regional Transit Authority

Resolution #\_\_\_\_\_, 2025

A Resolution To Dispose Of Obsolete And Unusable Assets

WHEREAS, this resolution authorizes the Executive Director/CEO to dispose of Obsolete and unusable assets; and

WHEREAS, there are a total of two (2) obsolete or unusable assets to be disposed of including the following;

<b>Asset ID</b>	<b>Asset Description</b>	<b>Purchase Date</b>	<b>Purchase Price</b>	<b>Fully Depreciated?</b>
01655-1	Power lift desk	12/1/2007	\$8,719.78	Yes
01655-2	Power lift desk	12/1/2007	\$8,719.77	Yes

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees, that the Executive Director/CEO has the authority to dispose of these assets.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary-Treasurer

Stark Area Regional Transit Authority

Resolution #\_\_\_\_\_, 2025

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01655-1	Power lift desk	12/1/2007	\$8,719.78	Yes
01655-2	Power lift desk	12/1/2007	\$8,719.77	Yes

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees, that the Executive Director/CEO has the authority to dispose of these assets.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Stark Area Regional Transit Authority**

**Resolution # \_\_\_\_\_, 2025**

**A Resolution Authorizing The Executive Director/CEO To Enter Into A Contract For HVAC Preventive Maintenance**

WHEREAS, the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority operates a wide array of HVAC equipment across all locations; and

WHEREAS, the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority would like to engage a vendor to provide comprehensive preventive maintenance services to extend the life of these systems while lowering downtime; and

WHEREAS, the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) dated September 26, 2025, and received one (1) proposal from Standard Plumbing and Heating, which was determined to be responsive and responsible; and

WHEREAS, the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority wishes to contract with Standard Plumbing and Heating to provide HVAC preventive maintenance for a period of five (5) years beginning January 1, 2026;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees, that the Executive Director/CEO is authorized to enter into a contract for HVAC Preventive Maintenance services for a term of five (5) years.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Stark Area Regional Transit Authority**

**Resolution #\_\_\_\_\_, 2025**

**A Resolution Of Approval For The Adoption Of The New Mission, Vision, And Values Statements For The Stark Area Regional Transit Authority**

WHEREAS, SARTA desires to change the culture of the organization in a positive way, establishing the Cornerstone of SARTA Excellence; and

WHEREAS, new values were developed – Trust, Customer Service, Teamwork, and Professionalism to create the Cornerstone Values for SARTA Excellence; and

WHEREAS, a new Mission Statement was written, which reads, “Creating and connecting opportunities one ride at a time.”; and

WHEREAS, a new Vision Statement was written, which reads, “Driving Stark County toward a relevant and sustainable service, that is an available and convenient choice.”; and

WHEREAS, the Cornerstones of SARTA Excellence statements will be included as an addendum in the recently adopted Transit Development Plan 2030 to ensure the mission, vision, and values are included in the planning goals for the next five years;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees, that the updated Mission, Vision, and Values Statements be approved as SARTA’s new Cornerstone of SARTA Excellence.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Stark Area Regional Transit Authority**

**Resolution # \_\_\_\_\_, 2025**

**A Resolution Updating Monthly Board Meetings**

WHEREAS, the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA) Board of Trustees adheres to the rules set forth in the Board bylaws; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees holds regular work sessions on the second Wednesday of every month and official meetings on the fourth Wednesday of every month; and

WHEREAS, each meeting is to convene at 5:00 PM in the Gateway Administration Board Room; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees has agreed to conduct meetings only once a month on the fourth Wednesday for official business, January through October, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of November and December. Thereby discontinuing the work session on the second Wednesday; and

WHEREAS, having one meeting per month will reduce overlapping content and allow staff uninterrupted time to present clear and concise reports to the Board of Trustees;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority, that the SARTA Board of Trustees meetings will be held on the fourth Wednesday, January through October, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of November and December at 5:00 PM to conduct official business.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Stark Area Regional Transit Authority**

**Resolution # \_\_\_\_\_, 2025**

**A Resolution Authorizing Alternates To The SCATS Board**

WHEREAS, the Stark Area Transit Study (SCATS) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Canton Urbanized area; and

WHEREAS, the President of Stark Area Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees is a member of the SCATS Policy Board; and

WHEREAS, Policy Committee members can designate an alternate to vote in their place; and

WHEREAS, dates should be written in the month, day, and year format, such as June 22, 2020;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees, that designate Ralph Lee and Clayton Popik, as alternates to the SCATS Policy Committee, along with Chris Tyson.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Stark Area Regional Transit**

**Authority Resolution #\_\_\_\_\_, 2025**

**A Resolution Updating The Transit Development Plan 2030, A Five-Year Short Range Service Plan For The Stark Area Regional Transit Authority**

WHEREAS, SARTA is required to update its Transit Development Plan (TDP) every five (5) years, and

WHEREAS, this plan will be used as a short-range service guide for SARTA for the years 2026 through 2030, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees, that the updated Transit Development Plan be approved as SARTA's five-year short-range service plan.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary-Treasurer



# TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2030

## Abstract

The TDP looks back at past recommendations and evaluates how those were implemented into the service and where work is still needed. Having reached out to the public six times in the last five years, SARTA has set six new goals to continue to work towards for improving the transit services offered to Stark County.

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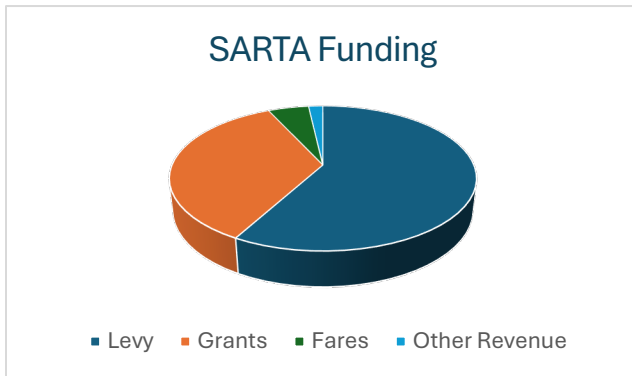
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## Introduction

The Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA) was established in 1997 as the public transit authority for Stark County through referendum of a 0.25% sales tax levy. Since then, SARTA continues to provide approximately 1.45 million trips per year across its Local and Express Fixed Route network as well as the Proline ADA Complementary Paratransit Service and Proline Plus Demand Response service.



SARTA's \$32.4 million dollar budget is supplemented by four main revenue streams. The sales tax levy makes up about 58.1% or \$19.2 million, grant funds account for 35.1% or \$11.6 million, farebox revenue is 5.1% or \$1.6 million, and other revenues make up the final 1.8% or \$590,000.

SARTA employs approximately 198 employees working as Operators, Road Supervisors, Dispatchers, Administrators, Service and Maintenance Technicians, and Directors.

SARTA is governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Stark County Commissioners, the Stark Council of Governments, and the Mayors of Alliance, Canton, and Massillon. The Board of Trustees meets twice a month on the second and fourth Wednesday at 5:00pm at SARTA's Gateway Facility located at 1600 Gateway Boulevard SE, Canton, OH 44707. SARTA's Board of Trustee duties include, but are not limited to:

1. Approving the annual budget.
2. Hiring an Executive Director/CEO.
3. Approving policies governing SARTA's business activities.
4. Approving long-range goals and annual operating objectives.
5. Overseeing management activities and implementation of adopted plans, policies, and objectives.
6. Approving procurement actions and contracts.

## SARTA's Mission Statement

SARTA is committed to enhancing the quality of life for our community by providing efficient, affordable, and sustainable mobility options for Stark County.

## SARTA's Vision Statement and Objectives

To enhance the economic and environmental viability of Stark County by providing mobility access for employment, education, medical care, and recreational opportunities.

SARTA will do this by:

1. Operating within budget and in a financially responsible manner.
2. Enhancing the quality of life through personal independence.
3. Offering mobility options to meet the diverse needs of the community.
4. Creating an environment supporting professional development to ensure dynamic workforce and operate according to the highest ethical standards.
5. Continuing our efforts to utilize alternative energy sources for our fleet and facilities.

SARTA Operates from their Gateway Facility in Canton with four additional properties that serve as transit centers – Cornerstone (Downtown Canton), Belden Village, Massillon, and Alliance. These transit centers help riders make connections within the community as well as providing amenities such as climate-controlled waiting areas, ticket and pass sales, restrooms, and break spaces for SARTA Operators and Customer Service Representatives.

These transit centers work as hubs for SARTA's extensive Fixed Route and Proline/Demand Responsive services. From these locations, riders can easily make transfers to get to other parts of the service area. These routes depart from the transit center at regular intervals where each route waits in a line-up reducing the times when a passenger may miss a bus.

## Other Services

In addition to SARTA's Fixed Route and Proline services, which will be discussed in detail later, SARTA has also helped provide service in neighboring communities. In Wayne County, SARTA acted as a federal recipient and provider for Demand Response services for all of Wayne County. This service ran from March 2021 through August 2024 and was ended by ODOT when a local match in Wayne County could not be identified. It was decided that Wayne County and the city of Wooster would need to strategize and work together to determine how to bring public transportation to Wayne County on their own.

Carrol County Board of Developmental Disabilities contracted with SARTA to provide a limited amount of work trips into Stark County for their clients. SARTA provided this trip for about four clients picking them up just inside their county and bringing them into Canton for work.

## Community Partnerships

SARTA serves as a resource for the whole community partnering with organizations over the years to provide services and fares for various organizations and their clients. SARTA is an Ohio Medicaid service provider who is able to provide non-medical transportation for those who qualify. They have provided service for the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities and passport clients that attend organizations like JRC. Other non-profit organizations have partnered with SARTA to purchase passes in a buy one get one program. These partnerships help demonstrate SARTA's ability to provide transportation to those in need without taking on the full cost themselves. SARTA's number 4 route, the Cleveland Express, is funded in part by the Veteran's Service Commission allowing veterans easy access to the Louis Stokes VA Clinic in Cleveland three times a day.

SARTA also partners with local schools such as Canton City Schools and Stark State. Their students ride SARTA Fixed Routes for free by showing their student IDs. The schools have agreed to cover the cost of the trips for the students. SARTA has already made plans to pursue additional partnerships with other local school districts to ensure all students have a safe and convenient trip to school.

SARTA will also offer supplemental services to community groups, when capable, to help provide transportation for groups who may otherwise overcrowd a bus while traveling downtown or around the county. These buses assist other organizations such as the local chambers of commerce, Leadership Stark County, or educational trips for the local schools.

SARTA staff will also take their time to volunteer on various boards and committees or provide non-transit humanitarian efforts through organizations such as Habitat for Humanity. These relationships help ensure that SARTA continues to be a valuable asset to the Stark County community.

## Transportation Services

### Fixed Routes

SARTA operates 26 Fixed Routes in the greater Stark County region. 24 routes operate locally while two provide Express service to the cities of Akron and Cleveland. SARTA's Fixed Routes service areas of Stark County surrounding the four transit centers. These routes run on predetermined schedules and lines for the public to access when it is convenient for them. These routes can be broken into three groups – Local, Local Interurban, and Express. Local provides service to and from each transit center. Interurban are routes that provide cross-town service connecting the transit centers. Express Routes depart from Canton to other service areas such as Akron and Cleveland.

It should be noted that the Cleveland Express operates as a way to help Stark County Veterans access the Louis Stokes VA Medical Center through a contract with the Veterans Service Commission of Stark County.

SARTA's Fixed routes help provide service surrounding the transit centers located in Massillon, downtown Canton, Belden Village, and Alliance with several routes providing connections between these hubs. The Belden Village area, Massillon, and Alliance each have three dedicated routes with five additional Interurban routes connecting the transit centers. Canton's Cornerstone Transit Center has fifteen routes that meet up including the two Express routes.

SARTA provides around 498 hours of Fixed Route service per day to Stark County covering approximately 8,040 miles. Using 32 buses and 94 CDL Operators, SARTA averages 55-minute frequency between buses with most routes operating on 30-minute or 60-minute frequencies.

### Local Fixed Routes

#### *Cornerstone Transit Center (Downtown Canton)*

SARTA's Cornerstone Transit Center is the central hub of the entire system. With fifteen total routes departing every hour, Cornerstone is a busy hub with approximately 475,170 boardings in 2024. It is impressive to watch the lineups leave carrying riders to all four corners of the city as well as North Canton, Massillon, Alliance, Akron, and Cleveland. These routes continue to show a steady rise in ridership that had been lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the table below shows, these routes run Monday through Saturday from 5:40am to 9:40pm.

Route	DOW	Hours	Vehicles	Frequency	2020 Ridership	2024 Ridership	Change
101	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	1	60	43,391	60,466	39.35%
103	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	1	60	44,872	49,642	10.63%
107	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	1	60	50,647	45,067	-11.02%
108	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	1	60	54,362	68,287	25.62%
110	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	1	30	45,856	70,131	52.94%
111	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	1	60	51,217	58,025	13.29%
113	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	1	60	33,233	28,190	-15.17%
114	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	1	60	33,542	26,500	-20.99%
117	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	1	60	50,559	56,812	12.37%
118	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	1	60	26,839	30,989	15.46%
119	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	1	60	61,601	58,846	-4.47%
				Total	496,119	552,955	11.46%

101 – Canton/Harmont Walmart: Connecting the Cornerstone Transit Center with the Walmart on Harmont, this route services northeast Canton with stops at Adventure Landing, Crenshaw Middle School, Coleman Senior Center, & Cook Park

103 – Canton/Plain Township: Servicing the northern Canton area, the 103 connects the Cornerstone Transit Center with destinations such as Gibbs School, Glenoak High School, Mercy Health Center of Plain, Oakwood Middle School, Oakwood Square, and the Stark County Library Plain Township Branch.

107 – Canton/East Canton: The city of East Canton and the Cornerstone Transit Center are connected by the 107 making stops along the way at Belden Elementary School, Canton Community Clinic, and the East Canton Library.

108 – Canton/Washington Square: Travelling straight north on Market Street gives riders the opportunity to stop at the Canton Civic Center, Culture Center, Stark County Library Main & North Branches, Canton Palace Theatre, Walsh University, and Washington Square.

110 – Canton/Sherrick Warner: The 110 connects the southeast neighborhood of Canton with the Cornerstone Transit Center. This route stops at Allen School, Gateway Homes, Canton Urban League, Hartford Middle School, Queen Esther Village, Skyline Terrace Apartments, and SARTA’s Gateway Facility.

111 – Canton/Harmont Walmart: Similar to the 101, this route connects the Cornerstone Transit Center with destinations in the northeast part of Canton such as Aldi, Board of Elections Office, US Post Office on Spangler, Amazon Fulfillment Center, Stark County Library Plain Branch, and Walmart on Harmont.

113 – Canton/Southway Industrial: Connecting the Cornerstone Transit Center with the Southway Industrial Park, this route also makes stops at First Ladies Library, Goodwill Industries, Linwood Acres, Canton Academy, Canton Police Boys Club, and the VA Clinic.

114 – Canton/Southgate: Cornerstone Transit Center is connected to Canton’s southside by the 114 where destinations include Compton Learning Center, Higgins Workshop, and the Southgate Shopping Center.

117 – Canton/Fairgrounds: Northeast neighborhoods are connected to downtown Canton with the 117 bus including stops at Harrison Professional Building, McKinley Monument, McKinley High School, Mercy Medical Center, Pro-Football Hall of Fame and Hall of Fame Village, and the Stark County Fairgrounds.

118 – Canton/Perry Hills: Southwest Canton and Perry Townships are connected to downtown Canton via the 118 which makes stops at Community Treatment & Corrections Center, DLH Industries, Perry Hills Colony, Perry Township, Richville, Sterilite, Metallus Harrison, and the VA Clinic.

119 – Canton/Frazer: This route services the northwest communities along Fulton Road and Cleveland Avenue travelling toward the city of North Canton. Stops along this route include Ohio Means Jobs, Frazer Elementary School, Glenwood Middle School, Malone University, McKinley High School (downtown), Early College High School and Giant Eagle on Cromer.

*Massillon Transit Center*

SARTA’s newest transit center is located in the city of Massillon. It has been the focus of many changes over the last five years. The first being the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in lost ridership in 2020. The vacating of the original transit center two years ahead of the completion of the new building made travel in Massillon less than desirable during times of extreme weather. The temporary facility was just four bus shelters with little to no amenities. Now that the new building has opened and routes have been adjusted, as recommended in the previous TDP, SARTA will continue to monitor the ridership over the next five years. Massillon finished 2024 with 31,677 boardings.

Route	DOW	Hours	Vehicles	Frequency	2020 Ridership	2024 Ridership	Change
124	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 8:55p	1	60	12,900	9,547	-25.99%
126	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 8:55p	1	60	7,718	6,608	-14.38%
128	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 8:55p	1	60	14,546	9,843	-32.33%
				Total	35,164	25,998	-26.07%

124 – Massillon/Walnut Hills: This route connects many points of interest throughout Massillon such as downtown, Franklin Elementary School, Paul Brown Tiger Stadium & Washington High School, Massillon Library, Massillon Museum, Massillon YMCA, and Walnut Hills.

126 – Massillon/Rolling Hills: This route connects most of Massillon’s west side with the Massillon Transit Center making stops at Knights of Columbus, Mayflower Park Shopping Center, Quarry Ridge Apartments, Rolling Hills Village, and the Boys & Girls Club of Massillon.

128 – Massillon/Navarre: This route connects the village of Navarre with the Massillon Transit Center. Points of interest include Menards, Walmart, TSC Distribution, Hendrickson, Sterilite, and Sheare’s Foods.

*Phyllis Byers Alliance Transit Center*

The Phyllis Byers Alliance Transit Center has shown some of the greatest ridership growth in recent years. In 2024, Alliance had 46,915 boardings at the transit center. The adjustments to service recommended in the previous TDP have proven beneficial to these routes. In order to accommodate economic growth on its way into Alliance from Canton, State Street service was moved from Route 139 to Route 131 causing its ridership to grow astronomically. This shows how important this commercial area is to the residents of Alliance. Other adjustments were made to reduce the number of transfers people need to travel around the city as well as making timing with Route 139 more convenient for those needing to get to Canton.

Route	DOW	Hours	Vehicles	Frequency	2020 Ridership	2024 Ridership	Change
130	Mon-Sat	6:45a - 9:10p	1	60	5,723	5,388	-5.85%
131	Mon-Sat	5:15a - 9:18p	1	60	15,794	47,447	200.41%
132	Mon-Sat	5:45a - 8:40p	1	60	14,076	6,522	-53.67%
				Total	35,593	59,357	66.77%

130 – Alliance/Gaskill: Serving the northern part of the city of Alliance, this route stops at places such as Alliance Senior Center, Altercare of Alliance, downtown Alliance, and Roselawn Terrace.

131 – Alliance/Walmart: With service to the western end of Alliance, this route makes stops at most of the retail locations as well as Alliance Community Hospital, Alliance High School, Buckeye Village, Carnation Mall, downtown Alliance, the University of Mount Union, Walmart, Meijer, and Giant Eagle.

132 – Alliance/College Plaza: Servicing the south end of Alliance, this route makes stops at the Alliance Chamber of Commerce, Alliance Community Hospital, Alliance Franklin Head Start, Auld Street Industrial Area, College Plaza, downtown Alliance, Rodman Library, Silver Park, Thompson-Snodgrass Park, and the University of Mount Union.

*Belden Village Transit Center*

The routes servicing the Belden Village Transit Center serve many purposes in this multi-use developed district. This is an area of high retail and industrial use. People come to this area to work, shop, and socialize. The two local routes below as well as the two Interurban routes that service this area have seen fluctuations in ridership over the past five years, but the service does continue to demonstrate the need for moving people in this area. Belden Village saw 66,120 boardings at the end of 2024. Even though some of the recommendations from the last TDP were implemented in making necessary adjustments, it is evident that further evaluation is needed to ensure ridership continues to grow in this area and that all necessary destinations are serviced.

Route	DOW	Hours	Vehicles	Frequency	2020 Ridership	2024 Ridership	Change
45	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:25p	1	60	15,698	33,843	115.59%
121	Mon-Sat	6:21a - 9:03p	2	30	18,663	14,211	-23.85%
				Total	34,361	48,054	39.85%

45 – Belden Village/Stark State: This route circulates the greater Belden Village area stopping at locations such as Belden Village Mall, Kent State Stark, Stark State, various retail centers, and the North Canton Industrial Park.

121 – Belden Village/North Canton Industrial Park: Servicing the Belden Village and North Canton areas, this route makes stops at Aultman Medical Center North, Belden Village Mall, Mercy Medical Center & Sports Medicine, North Canton Industrial Park, Stark State, Kent State Stark, Movies 10, and Tinseltown Movies.

**Interurban Routes**

The Interurban Routes act as connectors between the transit centers in the way that Interurbans connected various cities back when streetcars were in service. The overall drop in ridership for these routes can be attributed to the change in travel patterns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Ridership is slowly making a return overall from pre-pandemic levels however the Interurban routes demonstrate that travel between communities has been slower to return to those levels. These routes could benefit from an evaluation of frequency. People may choose not to travel by bus between communities because it is easier to drive.

The Interurban routes could be a good target for beginning to increase the frequency throughout the service area.

Route	DOW	Hours	Vehicles	Frequency	2020 Ridership	2024 Ridership	Change
102	Mon-Sat	5:10a - 9:40p	3	30	200,435	161,662	-19.34%
105	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	1	60	96,962	67,303	-30.59%
106	Mon-Sat	5:40a - 9:40p	2	30	83,108	85,732	3.16%
125	Mon-Sat	6:10a - 9:25p	1	90	23,680	17,589	-25.72%
139	Mon-Sat	5:15a - 9:40p	2	60	93,122	87,833	-5.68%
				Total	497,307	420,119	-15.52%

102 – Canton/Massillon: The 102 connects the Cornerstone Transit Center with the Massillon Transit Center serving both the cities of Canton and Massillon as well as Perry Township. Stops along the way are McKinley High School (downtown), Aultman Hospital, Walmart on Tuscarawas, various grocery stores, Target, Massillon Public Library, and Downtown Massillon.

105 – Canton/Belden Village via Cleveland Avenue: The 105 connects the Cornerstone Transit Center with the Belden Village Transit Center for making connections in Plain & Jackson Townships. McKinley High School (downtown), Canton City Schools Offices, Early College High School, US Post Office, Malone University, and Belden Village Mall are also along this route.

106 – Canton/Belden Village via Whipple Avenue: This route travels through southwest Canton to Whipple Avenue to connect with the Belden Village Transit Center with stops at Aultman Hospital, Walmart on Tuscarawas, Meyers Lake Shopping Plaza, and Belden Village Mall.

125 – Massillon/Belden Village: This route connects Massillon and Jackson Townships with connections at the Belden Village Transit Center. Other points of interest include Affinity Medical Center, Aultman West, Amherst Shopping Center, Jackson High School, Jackson YMCA, Lake Cable Medical Center, and Massillon Recreation Center.

139 – Canton/Louisville/Alliance: Connecting the Cornerstone Transit Center and the northeast neighborhoods of Canton with the cities of Louisville and Alliance, this route provides service to the Stark Regional County Correctional Center, Amazon Fulfillment Center, downtown Louisville, Louisville High School, Alliance Walmart, and the Phyllis Byers Alliance Transit Center.

## Express Routes

SARTA’s Express Routes have created a way for local residents to reach other areas and transit systems when needed. These reasons can be for work, to see family, or to get to larger medical facilities than are located here in Stark County. The Akron Express Route (81) connects the Cornerstone Transit Center, the Belden Village Transit Center, and Metro RTA’s RKP Transit Center located in downtown Akron. The Cleveland Express Route (4) connects the Cornerstone Transit Center, Veteran’s Service Commission, and downtown Cleveland – specifically the Louis Stokes VA Clinic. This route is partially funded through a contract with the Veteran’s Service Commission. These routes have shown great ridership growth since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Route	DOW	Hours	Vehicles	Frequency	2020 Ridership	2024 Ridership	Change
4	Mon-Fri	6:35a - 6:30p	1	3 trips	6,364	9,201	44.58%
81	Mon-Sat	5:15a - 9:40p	2	90	67,525	84,549	25.21%
				Total	73,889	93,750	26.88%

4 – Cleveland Express: This route connects downtown Canton with downtown Cleveland and the Louis Stokes VA Clinic.

81 – Akron Express: This route connects downtown Canton with the Belden Village Transit Center, Akron-Canton Airport, and the METRO RTA RKP Transit Center.

## Proline ADA & Proline Plus

Until early 2025, SARTA operated Proline ADA Complementary Paratransit Services at the countywide level following all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This unlimited service delivery model was beginning to make Proline unsustainable and in late 2024 it was decided to begin the public hearing process for restructuring Proline. This adjustment actually goes back to recommendations made in the 2020 TDP but was rushed due to financial concerns. By restructuring Proline, SARTA would be able to better serve the community with not only the federally mandated requirements of a ¾-mile ADA service area surrounding the Fixed Routes, but also budget for a countywide Demand Response service branded Proline Plus. Proline Plus would be delivered at a limited capacity as a first-come first-served Demand Response service for those riders with disabilities while Proline ADA would continue to operate as SARTA’s required ADA Complementary Paratransit Service.

Proline passengers continue to call SARTA’s Customer Service Representatives to book their rides. The service used to deliver the ride is based on the requested trip origin and

destination. Both services require one to four days advance notice. Riders are then given a 30-minute window in which to expect SARTA to arrive.

Proline operates with approximately 26 Operators from both the non-CDL and CDL pools to deliver around 226 hours across 3,900 miles each day. SARTA delivered around 400 Proline trips per day for roughly 191 individual riders in 2024.

In the 2020 draft of the TDP, it was suggested that SARTA consider implementing microtransit services. In early 2024, SARTA advertised for and procured a contract with Via to aid in transportation services within Stark County and piloted what became known as SARTA Connect in the city of Massillon and the southwest part of the county. This service provided two types of service to the general public – a corner to corner on-demand service booked through a mobile application which could have a ride available within a half-hour within most of Massillon and Navarre and a pre-booked service for the more rural parts of the pilot area. For those wishing to travel outside of these zones, a trip into the Massillon Transit Center could be scheduled. This pilot ran from July 2024 to December 2024. By October, it was realized that contracting out the service was becoming too costly, and another alternative would need to be considered.

## Previous TDP Progress

SARTA's 2020 TDP laid out nine recommendations and subsequent strategies for achieving those. In the five years since those recommendations SARTA faced numerous obstacles in reaching those goals. The first was the global COVID-19 pandemic which led to stay-at-home orders reducing ridership and routes, supply chain issues making parts and vehicle acquisition difficult, and ultimately a driver shortage. The second was the financial concern SARTA faced at the end of 2024 where numerous services or routes were ended, altered, or suspended until further notice which many came from the 2020 plan. Below are the nine areas of focus of the 2020 plan and a review of the progress SARTA has made in implementing or addressing those recommendations.

### Improving service in Canton-Akron corridor:

This was an area of focus for the previous TDP in strengthening service for regional transportation as well as servicing areas such as the Pro Football Hall of Fame, Hall of Fame Village, and the Akron-Canton Regional Airport. It was suggested to focus improvements on frequency and routing for the Akron Express (Route 81) and the Fairgrounds Route (Route 117). Overall, the improvements would focus on improvements made along the Interstate 77 corridor moving from downtown Canton toward Akron.

While no official changes in this area have been made, alternatives to Route 117 and the idea of having seasonal transportation geared toward tourism have been discussed and the metrics behind these adjustments are noted further in this plan. Also included in making regional connections more convenient for Stark County residents is that of an improved Cleveland Express (Route 4). Currently this route runs three trips per day but has limited destinations in Cleveland for the distance it travels. New roadways within the city of Cleveland could demonstrate a more efficient Cleveland Express route for SARTA.

In 2022, SARTA worked with WSP USA to complete a Streetcar Feasibility Study which would have made use of the rail line running parallel to the interstate. This rail line touches on four major economic drivers and would have helped make some strong cross-town connections. These were downtown Canton, Pro Football Hall of Fame/Hall of Fame Village, Belden Village, and the Akron-Canton Airport. It was found that Streetcar would be costly but also that using existing infrastructure helped ease that cost. The other part hinged on whether or not the Hall of Fame Village could provide all of their parking needs on site and a separate study completed by SCATS showed that they should be able to if their master plan were to be taken to completion. As of this writing, SARTA has not further pursued the topic of Streetcar.

### Improving productivity and access to employment in the city of Alliance:

SARTA has recently worked on combining two of the goals recommended in the 2020 plan which were to create more access to employment and restructure the Alliance routes. By restructuring the routes, SARTA was able to meet the employment needs of the city of Alliance by making connections between residential areas and work destinations. This has also allowed riders to make better connections at the Phyllis Byers Alliance Transit Center. As of this writing, SARTA is currently working on another merger within the Alliance area. The restructuring allowed SARTA to begin servicing the Amazon Fulfillment Center which was constructed in the last five years.

### Improving productivity and access to employment in the Belden Village area and city of North Canton:

While some improvements have been made in the Belden Village area making service available to the local colleges and the Belden Village Transit Center, it has been found that employment areas can be moving targets in an area of growth. It will be necessary to continue evaluating service in an area where changes can occur more frequently. For example, the Akron-Canton Regional airport could be an employment destination as well as a tourist destination and serviced from a local route and not just the Akron Express.

### Employment access and improved productivity in Massillon:

The biggest change that has come to Massillon since the writing of the 2020 plan is the new Massillon Transit Center. SARTA had previously operated a transit center on the ground level of the city's parking garage. As service and the fleet grew over the years, this facility no longer met SARTA's needs. The time had come to search for land in the downtown area where a standalone facility could be constructed to allow the residents of Massillon to make necessary travel connections with the rest of Stark County and in the Massillon area as well.

The second challenge in the Massillon area is that of the industrial growth in Navarre along the US Route 30 corridor. Suggested employment loops were created to meet this need but did have to be suspended due to lower ridership in early 2025. However, like the work being done in Alliance, Massillon has seen some consolidation and realigning of routes to make more convenient travel and connections for those riding in the area. Massillon continues to serve its population locally as well as for those needing to get to the Cornerstone and Belden Village Transit Centers.

## Increased Frequency for Local Routes:

Even with the realignment of routes in Massillon and Alliance, SARTA's frequency remains high on average. Most routes arrive every 60 minutes. This is a goal that has been carried out for the next five years with this TDP.

## Connections between routes outside of the Transit Centers:

This is another area that service has been tried before but was not successful in the idea of cross-town service. This way someone could catch a route across the service area without making a transfer at one of the transit centers. It is an idea that can still remain on the table and considered as part of other suggested service improvements.

SARTA does, however, have areas of service that are redundant. Meaning, two buses may traverse the same road at some point during the routing. In these locations riders could make connections across the service area without making the trip into a transit center and transferring.

## Microtransit Services:

SARTA began piloting a service branded as SARTA Connect, in July 2024. A contract with Via was procured and vehicles, drivers, and software were provided as a Mobility as a Service (MaaS) model. This was piloted in the Massillon/Southwest Stark County area with two types of service. In the immediate area surrounding the Massillon Transit Center, an on-demand service was implemented where a passenger could book a ride through their mobile device and have a ride within a half hour. The second was a traditional pre-booked service where those in the rural areas could book up to one day in advance and have a ride anywhere within the Massillon zone or to the transit center should they need to travel further. This was completely open to the general public, unlike the Proline service.

Due to the financial concerns SARTA faced at the end of 2024, this pilot and the contract with Via were cancelled. SARTA felt that the restructuring of Proline would be a better way to meet this recommendation at a slower pace, allowing for a better understanding of travel needs. Currently, only those with a disability can access Proline and while this is inhibitive of true county-wide service, it is a starting point and can allow for a more strategic and budgetary approach to expanding the audience of those who use Proline.

## Enhance infrastructure for those who access SARTA routes by foot and bike:

Both recommendations in this section call for shelter placement and larger bicycle racks. Shelters are placed based on location and ridership. Partnerships in stop placement are also a beneficial

way to handle this. In this scenario, a landowner such as a business might allow the stop to be placed and handle the permitting and concrete pad installation. SARTA then provides and installs the shelter. SARTA continues to evaluate shelter requests as they come in.

SARTA has also ensured that bike racks are on all vehicles to help those who use bikes to get to and from their bus stop. This is a common first mile/last mile solution that SARTA and other transit agencies have offered for some time.

### Addressing Sunday needs.

Sunday service was eliminated almost twenty years ago. Low ridership and the entire fleet out on the road with significantly lower ridership made this day of service an easy target to save money. However, it is important to study if a limited service could be reintroduced to the area and explore how this could be accomplished. This will be added to the service goals for this TDP.

## Other Service Changes Since Last TDP

SARTA would make service decisions as they were needed regardless of what was in TDP. In the last five years since the writing of the 2020 Transit Development Plan, SARTA has had to make some quick decisions on how to keep service going through unprecedented times. These challenges largely occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Stay at home orders caused ridership to drop, supply chain issues caused a shortage of vehicles and vehicle parts, and driver shortages caused cuts to be made to the service. Communities with lower fixed-route ridership such as Canal Fulton, Hartville, Waynesburg, and East Sparta saw a suspension of Fixed Route services, leaving only Proline to service those areas.

The Fixed Route service areas of Massillon, Jackson Township, Plain Township, North Canton, Canton, Louisville, East Canton, and Alliance saw adjustments in routing, frequency, and alignment but were able to maintain some level of Fixed Route. While some adjustments to frequency and alignment have been made since the end of the pandemic, SARTA is still seeing lower ridership levels than years leading up to the pandemic.

Proline was another area where restructuring was necessary to make this a sustainable service as Stark County's need for Demand Responsive services has grown in recent years. This will be discussed further but it was decided that SARTA would move forward with applying the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to its Proline services where passengers who are not able to access the Fixed Routes would be able to ride Proline ADA Complementary Paratransit Service for traveling to and from destinations within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a Fixed Route. An additional service was created, however, to maintain a level of Demand Responsive service outside of the core Fixed Route areas now known as Proline Plus.

Budgetary concerns did cause further service adjustments to the Fixed Route service in late 2024. Public hearings were held to discuss the above-mentioned Proline restructure as well as the end of the Late Night Loops – Routes 151, 152, 153, 154, and 157 were discontinued officially in February 2025 when the Proline restructure launched. The ending of these routes with lower ridership helped reduce the impact to the Proline service and by extension, the disabled community of Stark County whom Proline ADA and Proline Plus are currently intended for.

## Public Engagement

SARTA engages with the public at times of major service changes as well as through their travel training and outreach programs. Other times that SARTA will seek public input is during studies such as the Streetcar Feasibility Study and updates to the Transit Development Plan such as this one. Below are times that SARTA worked with the public to receive input for changes happening with the service and/or organization.

In the past five years, SARTA has gone to the public for a total of five topics dealing with service changes and SARTA activities. SARTA also spends much time in the public space talking about services at major events such as the Stark County Fair and various resource fairs throughout the community.

### Gateway Expansion

SARTA's main facility, having been built in the early 1980's had become land locked with no room for expansion. By the early 2020's it had become necessary for additional workspaces and parking. An administrative expansion was planned, and public hearings would need to be held. The problem was there was a global pandemic occurring due to the COVID-19 outbreak and large gatherings were temporarily banned.

To work around this, SARTA hosted Facebook Live hearings to receive comments on the purchase of two public spaces. One was owned by the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority (SMHA) and the second by the city of Canton – Crenshaw Park. SMHA were consolidating buildings and did not need the six that were demolished, and the city had been looking to downsize the park land. This allowed the SARTA property to expand by ten acres where a new parking lot, CDL training pad, and 13,000 square foot administration building were constructed.

Those who participated had no immediate concerns with SARTA acquiring the land.

### Streetcar Feasibility Study

In 2022, SARTA had a Streetcar Feasibility Study conducted by WSP USA to look at the rail corridor connecting downtown Canton to the Pro Football Hall of Fame and Hall of Fame Village, Everhard Road/Belden Village area, and the Akron-Canton Regional Airport. This corridor sees plenty of local and tourist traffic and the Streetcar would play a cross-town connector bringing together two transit centers and the airport with the hotels in the area.

Stakeholder and Public Meetings were held as part of the study to gauge support for this endeavor, and other similarly sized systems were explored as part of the study to determine

what additional infrastructure would be needed. Hydrogen Fuel Cell was, of course, explored to avoid the cost of constructing overhead catenary and a power station.

The overall cost of the project demonstrates that a closer look at the bus network could be a more cost-effective alternative to strengthening service in the corridor between downtown and the Akron-Canton Regional Airport corridor.

## Customer & Community Survey

In 2022, SARTA sought input from riders and community members about their views of SARTA. This was conducted by EMC Research where 500 residents were interviewed by either phone, email, or texting modes of communication. These surveys were conducted October 12-17, 2022. Key findings were SARTA is viewed positively by the community and that it is important for the region to have a high-quality public transit system. However, most respondents reported they do not currently use SARTA as their preference was for their personal automobile. The survey found that while most respondents were unaware of SARTA, their view of SARTA was favorable. This was found to be true within both the rider and non-rider groups. Reasons for not riding were convenience with non-riders citing improvements such as frequency and stop location affecting their choice to drive their own vehicles. These topics were further explored in this TDP's community survey below.

Amongst the riders polled, it was found that over half felt the need for an expansion of services. Most also found that SARTA was doing a positive job and had a favorable opinion. Riders cited the SARTA Operators, frequency of service, safety, and overall quality as the top four factors contributing to their satisfaction. The top four reasons, at this time, for using SARTA were: medical, shopping, social visits, and work.

## Stark Poll

SARTA participated in the 2024 Stark Poll. This poll was conducted by Center for Marketing & Opinion Research, LLC where SARTA could submit questions to be asked of Stark County residents as part of a larger county-wide group survey. The sample size for the Stark Poll was 600 people.

These questions were developed to gauge the perception of SARTA as well as the possible level of levy support SARTA should expect to receive when going to the ballot in 2026 to renew the 0.25% sales tax levy which makes up a substantial portion of SARTA's operating dollars.

The poll showed how people typically find out about SARTA and among those top four sources were billboards, internet, radio, and social media. Other insightful information shown in this poll was how each community's transit needs changed throughout Stark County with the majority saying the needs have changed. This has been seen in SARTA's

service planning as we continue to always adjust service to meet the needs of the community. This was an equal finding across the communities served as well.

## Proline Restructure

SARTA held two series of public meetings surrounding the restructuring of Proline. The first set were the official hearings held in November 2024 to announce the restructuring would be happening. The second was information meetings explaining the difference between the Proline ADA and the Proline Plus service held in January 2025.

In addition to the people who attended the meetings, comments were also collected online. These comments were compiled and demonstrated that while the restructuring focused on maintaining the ADA level of service in the core Fixed Route area, there was a real need for public transportation in the rural areas. The restructuring was pushed quickly, and the biggest complaint was about the lack of time people had to make other arrangements before the changes went into effect.

The conclusion of this outreach demonstrates how important Proline is to the community and can be one of the ways that SARTA continues to expand to ensure service is delivered to all residents of Stark County who may have no other form of transportation, and this would include expanding the audience of Proline beyond just those with disabilities.

## TDP Public Outreach

SARTA went back to the public during the drafting of this plan. This started with a Stakeholder Meeting at the beginning of August 2025 that kicked off a five-week survey period for not only riders but community members and employees as well. The surveys were web-based; however, paper copies were made available upon request.

Postcards were distributed containing the QR codes. These were sent to the transit centers as well as distributed to partner agencies who would typically have clients that ride our buses. To ensure all could participate in the survey, paper copies were sent to the transit centers for those who may not have internet access. Proline riders were asked to fill out a survey when they



called to book their rides and for those who needed further assistance in filling out their surveys, help was offered over the phone.

The Stark County Fair was occurring during this period where staff took the opportunity to speak with attendees about the TDP and requested they take a moment to submit a response. The beginning of school events were also leveraged as the Outreach Team spoke with students and parents preparing to begin the school year.

In the end SARTA received 172 responses across all three surveys. The breakdown was: 25 employees, 57 community members, and 90 rider surveys completed. All surveys asked that the respondents consider the goals set forth in the plan and even asked them to submit an idea of their own. Questions were also asked surrounding knowledge of SARTA's policies and programs. Employees were further asked about their views on the services offered and for thoughts about the Executive Leadership Team.

These surveys provided insight into what SARTA should be doing to help better transportation in the community. Below are summaries of all three surveys.

The Rider Survey was completed by approximately 68 Fixed Route riders, 16 Proline ADA riders, and 6 Proline Plus riders. Most ride daily and some weekly. The top three reasons the respondents ride with SARTA were Personal, Work, and Shopping with others noting various reasons such as not having a license or car, concerts, library, and visiting family. The Fixed Route respondents listed many of SARTA's Fixed Routes with some exhibiting making trips across the entire service area. Ninety-two percent of the respondents noted that SARTA is their primary form of transportation. Of the five goals presented, the riders responded that they felt Sunday service and increasing route frequency were the top two goals to concentrate on. Improving connections outside of Stark County and concentrating on SARTA's relevancy and sustainability tied for third. Other responses were to expand the service hours of Proline Plus, bringing back the Late-Night Loops, and increasing the safety and amenities at bus stops. The final questions surrounded rider policy and the responses showed that our ridership has a strong understanding of what is expected of them.

The Community Survey was completed by 57 respondents. Eighty percent of them know a rider that uses SARTA as their main form of transportation. They found public transportation to be extremely valuable to the Stark County community. Respondents were representatives of other public service organizations such as Canton City Schools, IDEA House, Goodwill Industries, YWCA, Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority, and the Louisville Public Library. Some have even requested Travel

Training sessions for their staff. This group of community members felt riders use SARTA for Work, Medical, and Personal trips. This aligns with the responses from the riders apart from shopping and medical. When asked about additional communities in need of service, the responses were overwhelmingly the outlying, rural villages and townships. The community also felt that the Express services connecting riders to areas outside of the county were extremely valuable. When asked what would sway them to become riders, they cited increased service area, increased frequency, and less transfers as the top three reasons for not riding. Finally, when asked which goals to concentrate on, this group felt that Sunday service, expanding Proline Plus, and increased route frequency were the top three goals. Other goals noted were Late Night Loops, microtransit, subscriptions, and second shift service.



Please take a few moments to complete the Transit Development Plan Team Member survey!  
Scan the QR code to help guide SARTA in the best direction to serve our communities AND help focus SARTA's Executive Leadership Team to begin agency-wide strategic planning!



Twenty-five employees filled out the Employee Survey. Most who filled out the survey have been with SARTA for 10-20 years with the 3-5-year group coming in second. Most were aware of what SARTA's Mission and Vision Statements were. When asked about SARTA's core values,

safety, efficiency, reliability, customer service, and professionalism stood out as common themes. When ranking the aspects of their employment, staff said that pay, healthcare, and culture were the three items of importance. SARTA staff were asked to evaluate the Executive Leadership Team. Among the strengths were longevity, innovation, going above and beyond, caring, teamwork, supportive, knowledgeable, and approachable. Weaknesses noted were lack of communication, not receptive, not involving staff in decisions, management of funds, and losing focus on serving the passengers and community. The top three goals chosen by staff aligned with the riders' view and they were increasing route frequency, expanding Proline Plus, and keeping SARTA sustainable and relevant. Other ideas the staff had were maintaining a competitive workforce, Late Night Loops, introducing an on-demand style service, and ensuring all communities have access to transportation. The staff also felt that of the three types of service offered by SARTA – Fixed Route, Demand Response, and Express – Fixed and Proline were the most important. SARTA was rated at 3.4 out of 5 stars and the staff's reasoning was service cuts, not focusing on Stark County, good and bad customer service, and providing a good service to the community. Overall, they feel SARTA still maintains a good image in the community, but that we do get bad

publicity due to certain events rather than concentrating on the good we have going on.

All three surveys were reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team and summarized to determine SARTA's standing in the community, with the ridership, and with the employees.

## Other Outreach & Travel Training Activities

In addition to official public engagement activities required based on the planning activities of SARTA, there is also a Travel Training & Outreach team here that promotes SARTA at resource fairs, public events such as the Stark County Fair, and provides group and one-on-one teaching sessions to help get new riders acquainted with SARTA's services.

This group goes to most any event SARTA is invited to and will be sure to get to their regular activities as well such as:

1. YMCA Senior Fair Events
2. Kidfest/Funfest
3. Back-to-school Events
4. African American Fest
5. NE Community Group
6. Lifecare Vendor Fair
7. Keep Seniors Driving Safe

## 2025-2030 Goals & Objectives

For this TDP, SARTA will set five goals that will focus on service improvements for the greater Stark County Community. As discussed previously, SARTA sought the input from riders, community members & leaders, and employees to help guide this plan.

These goals are laid out to allow focus on one per year of the plan. SARTA can evaluate resources available such as drivers, vehicles, and money available to make the changes and/or expansions possible. These goals and the feedback received can help establish SARTA as the leading transportation provider for the area.

The costing calculations for these scenarios will come from SARTA’s submissions to the National Transit Database (NTD) and the reports generated by the NTD. The most recent year available is SARTA’s 2023 data. The figures for SARTA’s costing metrics are in the table below. Also added to this is the SARTA Operator average wage. Costing service adjustments can be extensive. If adding service to a weekday and there is no additional need for support staff or vehicle costs to be considered, a simple hourly rate can be computed for the driver. Should the additional service needed start requiring an increase in the fleet and support staff, then using the fully charged rates may need to be used.

NTD Cost per...	Vehicle Revenue Mile	Vehicle Revenue Hour	Unlinked Passenger Trips
Fixed Route	\$8.37	\$139.10	\$15.63
Proline	\$7.82	\$123.52	\$70.76

This table shows those calculations spread out at daily, weekly, and annual levels as well as multiple buses and/or runs being added annually. Note that both rates were used – the average driver salary and the NTD cost.

Service	2023 NTD VRH Cost per Run/Bus	Daily Cost per Run/Bus	Weekly Cost per Run/Bus	Annual Cost per Run/Bus	2 Buses/Runs	3 Buses/Runs	4 Buses/Runs
Driver	\$26	\$208	\$1,248	\$64,896	\$129,792	\$194,688	\$259,584
Fixed - Fully Charged	\$140	\$1,120	\$6,720	\$349,440	\$698,880	\$1,048,320	\$1,397,760
Proline - Fully Charged	\$124	\$992	\$5,952	\$309,504	\$619,008	\$928,512	\$1,238,016

## Expand Proline Plus

SARTA established Proline Plus in early 2025 to gain control of the cost of the Proline service where an open-door ADA level of transportation had been offered county wide. Financial concerns caused SARTA to restructure Proline by designating trips as ADA or non-ADA. ADA trips would be served within  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile of the Fixed Routes and non-ADA trips would be outside of the core service area in the more rural parts of the county. This new service was branded Proline Plus.

Proline Plus can gradually expand in many ways. One way is to add runs as SARTA can. An example of how much this strategy would cost SARTA is to look at the average cost for SARTA's Proline services. Provided that SARTA has the vehicles and support staff available already, each run would be scheduled for 8 hours at a rate of \$26 per hour but could cost up to \$124 per hour for a total of \$208 to \$992 per day. If SARTA were to look at adding two runs over the course of 2026, the total cost of the additional runs would be \$416 to \$1,984 per day. Across the course of approximately 52 weeks, SARTA would be looking at an additional \$64,896 to \$309,504 per run added to either Proline service.

SARTA can also expand Proline Plus through the audience Proline Plus is targeting. Currently Proline Plus serves riders with disabilities. By adding other needs such as the elderly or the general public as a whole, SARTA can expand Proline Plus without directly impacting their budget. Cost only becomes a factor in this scenario should the demand start requiring additional runs and resources.

A third way that SARTA can improve Proline Plus is by contracting with a software-as-a-service company (SAAS) to provide the ability to schedule on-demand rides through a mobile application. This is similar to the SARTA Connect pilot, however, the drivers and vehicles would be employed and owned by SARTA as part of our Proline Plus service. People could book rides as needed and have a vehicle at their door within a short period of time while that vehicle was already out providing pre-booked service. Looking at what COTA launched in Columbus with their on-demand service, they spend around \$330,000 per year to make this technology available. Seeing as SARTA is considerably smaller, it could be reasonable to see a lower cost proposal for acquiring such software to help better develop Proline Plus.

Another way to allow growth with Proline Plus would be to divide the county up into service areas. People do not always need to travel every day; however, they may need to travel once or twice a week. By dividing the rural parts of the county up by days of the week, the same number of runs can provide service countywide. This would be a similar service delivery model to other rural systems in the area.

## Increase Frequency on Fixed Routes

Increased frequency can help with ridership issues. While ridership is not necessarily a true gauge on a transit's value, it can be used to determine where better service can be applied. Increased frequency can be difficult because it requires additional resources to be added or taken from other areas. This would also be a calculation of 8 hours per additional bus at a rate of \$26 to \$140 per hour. Each additional bus on a route would cost SARTA \$208 to \$1,120 per day or \$64,896 to \$349,440 per year.

One way of accomplishing this goal would be to identify higher performing routes across the service area that could further improve with more frequency. By adding service to a higher performing route, you move people across the area quicker and reduce overcrowding on the buses.

Another way to consider higher frequencies is on the Interurban style routes that connect SARTA's transit centers, making connections across the region more accessible to SARTA's riders.

A final way to help improve frequency without greatly impacting the budget is to identify times of day where a route could operate on a more limited-stop trip or express-style service versus stopping at every stop which would allow people to get from point A to point B a little more quickly.

## Bringing Back Sunday Service – In a Limited Capacity

Sunday service always comes as a request in most public engagement situations. It is a day of week people commonly want to get out and about for various reasons. This group is usually smaller, which is why Sundays are cut first. Sundays were cut in Stark County approximately fifteen years ago. Bringing Sunday service back would have to happen in a limited capacity. This would be the most expensive day to start service back up. To bring back Sundays, it will require SARTA to create an entirely new workday with Dispatchers, Road Supervisors, Maintenance personnel, Operators, and vehicles. When runs are added during the week, Operators and vehicles are all that need accounted for typically. This is why the fully allocated cost is used in planning service expansions because that number considers the amount of support that may be needed to increase service and on Sunday's this is most definitely true.

A simple way to begin establishing Sunday service would be to determine a fixed number of runs to provide Proline Plus each week. There would be no Proline ADA as there would be no Fixed Route Service, at this time. These would come at the cost of \$124 per hour at a daily

total of \$992. For approximately 52 Sundays in a year, the addition of Sunday service would impact SARTA's budget by a total of \$51,584 per Sunday run added.

Sundays could also be opened up to a greater audience for Proline Plus and could help determine the demand for more than just those with disabilities during the weekdays too. Having a more open-door service on Sundays would allow SARTA to promote having true county wide public transit. Should the demand for service prove too great for Proline Plus, then Fixed Routes could be explored.

## Improve Service to Other Areas Within the Region

Past recommendations have encouraged SARTA to look at the I-77 corridor to strengthen service between downtown Canton, Pro Football Hall of Fame and Hall of Fame Village, and the Akron-Canton Regional Airport. Several local Fixed Routes and two Express Routes traverse this area.

Other areas to help improve this service are to explore more comfortable ride options for the number 4 route and offering WiFi on longer routes. SARTA could also look to include other hospitals in the connecting cities that residents may need to get to for specialized service not offered in Stark County. Exploring partnerships beyond just the one with the Veteran's Service Commission could help improve ridership and strengthen the revenue for the two Express Routes.

## Continue Keeping SARTA Relevant & Sustainable

SARTA's relevance and sustainability will be addressed strategically through careful long-range planning. By establishing a long-range master plan in addition to this TDP, SARTA can have a roadmap to ensure that not only is the service being managed in a way that keeps it relevant to the needs of the passengers, but that also SARTA's fleet, facilities, and staff are taken care of in a way that will ensure long term sustainability for the organization which in turn ensures long-term sustainability for the services delivered.

SARTA's fleet has come a long way from the days of spewing diesel exhaust throughout Stark County. Starting in 2009 with diesel-electric hybrids, SARTA began travelling down the road to a cleaner fleet and by extension cleaner air for the community. In 2012, the Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling station was completed and the first CNG buses hit the road greatly reducing SARTA's carbon footprint. Then in 2016, SARTA constructed one of the first Hydrogen fueling stations in the country and ran some of the first Hydrogen Fuel Cell buses used in public transit. It is these efforts that demonstrate the concern SARTA has over its passengers and fellow community members in ensuring reduced emissions continues to be a goal of the organization. In fact, SARTA's maintenance data demonstrates that since 2015,

SARTA has reduced their total greenhouse gas emissions by 45% when reviewed in 2023. This is in part due to SARTA's increase of alternative fuel vehicles from 39 to 70 between 2015 and 2023. As of this writing, SARTA has no diesel vehicles left in the revenue fleet making a great start to this goal of environmental sustainability.

SARTA's facilities are another area to ensure they will last well into the future of transit here in Stark County. Each triennial, Facility Assessments are completed for each building to determine the needs of that building. Most buildings score well while others need some work. Taking these assessments and implementing them through a large long-term plan can help SARTA prioritize building needs and create a timeline for ensuring repairs and renovations can happen as well as search for money to complete these larger scale projects. When the facilities are in great shape, the passengers have terrific amenities for their use.

Another highlight of the TDP survey period was that of employee development and retention. Through carefully planned efforts to evaluate organizational needs and placing the right people in the right positions, SARTA is setting itself up for some long-term success because if the staff is taken care of, the riders will be taken care of.

Finally, through short-term evaluations and planning, the services delivered can remain relevant to the riders. Changing needs require changing services. Legacy routes and service delivery models do not always do well for the riders. Transit has come a long way and with careful planning, SARTA will continue to go a long way. The restructuring of Proline was a start, but an evaluation of the Fixed Route network could be warranted as well as revisiting the offer of microtransit or some form of an on-demand model.

## Late Night Workforce Service

One of the common themes that came from the surveys was the need for service that helps second shift workers get home, and third shift workers get to work during the gap of time when SARTA does not have any service on the road. This was previously delivered in the form of four Fixed Routes which generated relatively low ridership which made them easy targets during the financial concerns in late 2024. However, this is an example of a time when low ridership seems like it is not an important service to the agency; but it was a great service to those few that did ride. This goal can be tied back to sustainability. What would be the best way to service those that need rides late at night? Traditional Fixed Routes were not the answer. Could we plan for a couple of Proline Plus runs? That could be a start and make for an easy way to study what the needs are at those times. Keeping in mind the above costing models, a couple of late-night Proline Plus runs could cost SARTA up to \$309,504 per run annually.

## Board Resolution

In order to demonstrate full organization support in developing this plan, SARTA asked for the participation of not only the staff, but of the Board of Trustees too. Updates for the plan have been presented at the Board of Trustee meetings throughout 2025, they joined us for the Stakeholder Breakfast, and they have been presented with a draft to submit comments on. Below is the resolution supporting the efforts of this plan and the service goals set within.

Stark Area Regional Transit

Authority Resolution # 37, 2025

A Resolution Of Approval For The Transit Development Plan 2030, A Five-year Short Range Service Plan For The Stark Area Regional Transit Authority.

WHEREAS, SARTA is required to update its Transit Development Plan (TDP) every five years; and

WHEREAS, this plan will be used as a short-range service guide for SARTA for the years 2026 through 2030;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees, that the updated Transit Development Plan be approved as SARTA's five-year short-range service plan.

10-22-25  
Date  
Ronald B. Macale  
Board President  
Paul O. Lee  
Secretary-Treasurer

## Conclusion

SARTA operates as Stark County's public transit authority and is largely supported by its 0.25% sales tax levy. This levy is widely supported by the majority of Stark County residents. SARTA also works to acquire grants through both federal and state programs in addition to the revenue collected from the riders. With these funds and some other minor revenue streams such as Marketing endeavors, service is delivered to the county in four forms: Fixed Route, Proline ADA Complementary Paratransit Service, Proline Plus, and Express Route. These services have provided an average of 1.14 million rides per year over the last five years and approximately 223,000 hours and 3.68 million miles in the same period of time.

The benefit of having such an extensive public transit system is that there are not only rides being delivered, but partnerships are created through pass partnerships, transportation agreements, and supplemental services. This is in addition to other various boards, committees, and volunteer programs SARTA staff participate in throughout the community.

Part of this plan provided a lookback at SARTA's previous TDP to determine how much of that plan had been initiated. Nine recommendations were made and SARTA showed some level of progress in all but two or three. The biggest factor was that the COVID-19 pandemic occurred right after the release of the 2020 TDP and was not officially over until around mid-2022. Other service changes had been made during this time which left some positive and some negative impacts on the community.

SARTA went to the public six different times throughout this time to discuss different changes that would be occurring in regard to the organization or services offered. Three of the times there were surveys to gauge community and rider support for SARTA. While still remaining favorable with the community, it was demonstrated that some improvements were still desirable.

For this TDP SARTA is set out with five original goals and a sixth one developed due to the feedback from the final rider survey completed in September of 2025. These goals would help guide SARTA through year 2030 and looked to accomplish things such as an expansion of the newly established Proline Plus service, bringing back a limited Sunday service, providing a level of late-night service for second and third shift workers. This TDP will continue to guide the service delivery model here at SARTA and lead to more long term, strategic planning for the organization which will help continue keeping SARTA relevant and sustainable.

## Addendum

In the weeks leading up to the conclusion and adoption of the Transit Development Plan 2030, SARTA had already begun looking at ways to improve the organization's culture. The Executive Leadership Team had begun developing new values, creating the “Cornerstone of SARTA Excellence”. These values further led to the development of a new Mission Statement that encompassed what SARTA has pledged to do for the Stark County Community, along with a new Vision Statement on how that Mission would be achieved. This team felt optimistic enough about how this would bring about great change for SARTA that it was decided to create an addendum to the TDP and to bring a resolution before the board. With the board's support, SARTA’s Executive Leadership Team can begin promoting this new culture and instilling it in current and future employees, so the change will be felt not only internally but also externally.

### Values

SARTA set out to establish four values that would act as the Cornerstones to SARTA Excellence. These core values are:

1. Trust: We honor our responsibility to the public and ourselves by operating with honesty and accountability.
2. Customer Service: We meet the needs of our customers first.
3. Teamwork: We succeed through unity, communication, and our commitment to serve others while working toward one common goal.
4. Professionalism: We take pride in ourselves, our work, and our environment wherever we go.

### Mission Statement

Creating and connecting opportunities one ride at a time.

### Vision Statement

Driving Stark County toward a relevant and sustainable service, that is an available and convenient choice.

# For Your Information



CANTON

## 'A dignity to being clean.' Akron nonprofit to bring mobile shower buses to Canton



**Robert Wang**

Canton Repository

Oct. 31, 2025, 5:59 a.m. ET

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### Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

The Akron-based nonprofit Forever R Children is expanding its mobile shower bus program to Canton in 2026.

The program provides free showers, clean clothes, haircuts, and other services to people experiencing homelessness.

The Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA) is donating three buses to be retrofitted for the program's Canton expansion.

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CANTON – Robert Ford wanted to bring food to those who needed it.

So he founded the Akron-based nonprofit Forever R Children, which operates a mobile food pantry, in 2019.

**Related:** Mobile shower facility will lead the way for 'caravan of love' serving Akron area's needy

He later realized just dropping off meals for the homeless wasn't enough.

A young woman asked Ford if there was a place she could go to wash up. He said he unfortunately couldn't help her.

That's when he said he thought of the idea to bring a shower in a vehicle so people without regular access to one could use it.

With a donated Akron METRO bus retrofitted for about \$90,000 in donations and grants, Forever R Children launched a mobile shower that visits locations around Akron in May 2024.

Visitors get 20-minute showers, new clothes, free food, free haircuts and free use of a laundromat to wash clothes. And they get referrals to social services.

The city of Canton now is helping Forever R Children deploy mobile shower buses in Canton starting in 2026.

Mayor William Sherer II spoke at an Oct. 29 event near the Refuge of Hope shelter to promote the program.

"This mobile shower bus is more than just a vehicle," the mayor said. "It's a symbol of dignity, hope and care. For so many people in our city who are struggling with homelessness or hardship, something as simple as a warm shower can restore confidence and bring comfort and remind that they are not forgotten."

About 80 people attended the event, including U.S. Rep. Emilia Sykes, D-Akron.

## **Shower bus Canton**

Sherer said he invited Ford to give him a pitch on the concept at a homeless task force meeting at City Hall in September. The mayor said he was immediately sold. His administration is prepared to offer space for buses to park, to provide water and to dispose of waste water.

The mayor met with SARTA officials about donating a bus.

Sherer, a former ironworkers union official, is having conversations with local trades unions to donate labor to retrofit buses and install showers. Sherer said he's also trying to see if local foundations might provide grants.

Ralph Lee, interim CEO of the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority, told SARTA's board the agency will provide three buses. Lake County's transit system Laketrans

gave one to SARTA because it reached the end of its useful life. SARTA will in February donate to Forever R Children two of its 13-year-old buses with more than 600,000 miles that need to be replaced.

## **Forever R Children coming to Canton**

On the morning of Oct. 29 near the Refuge of Hope's shelter on Second Street NE, SARTA's staff surprised Ford, Forever R Children's director. He learned the agency, which has a staff of seven, would receive three buses for its Canton program, not just one.

SARTA had planned to ceremonially present the former Laketran bus to Ford at the Oct. 29 event. SARTA executives had driven it to Canton the prior week.

But SARTA's chief operating officer, Mark Finnicum, said the vehicle's air bag had a leak, and so the bus wasn't safe to drive to present. Finnicum said SARTA's mechanics will fix the issue, so SARTA can turn over the vehicle to Forever R Children soon.

Ford said he hopes that the former Laketran bus can be retrofitted by May with the two donated SARTA buses ready to be used shortly after that. Forever R Children would use all three as shower buses in the Canton area.

Each bus will have a 300-gallon tank of water, enough to provide showers for about 25 people.

"My dream was to be able to bring this service to any where in need," Ford said.

"Any bridge. Underpass. Any encampment to offer a warm shower, clean clothes, fresh haircut and just conversations about, 'We love you, we're for you and we care for you.'"

Ford said his group puts out flyers advertising mobile shower times and locations. Anyone who shows up can use it. Ford said from late May 2024 to September 2024, the program gave 904 people showers.

At the event on Oct. 29, Forever R Children arranged for two hair stylists to give free haircuts.

Anthron Grimes, 57, of Canton was among those waiting for a haircut. He said he thought the idea of a mobile shower bus was great. Homeless after years of unemployment and health issues, Grimes said he has gone as long as a week without a shower. He's able to get showers through a shelter but it can be difficult to get a secure a bed.

Amber Mitchell, one of the stylists, said she's provided the haircuts at the mobile shower locations since May 2024.

She said those who get the showers and haircuts "feel like a brand new person. ... Their smile. You can tell, their posture. Everything changed after the shower and the cut and all that great stuff."

Refuge of Hope Ministiries CEO Scott Schnyders said his organization is planning on setting up a facility by the shelter where people can get showers and a public laundry service.

"There's a dignity to being clean," said Schnyders. "You feel good about yourself. You feel like, 'Hey I can do something different than I did yesterday because I've got cleaned clothes and showered.'"

*Reach Robert at [robert.wang@cantonrep.com](mailto:robert.wang@cantonrep.com).*



October 21, 2025

Latrice Virola, SARTA  
Stark Regional Transit Authority  
1600 Gateway Blvd SE  
Canton, OH 44707

Dear Latrice,

Thank you for your generous sponsorship for ArtsinStark's Let's Do Lunch Series. Your support fuels our mission and strengthens the very foundation of the arts in Stark County. Because of you, we can further empower arts education, promote well-being through creative expression, and ignite vitality across our community.

This year, we're excited to reinvest in programs and outreach that make a real difference—fostering a love for the arts in young learners, helping individuals find healing through creativity, and bringing vibrancy to our neighborhoods. Your belief in these initiatives allows us to reach more people, touch more lives, and create a community that thrives together.

Thank you for standing with us and championing the transformative power of the arts. Together, we are making Stark County a place where creativity, connection, and inspiration flourish.

Sincerely,

**MAUREEN "MO" ATER**  
President & CEO

*Thank you for this partnership!*

Please keep this written acknowledgment of your donation. Your gift is fully tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Date Received: 10/21/2025  
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# Refreshed Hope



Clayton Popik, Ralph Lee, Mark Finnicum, Robert P. Ford Jr., Dr. Fannie Brown, Jason Saunders, Jeff White and Craig Smith, photos by Mal McCrea

**At Canton's Stark Area Regional Transit Authority headquarters, nonprofit leaders and SARTA executives meet around a table. Outside, visible through a window, is a large bus, adorned with "Forever R Children" on the side.**

SARTA interim executive director and CEO Ralph Lee is discussing donating decommissioned SARTA buses to Forever R Children, a nonprofit that retrofits the vehicles to include shower facilities for those in need. The Akron area is already being served by one finished bus, complete with two showers. Now, the city of Canton and SARTA are helping create two more.

"I love the concept of what it gives to a person," Lee says. "It gives them back a sense of hope and a sense of pride."

Forever R Children's founder, Robert P. Ford Jr., witnessed the unmet needs of children at a high

school football game in November 2018. Upon talking to the school's principal, Ford realized the need for a food pantry. By 2019, Ford began a food pantry and distribution center, a mobile food pantry and more. Currently, food distributions are on third Saturdays at House of Prayer and Studio WNYH, both in Akron.

"During our mobile food pantry ... a lady says ... *Me and my kid, we sleep in that van. My kid goes to the middle school, but we can't go because we haven't had a shower,*" Ford recounts. "A bus rolled by, and something just clicked."

In the late 1980s, Ford was without housing — and the experience shaped his understanding of the necessity of access to hygiene tools. "I was homeless, so I know how it was. If you're not clean, if you don't have sanitation, you don't feel human," he says.

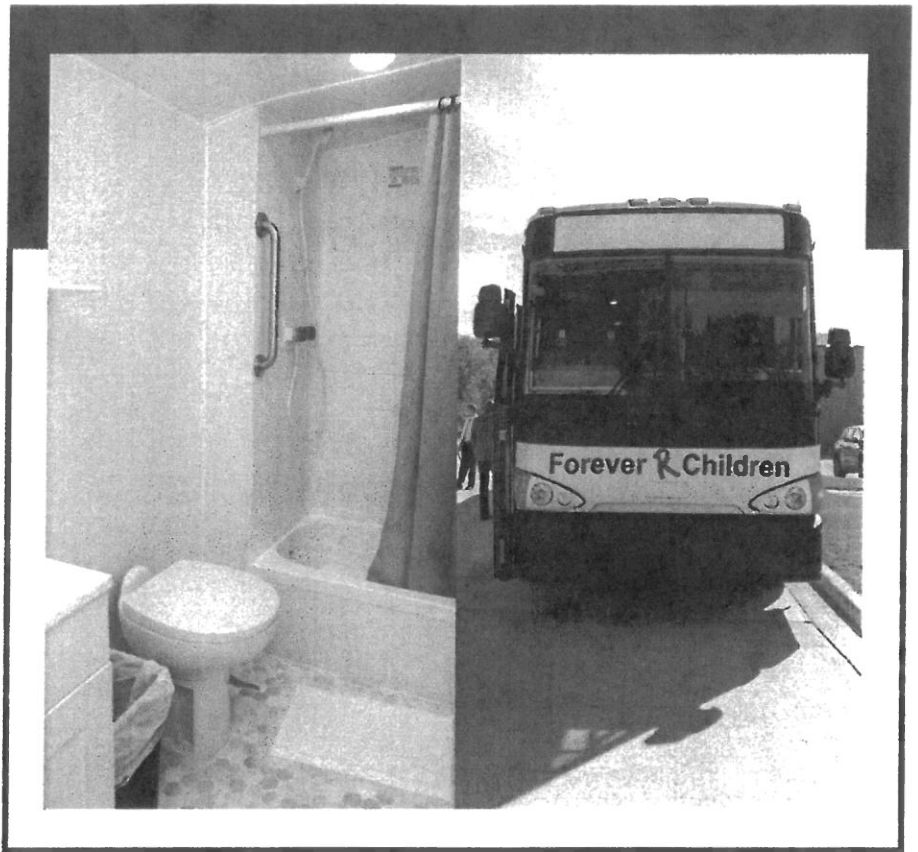
Ford took his idea to Akron's METRO Regional Transit Authority and was eventually given a bus. The retrofitting process was completed in 2024.

During most stops, the bus brings a "Caravan of Love" — the Salvation Army accompanies it, and showers, hygiene packs, clothing, counseling and food are offered — as well as haircut services. The nonprofit has also partnered with AmeriHealth, which sends its medical vehicle on select dates. Upcoming bus appearances include Common Threads in Barberton Nov. 6 and Dec. 4 and Metro Transit Station in Akron Nov. 10.

"We're offering everything you need, right where the need is," Ford says. "They want to get clean. ... You feel good about yourself, and you get yourself back in the work force."

The second person to ever take a shower in the bus was a young woman who was covered in mosquito and raccoon bites. She hadn't showered in about a week.

"She got a shower, got her hair done, got cleaned up, got something to eat and got new clothes," Ford says. "The following week, she came back. We



said, *Ready for a shower?* She said, *No, I just want to get something to eat. I got a job.* Just that fast, once she got clean, she ran out, because she felt human."

Ford's giving nature is the thing that drew in many of Forever R Children's volunteers, partners and board members — including Dr. Fannie Brown.

"It's a commitment to helping people — he has no limits," she says. "No matter what people need, he'll find a way to make sure that people are served."

Jason Saunders has his certified peer recovery support license in recovery and mental health issues, as well as his chemical dependency counselor assistant license.

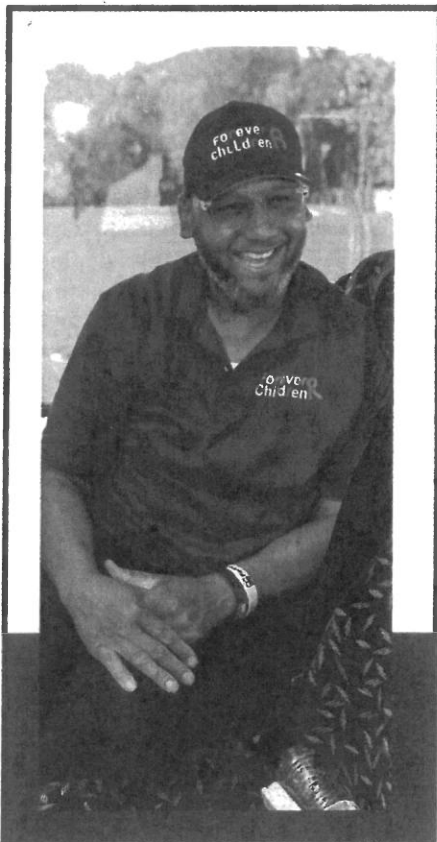
"I can do case management, helping people get their SNAP benefits, Medicaid, anything like that," Saunders says. "How passionate he is about it — it kind of draws you in."

Ford has received calls for his services from other cities, including Atlanta. Forever R Children is set to meet with the city in November to discuss plans to expand.

"Just to get inside that shower and

let that warm water hit you, just gives you a moment of respite. You sit back, and you just relax, and say, *Someone does care about me. Someone does love me,*" says Ford. "Once you have hope, and you get your dignity back ... you want to maybe go back to school. Just chase your dreams again. It's because that one little shower changed your life." //CG

**Donate or volunteer: 330-957-0068, [foreverchildren.org](http://foreverchildren.org)**



**"It gives them back a sense of hope and a sense of pride."**

Ralph Lee

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