

# Director's Notes

January 2025

## 1 Increase Education & Advocacy

### Merchandising

BCRTA experienced some limited success with partner sales of 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary merch over the summer. Now that Summer of Celebration has ended, staff are testing an [online portal for merch sales](#) that will integrate with the future customer loyalty program.

### County Commission

Mr. Dutkevicz was able to hold initial one-on-one meetings with Commissioners Dixon and Rogers in December. Mr. Dutkevicz will follow-up with Commissioner Carpenter in January.

## 2 Enhance Revenues

### Funding Education

Although funding education was slated to begin in fall 2024, staff have placed the item on hold until meetings with elected officials can be conducted. Funding education will commence following these meetings.

## 3 Engage Entrepreneurial Disruptive Tech

### SMART Grant

BCRTA, in cooperation with the Stark County Regional Transit Authority (SARTA), Western Reserve Transit Authority (WRTA), and NEORide has been awarded a SMART grant provided by USDOT.

Matthew Dutkevicz and Luke Morgan attended an Autonomous Vehicle launch event at Western Reserve Transit Authority in Youngstown, OH on August 22 to view the proposed grant technology and learn more about autonomous vehicles. The grant partners also held a meeting to discuss project timeline and needs.

The primary goal of this proposed demonstration project is to evaluate the effectiveness of and enhanced transit fleet safety from integrating advanced vehicle safety technologies on to vehicles in transit fleets; preventing death and injuries by reducing the number of accidents and the serious nature of those that cannot be avoided. This project utilizes two SMART grant technology areas - Connected Vehicles and Systems Integration - and addresses the need for collision avoidance on transit vehicles by retrofitting up to 3 vehicles (Ford e450 and Gillig 35' platforms) within each transit partner's current operating fleet vehicles with the TONY/MAX advanced vehicle safety system package. This system will enable collision avoidance that can also support bus yard management and includes data logging and telematics features that will allow the project team to collect data that will be shared following a Data Management Plan developed in accordance with the Public Access Plan and as provided in the FY23 SMART Grant NOFO.

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## Attain Grant

USDOT announced that we were successful in seeking the ATTAIN grant! BCRTA has agreed to partner with NEORide and other transit agencies to leverage a USDOT/FHWA Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) grant. The partners seek to create a multimodal data exchange to address the gaps data collection; Facilitate NTD reporting.; Generate operational reports per key service indicators (to be defined); Develop capability for multimodal information tools (e.g., multi-agency electronic information signs at transfer centers); and Enhance TDS Middleware to support human service transportation (HST)/ non-emergency medical trips. BCRTA is providing data and in-kind match, no cash match is required.

## Accelerating Advanced Digital Construction Management Systems Program

BCRTA also received news that the University of Cincinnati has been successful in receiving an AADCMS grant. BCRTA will support UC's grant by providing input and feedback regarding the agency's experience with technology used during the Chestnut Street Station construction project. BCRTA may also be eligible to receive additional software for use during the Moser Court FASST parking project.

## 4 Leverage Regional Partners

### EZConnect Call Center

Staff are excited to announce that the EZConnect Regional Call Center pilot will launch in mid-January. The ERCC will take calls for BCRTA customer service during the early evening after BCRTA's in-house call center closes to help address customer inquiries.

### Middletown

BCRTA staff continue to work with the city to transition grantee responsibilities to the BCRTA. Conversations have been ongoing with City staff and the mayor, but have not advanced back to Council for action. BCRTA staff have plans to connect with the new Interim City Manager this month.

### Paratransit Coordination

BCRTA is working closely with NEORide, SORTA, and TANK to pilot a regional one-seat ride program for eligible ADA riders. SORTA has agreed to fund the pilot to help riders cross borders in the tri-state area without changing buses or booking multiple rides. The pilot is expected to launch in Q2 2025. SORTA received a grant award to help fund operations as part of the Ohio Workforce Mobility Grant, although staffing has been an issue for METRO.

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## 5 Lead Workforce Development

### Autonomous Shuttle

Staff are investigating the possibility of bringing an autonomous shuttle to the area in Fall 2025. The first pilot would focus on work with persistent staffing shortages, such as late-night SafeRide services within the City of Oxford and on the Miami University Campus. Obtaining an autonomous vehicle may also lead to workforce opportunities for training on autonomous tech and vehicle systems.

The project would be completely reliant on discretionary grant funds. Staff applied to ODOT to fund this project as part of the 2026 Ohio Transit Preservation Partnership program. Announcements are expected in March 2025.

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## 6 Adapt to Market Demand

### Chestnut Street Multimodal Station

Chestnut Street Station continues to move forward. The building is “dried in” for the winter. Drywall is well underway, masonry walls are being completed, and overhead doors are all installed. Staff are working with Graybach and Bowen to identify an opening date in Fall of 2025.

Information, updates and pictures are available at

<https://www.butlercountyrta.com/projects/oxford-multimodal-facility/>

### R3 Revisions

The R3 received a major revision on October 28 extending the connection between Oxford and Fairfield further south to connect with Cincinnati Metro in Forest Park and serve major destinations on OH-4. This change is consistent with the Kimley-Horn Short Range plan service recommendations. Reception and ridership have been very positive.

### GDRTA Bus Lease

Given the continued increased demand for BGo services and the surge in hiring, operations staff has found themselves in the unfamiliar position of having more drivers available than vehicles. As part of a short-term solution to meet service needs, Greater Dayton RTA has agreed to lease contingency vehicles to the BCRTA for a very low cost. Staff are working to finalize a lease agreement for five (5) vehicles.

## State of Good Repair

### Ohio Workforce Mobility Grant

BCRTA was successful in obtaining \$2.5M to realize the Fuel Alternative, Security, Storage, Training (FASST) project to finish the Moser Court parking expansion plan. Staff will be working to finalize A&E plans to let a bid for construction in Q1 2025.

## Coming Up

### Board Portal

Staff are working to complete the implementation of the new BCRTA Board portal using software from OnBoard. Invitations to the system for trustees will be forthcoming. Please make sure we have your correct email! Training will be provided upon request for trustees. Staff find the system exceptionally easy and intuitive to use and have needed very little training. Trustees that would prefer may still receive a PDF packet via download.

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## Annual Report

Copies are available on the BCRTA website and from Shawn Cowan.

## Employee Appreciation Event

The annual employee appreciation event is scheduled for Sunday, February 23 at 12:00pm. The event will be held again at Receptions Event Center in Fairfield. Trustees are welcome and encouraged to attend this exciting full staff event. Please RSVP to [schwartzs@butlercountyrta.com](mailto:schwartzs@butlercountyrta.com).

## Upcoming Procurements >\$25,000

<b>Item</b>	<b>Procuring Agency</b>	<b>Estimated Spend</b>	<b>Estimated Term</b>	<b>Reason for Purchase</b>
Misc Maintenance Parts	BCRTA	54K	1	Replacement
Moser Court Parking Lot Construction	BCRTA	3.5M	Task	New
Chestnut Station FF&E	BCRTA	475K	Task	New
Chestnut Station Bus Wash	BCRTA	1.3M	Task	New
Small Bus Tires	BCRTA	180K	5	Replacement
Large Bus Tires	BCRTA	180K	5	Replacement
HRIS Software	BCRTA	175K	5	Replacement
Uniforms & Supplies	BCRTA	250K	5 years	Replacement
Non-Revenue Vehicles (4)	BCRTA	200K	Task	Replacement