



Strategic and Operational Planning Committee Minutes

Tuesday, July 7, 2026 at 9:30 AM

COTA - WG Porter Boardroom, 33 N High St, Columbus OH

1. Call to Order

Chair Trudy Bartley called the July 7, 2026 Strategic and Operational Planning Committee meeting to order at 9:41 am.

2. Roll Call

Board Members Present

Trudy Bartley, Chair

Stephen Sayre, Trustee

Board Member Excused

Mallory Donaldson, Trustee

3. Approval of Strategic and Operational Planning Committee Minutes

A. May 5, 2026 Strategic and Operational Planning Committee Minutes

Trustee Stephen Sayre moved to approve the May 5, 2026 Strategic and Operational Planning Committee meeting minutes, seconded by Vice Chair Bartley. Motion carried.

4. New Business

A. Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee Update – Corrina Hyde, COTA Program Manager, Social Services

COTA Program Manager, Social Services Corrina Hyde presented the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) update, noting ATAC is a systemwide advisory group required under Board Governance Guidelines and U.S. Department of Transportation ADA regulations, bringing together riders with disabilities, advocates, and community organizations to promote ongoing dialogue and improve transit accessibility. She said the committee's purpose is to provide a collective voice that meaningfully influences decisions, foster a culture of accessibility, identify and remove barriers, and ensure inclusive design in transit planning and service delivery. Ms. Hyde said recent discussions have focused on storm and snow removal planning, ADA empathy training, the Director of Accessibility position, and new rider-support technologies. She highlighted how ATAC gathers valuable community feedback, and said engagement has led to better relationships between COTA, riders and the community.

B. COTA Advisory Panel Update - Paige Wright, COTA Advisory Panel Chair

COTA Advisory Panel (CAP) Chair Paige Wright presented the CAP update, noting CAP

is a quarterly advisory body established under the COTA Charter to provide guidance to COTA management on the development and implementation of public transit in Central Ohio and to inform programs presented to the Board. The panel is composed of representatives appointed by participating municipalities, Franklin County, and at-large members, all of whom must be residents familiar with regional transit needs. The current roster includes representatives from local governments and agencies across the COTA service area. Ms. Wright reported that CAP discussions focus on topics such as service changes, LinkUS, ridership data, the Short-Range Transit Plan, COTA//Plus, community development and mobility initiatives, facility tours, and emerging transportation trends. She said the panel provides creative problem solving, not just for COTA but across the board.

C. 2027-2031 Short-Range Transit Plan - Devayani Puranik, COTA Director of Planning

COTA Director of Planning Devayani Puranik presented the 2027-2031 Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP), a five-year roadmap designed to expand transit service by approximately 30 percent. She said the plan was developed through extensive public engagement and data analysis, and that it recommends expanding and modernizing COTA's network by increasing service frequency, especially on weekends and throughout the day, extending service to underserved areas, introducing 24-hour service on core routes, launching new direct connections such as Airport–Downtown–OSU service, adding up to three new COTA//Plus zones, and aligning the network with future bus rapid transit corridors. The plan also proposes simplifying and restructuring certain routes to improve reliability and efficiency, focusing investments on high-ridership corridors and transit-dependent communities, and implementing improvements through phased service packages that balance customer demand, operational readiness, community input, and fiscal responsibility. Ms. Puranik said every recommendation COTA intends to implement will get public input, and that implementation will happen in phases.

Ms. Puranik then presented the corresponding resolution, which was recommended for the regular agenda:

Resolution 2026-XX Authorizing the Adoption of COTA's 2027-2031 Short-Range Transit Plan

D. 2027-2031 Transit Supportive Infrastructure (TSI) Capital Improvements Program - Maria Schaper, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Transportation Study Director

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Transportation Study Director Maria Schaper presented the 2027-2031 Transit Supportive Infrastructure (TSI) Capital Improvements Program, noting the projected \$263.3 million program

funds both construction and development projects, and includes 75 projects across 20 jurisdictions with more than 100 miles of improvements. Ms. Schaper reviewed committee roles, the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) approval process, annual funding allocations by geographic quadrant, specific 2027 grant awards for transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and trail projects throughout Central Ohio, and identified next steps for grant agreements, project implementation, and development of the future 2028–2032 CIP.

COTA Chief Financial Officer Earl Jackson presented the corresponding resolution, which was recommended for the regular agenda:

Resolution 2026-XX Authorizing the Adoption of the 2027-2031 Transit Supportive Infrastructure Grant Awards Program's Five-Year Capital Improvements Program

E. LinkUS Update – Kelsey Ellingsen, COTA LinkUS Program Interface Director

COTA LinkUS Program Interface Director Kelsey Ellingsen provided the LinkUS update, highlighting progress on the West Broad, East Main, and Northwest Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors, including key staffing additions, ongoing consultant support, and major project milestones. She said West Broad has advanced through the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) review and remains on track for a Small Starts grant agreement, with the FTA designating July 2031 as the deadline for COTA to begin revenue service. COTA will be working with the City of Columbus to approve the traffic plan prior to presenting it to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The East Main corridor is progressing through environmental review and design development, including developing end-of-line site plans in coordination with the City of Reynoldsburg and a fall 2026 NEPA completion target. The FTA risk readiness process for this corridor is expected to begin in early 2027. Ms. Ellingsen said the Northwest corridor is moving toward continued design pending contract approval from the board in September, and that COTA is awaiting an FTA rating response. Across all corridors, COTA's focus is on design advancement, regulatory approvals, critical agreements, and maintaining schedules for future construction and service implementation.

COTA Engineering and Design Director Tom Komlanc presented the corresponding resolution, which was recommended for the regular agenda:

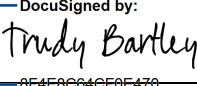
F. Resolution 2026-XX Authorizing the Acquisition of Necessary Real Estate and Declaring the Necessity to Construct Phase A of the West Broad Street High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

5. Other Business

No other business was brought before the Committee.

6. **Adjournment**

Trustee Sayre moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Vice Chair Bartley.
Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am.

Adopted:	<u>September 8, 2026</u>
Signed:	DocuSigned by:  8F4E8C64CF8E478... <u>Chair, Strategic and Operational Planning Committee</u>
Attest:	Signed by:  C880309620B34D2... <u>President/CEO</u>