



**MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION**

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Memorandum

TO: Transportation Policy Committee
Transportation Advisory Committee
Community Advisory Committee

FROM: Thea Ewing, Director, Transportation & Infrastructure Development

DATE: September 3, 2021

SUBJECT: Proposed Resolution T-9-21: "AMENDING THE 2020-2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN"

The region's planning partners have been studying High-Capacity Transit corridors for many years, including, most recently, COTA's NextGen plan and the MORPC Insight 2050 Corridor Concepts study. As a result, the 2020-2050 MTP includes five high-capacity transit corridors in the financially constrained plan, however specific modes were not identified when it was adopted in May 2020.

Building upon these regional transit planning efforts, the LinkUS Mobility Initiative was launched in 2020, with the purpose of providing a complete mobility system along key regional corridors, including high capacity and advanced rapid transit, among a broader program of mobility options and infrastructure. The first two corridors to be studied as part of the LinkUS Mobility Initiative were the Northwest Corridor, connecting downtown Columbus to Bethel Rd. (with future studies of a connection to Dublin) along Olentangy River Rd., and the East-West Corridor, which spans Franklin County along West Broad St. and East Broad and East Main Streets. The LinkUS Partners, led by COTA and the City of Columbus, have begun the corridor-specific studies and engagement activities to identify the locally preferred alignments and transit modes for each of these corridors.

To be eligible for federal funds to further advance rapid transit projects in these corridors, they must first be reflected in the regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan. This amendment is proposed to incorporate the corridor information resulting from the recent LinkUS Mobility Initiative studies.

Of the five high-capacity transit projects already included in the MTP, three projects can now have the specific mode and refined estimates included because of the LinkUS Mobility Initiative corridor studies. Additionally, one transit project that was not previously included in the MTP is proposed to be added as part of this amendment. These projects are all listed and mapped in the Resolution Attachment along with more information on fiscal balance and air quality conformity.

A formal public comment period on the proposed amendment began on August 2, 2021, and lasted through August 31, 2021.

William Murdock, ACP
Executive Director

Karen J. Angelou
Chair

Erik J. Janas
Vice Chair

Chris Amorose Groomes
Secretary

Proposed Resolution T-9-21

Memo

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The amendment and the revised MTP, including the revised project listing, maps, fiscal balance information, air quality conformity documentation and other amendment-related changes, will be placed on the website once the resolution to amend the MTP has been approved.

Attachment: Resolution T-9-21

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RESOLUTION T-9-21

“AMENDING THE 2020-2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN”

WHEREAS, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission is designated as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) by the governor acting through the Ohio Department of Transportation and in cooperation with locally elected officials for Franklin and Delaware counties, New Albany, Pataskala and Etna Township in Licking County, Violet and Bloom townships in Fairfield County, and Jerome Township in Union County; and

WHEREAS, the MPO, pursuant to 23 United States Code 134 and 49 United States Code 1602(a)(2), 1603(1), and 1604(g)(1), has caused the 2020-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) dated May 2020 to be prepared; and

WHEREAS, the Policy Committee of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) adopted the 2020-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) by Resolution T-6-20; and

WHEREAS, projects must be included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan to be eligible for federal funding; and

WHEREAS, the 2020-2050 MTP includes five high-capacity transit projects; and

WHEREAS, the LinkUs Mobility Initiative, a partnership among the Central Ohio Transit Authority, City of Columbus, Franklin County and MORPC has advanced high-capacity transit planning activities along the northwest corridor and east-west corridors along Broad Street and east Main Street; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Corridor Mobility Study Phase 1 and the East-West Corridor Alternatives Analysis have been completed as part of the LinkUS Mobility Initiative; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Corridor Mobility Study Phase 1 recommended Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as the transit mode in the Northwest Corridor (MTP ID 643); and

WHEREAS, the East-West Corridor Alternatives Analysis identified BRT as the preferred transit mode for West Broad St. (MTP ID 988), East Main St. (MTP ID 619) and East Broad St., and refined capital cost estimates for each of the three corridors; and

WHEREAS, on July 28, 2021 the COTA Board of Trustees voted to adopt the three Locally Preferred Alternatives (LPA) as identified in the East-West Corridor Alternatives Analysis for West Broad St., East Main St. and East Broad St; and

WHEREAS, the MTP needs to be amended to include the East Broad Street corridor, establish the mode for each corridor, updated timeframe for implementation, and updated cost information as shown in Figure 1 in the attachment; and

WHEREAS, the fiscal balance of the MTP is maintained because the refined cost estimates combined with the cost of the added project, are not significantly different than the original estimates included in the MTP; and

WHEREAS, the information regarding the project changes, additional project, fiscal balance, and air quality conformity was made available for public comment and review for a 30-day period; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 49 USC, 1607, 23 USC, 134 and 42 USC, 7506, the 2020-2050 amended MTP has been analyzed based on accepted methodology and has been determined to be in conformity with the requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990; and

WHEREAS, the Community Advisory Committee at its August 30, 2021 meeting, and the Transportation Advisory Committee at its September 1, 2021 meeting recommended approval to the Transportation Policy Committee; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION:

- Section 1. That it amends the 2020-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan project listing to add and adjust the projects shown in the Attachment.
- Section 2. That it directs staff to update the 2020-2050 MTP project listing, map, and relevant text in the document to reflect the information as shown in the Attachment.
- Section 3. That it affirms the conformity of the 2020-2050 MTP with the State Implementation Plan.
- Section 4. That it directs staff to administratively modify the 2020-2050 MTP, if necessary, to reflect additional refinements to high-capacity transit corridors or projects resulting from the LinkUS Mobility Initiative and do not significantly change the fiscal balance and impact the air quality conformity determination.
- Section 5. That the Transportation Policy Committee finds and determines that all formal deliberations and actions of the committee concerning and relating to the adoption of this resolution were taken in open meetings of this committee.



Karen J. Angelou, Chair

MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

9-9-2021

Date

Prepared by: Transportation Staff
Attachment: 2020-2050 Columbus Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment Narrative

2020-2050 COLUMBUS AREA METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

T-9-21 Amendment Narrative

This amendment is to modify the mode, alignment, and cost estimates for three transit projects and to add one Bus Rapid Transit project to the 2020-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The amendment will also adjust the estimated construction timeframe of one of the transit projects.

Background

The region's planning partners have been studying High-Capacity Transit corridors for many years, including, most recently, COTA's NextGen plan and the MORPC Insight 2050 Corridor Concepts study. The 2020-2050 MTP includes five high-capacity transit corridors in the financially constrained plan, however specific modes were not identified when it was adopted in May 2020.

Building upon these regional transit planning efforts, the LinkUS Mobility Initiative was launched in 2020, with the purpose of providing a complete mobility system along key regional corridors, including high capacity and advanced rapid transit, among a broader program of mobility options and infrastructure. The first two corridors to be studied as part of the LinkUS Mobility Initiative were the Northwest Corridor, connecting downtown Columbus to Bethel Rd. (with future studies of a connection to Dublin) along Olentangy River Rd., and the East-West Corridor, which spans Franklin County along West Broad St. and East Broad and East Main Streets. The LinkUS Partners, led by COTA and the City of Columbus, have begun the corridor-specific studies and engagement activities to identify the locally preferred alignments and transit modes for each of these corridors.

Equitable public and stakeholder engagement has been and continues to be an essential part of the LinkUS Mobility Initiative corridor studies. Thus far it has included a range of tools and techniques—including in-person, virtual, and other alternative formats. The information gathered is a key input in the corridor studies.

Project Changes

Of the five high-capacity transit projects already included in the MTP, three projects can now have more detail and refined estimates included because of the LinkUS Mobility Initiative corridor studies. These projects are:

- MTP ID 619: East Main St. Corridor; East Rich St./Main St., from High St./Spring St. to Taylor Rd.; Bus Rapid Transit
- MTP ID 643: Northwest Corridor; Downtown to Dublin; Bus Rapid Transit
- MTP ID 988: West Broad St. Corridor; Broad St. from Westwoods Blvd. to Washington Ave.; Bus Rapid Transit

The following project that was not previously included in the MTP is proposed to be added as part of this amendment:

- MTP ID 987: East Broad St. Corridor; East Broad St. from Taylor Rd. to Souder Ave.; Bus Rapid Transit

Figures 1 and 2, below and on the following pages, represent the projects as they will be included in the amended MTP.

Figure 1: Project Descriptions, Estimated Construction Time Frame, and Cost Estimate

MTP ID	Project Description	Year	Cost Estimate (YOE \$)
619	East Main St. Corridor: East Rich St./Main St., High St. from Spring St. to Taylor Rd. <i>Bus Rapid Transit</i>	2030	<i>\$214 - \$313 Million</i>
643	Northwest Corridor: Olentangy River Rd., from Downtown Columbus to Dublin., <i>Bus Rapid Transit</i>	2030	\$390.3 - \$461.5 Million
987	<i>East Broad St. Corridor: from Taylor Rd to Souder Ave., Bus Rapid Transit</i>	<i>2040</i>	<i>\$178 - \$362 Million</i>
988	West Broad St. Corridor: from Westwoods Blvd. to Washington Ave., <i>Bus Rapid Transit</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>\$157 - \$285 Million</i>

Bold italics = new or changed project components

Fiscal Balance

The 2020-2050 MTP includes a forecast of \$4.05 billion in federal and local revenue intended for construction and operation of five high-capacity transit corridors. The assumed cost of these five high-capacity transit corridors is \$3.9 billion. The cost estimates were based on various planning documents and unit costs. For the projects proposed to be amended, more refined capital cost estimates were developed for the corridors studied in the recent LinkUS Mobility Initiative studies. These more refined costs are lower than the initial cost estimates included in the MTP. Furthermore, this proposed amendment includes moving the estimated construction timeframe for MTP ID 988 up from 2040 to 2030, further lowering the capital cost estimate due to less inflation. The differences in the cost estimates are great enough to accommodate the addition of MTP ID 987 to the financially constrained MTP.

Air Quality Conformity

Due to the significance of the proposed changes to the MTP, it is federally required to do an analysis to confirm the projects included in the amended MTP do not lead to violations in the air quality standard or delay obtaining the standard. This is called a conformity determination. The incorporation of the proposed amendments into the conformity analysis has been completed, with no violations found. Appendix B of the 2020-2050 MTP will be updated accordingly upon adoption of the amendment resolution.

Public Involvement

This amendment packet and the revised conformity determination appendix was made available for a 30-day comment period.

The amendment and the revised MTP, including the revised project listing, maps, fiscal balance information, air quality conformity documentation and other amendment-related changes, will be placed on the website once the resolution to amend the MTP has been approved.

Figure 2: High-Capacity Transit Projects

