



Vision & Goals



The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) is partnering with the community to develop a new Strategic Plan that will create the “Framework for the Future” to the year 2030. RTA has historically demonstrated its commitment to customers through continual infrastructure upgrades and planning initiatives. However, several challenges create uncertainty on the path ahead: decreasing ridership in line with national trends; limited and reduced funding; aging infrastructure; and emerging technology and mobility disruptions. During the conclusion of the planning process, COVID-19 struck Northeast Ohio and the world. This pandemic impacted transit and daily life for everyone in unprecedented ways. The planning team considered this new disruption and incorporated a new perspective throughout the Strategic Plan

report. Through input from a variety of stakeholders and the public, this planning process resulted in clear direction to guide RTA in navigating the upcoming decade.

This section provides a structure for framing the vision and goals of the Strategic Plan. The vision defines the philosophy that will guide RTA decisions and priorities. This is a living document that will evolve even after the planning process is completed. It is based on input from stakeholders and the public, previous RTA documents, changing conditions facing RTA and the transit industry, and national best practices. The Vision and Goals are highlighted below, with a subsequent background section that describes supporting information.

Strategic Plan Vision

The Vision for the Strategic Plan:

Customer Focused, Community Engaged

This highlights the dual internal and external focus of RTA's vision for the future. Through safe, reliable, integrated, sustainable, and innovative transportation, RTA will deliver access to opportunity for individuals and the entire region over the next decade.

Goals

The study team collaborated with stakeholders and the public to identify ten goals for the Strategic Plan. These goals provided a framework for understanding needs and opportunities as described later in the Engagement chapter.

1

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

RTA will provide dependable, clean, fast, and seamless transportation that creates a positive experience for RTA customers.

2

FINANCIAL STABILITY

RTA will be a responsible steward of public funds by providing exceptional services cost-effectively.

3

STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

RTA will enhance, preserve and maintain its infrastructure and assets.

4

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

RTA will lead in its integration of new technologies and evolving mobility options to enhance the transportation experience for customers, RTA employees, businesses and visitors.

5

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

RTA will be the transportation backbone that moves the economy forward and improves the quality of life of county residents by enabling economically sustainable regional land use and development and reinforcing investment in strategic employment and population centers.

6

ACCESS

RTA will facilitate increased access to jobs, education, and civic life.

7

COLLABORATION

RTA will work with stakeholders to foster creative solutions to mobility challenges and drive opportunities for transit oriented development.

8

EQUITY

RTA will continue to provide equitable transit services that benefit disadvantaged individuals and communities.

9

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

RTA will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region by providing clean transportation and shifting travelers away from single occupancy vehicles.

10

TRANSPARENCY

RTA will instill public confidence as a well-run institution that is accountable to its customers, employees, and taxpayers.



Previous RTA Strategic Plan

RTA published its previous Strategic Plan in 2012. The vision identified for RTA's 2012 Strategic Plan was "RTA will be the preferred form of transportation in the Cleveland area." The goals that were developed to guide the document are listed below.¹

- RTA will continue to put customer needs first.
- RTA will focus on ensuring access to employment and educational opportunities for residents throughout the region.
- RTA will provide services cost effectively.
- RTA will continue to play a vital role in maintaining and building our region's competitiveness.
- RTA will support regional approaches to transportation and land use planning that reinforce investment in existing employment and population centers, infrastructure, and services.
- RTA will improve services to suburban employment centers.
- RTA will provide special transportation service support to those who need it most.
- RTA will provide services at a sustainable level given its financial resources.
- RTA will increase its contribution to sustaining our natural environment.

Priorities included transportation to members of the workforce and students, supporting land use planning efforts that encourage strategic investments, and sustainability initiatives.

Changing Conditions

The rapid advance of new transportation business models and innovative technologies have thrust public transit agencies into a disruption in transportation unlike anything in recent history. With this in mind, RTA and partner agencies need to determine how their role will change in the coming years, how quickly new technologies will reach a maturity level sufficient for widespread adoption, and how to future-proof the transit network against a range of possibilities. It is critical that today's transit decision-makers are well positioned to utilize new technologies and business partnerships while planning wise investments and maintaining state of good repair.

Trends such as shifting travel preferences, new development patterns, economic conditions, and an increase in telecommuting each impact the demand for transportation; against this backdrop autonomous and connected vehicle technology, micromobility, and ride hailing services are changing the provision of transportation services. Readyng RTA for emerging technology will require an understanding of how changes provide both opportunities and challenges to established operations. Connected vehicles consist of point-to-point dedicated short-range communication message exchanges including vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communication that allows enabled vehicles to communicate with each other; vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) communication that allows vehicles to communicate with surrounding infrastructure; and, vehicle-to-all (V2X) communication that enables the interaction of vehicles and any capable communication device in the immediate vicinity, such as a device carried by pedestrians. Autonomous vehicles utilize technology to independently monitor the driving environment and perform driving functions. As these transportation technologies continue to be developed, new opportunities and challenges will come into focus. Uber, Lyft, and scooter sharing businesses were not on transit agencies' radars a decade ago. When looking to the next decade, how does an agency plan for unknown technologies and companies that have not been invented yet?

From Goals to Recommendations

Funding challenges, regional development patterns, and technological advances create a difficult situation in which travelers have higher expectations of transportation at the same time RTA's job is more difficult than ever. On the other hand, what change can RTA embrace to succeed in the future? These conditions drive the Strategic Plan from goals to recommended initiatives.

At the conclusion of the planning process, COVID-19 thrust the world into unforeseen change. Throughout the recommendations at the end of the Strategic Plan, new considerations to handle the disruptions of COVID-19 are included.

Footnotes

¹ RTA 2010-2020 Strategic Plan, 2012