Committee of the Whole

October 7, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members:	Mayor Koomar (Chair), Ms. Elder, Mayor Gallo, Mr. Love, Ms. McPherson, Ms. Pacetti, Mr. Sleasman
Not Present:	Rev. Lucas, Mayor Weiss
Staff/Other:	Shawn Becker, Nick Biggar, India Birdsong Terry, Janet Burney, Floun'say Caver, Brent Charnigo, Nick Davidson, Maribeth Feke, Michael Fesler, George Fields, Bob Fleig, Joel Freilich, Anthony Garofoli, Rajan Gautam, Carl Kirkland, Jonathan Laule, Sheila Miller, Charles Morgan, Mike Schipper, Joe Shaffer, Wendy Talley, Dawn Tarka, Brian Temming, John Togher, Natoya Walker-Minor, Carolyn Young
Public:	Brian Gibbons, Loh

I. Roll Call

Mayor Koomar called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. with a roll call. A quorum was present.

Airport Terminal Modernization Development Program -- The City of Cleveland, Department of Port Control

Presenter(s):
- Bryant Francis, , Director of Port Control
- Dennis Kramer, Assistant Director, Airport Development

India L. Birdsong Terry, Deputy General Manger & CEO, stated the two items on the agenda were for informational purposes; no Board action is required. The updates are not necessarily projects GCRTA is paying for, but customers will benefit from the additional infrastructure.

Dr. Caver, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy General Manager of Operations, stated that on November 15, 1968, the Red Line was extended to Cleveland Hopkins International Airport, making Cleveland the first city in the Western Hemisphere to offer direct rapid transit services to its major airport. For more than 56 years, this vital connection has served the residents and visitors of Greater Cleveland, linking our neighborhoods, downtown and airport with convenient and reliable service.

Cleveland Hopkins International Airport is embarking on CLEvolution, a major investment and redesign and modernization of the airport. This investment ensures that the airport continues to serve as a powerful economic engine for Cleveland and the entire region. As part of the redesign, the airport would introduce a new customer facing head house and as a result will relocate and build a new state-of-the-art terminal station at the airport. This new facility will deliver a modern, seamless experience for travelers arriving to Cleveland and for those connecting to downtown and destinations throughout the city.

Bryant Francis, Director of Port Control, played a video presentation of CLEvolution. Following the video, Mr. Francis stated that Cleveland is the busiest passenger airport in the state of Ohio. This is compounded by aging terminal facilities. CLEvolution is the solution for the challenges, which includes swells of outbound passenger activity in the early morning hours, an inefficient TSA security checkpoint layout with three locations, a deficit of overall space for easy flow of our guests throughout the departures level, a lack of public parking capacity, and roadway congestion both entering the airport and at our terminals upper and lower-level curbside.

Dennis Kramer, Assistant Director, Airport Development, stated that approximately 1,600 parking spaces will be added which will need the Orange Lot to be closed for the construction of a new 6,000-space parking structure -- which includes the new RTA station -- and the new ground transportation center. New above ground and underground walkways to the existing terminal and eventually the new terminal will be built. Once that comes online, construction of the new headhouse will begin – which will include a new ticket hall, baggage claim and security screening.

Mr. Kramer played a video describing how CLEvolution is a plan to evolve to meet the needs of today's travelers while paving the way for the future of aviation in Northeast Ohio.

The site of the demolished hotel will be available for construction layout. The existing aircraft apron adjacent to concourse D will be converted to surface parking called the Gold Lot.

A new RTA station will be constructed with a tunnel connector to the existing RTA platform providing access to the existing terminal. A new ground transportation center will be constructed. The existing garage and pedestrian bridge will be demolished for a new terminal. Existing structures will be demolished to make way for new roadways. The new terminal will be constructed with new departure and arrival roadways. Above the roadways, a new pedestrian bridge will connect the new garage to the new terminal. Pedestrian walkways will be constructed connecting the new terminal to concourses A and C, then to concourse B.

The existing terminal will be demolished. A new surface lot next to the garage will be constructed. A new pedestrian walkway to concourse A will be constructed. A new sterile corridor will be built to connect to the new terminal's international arrivals facility.

Mr. Kramer stated that procurement is underway for some elements of the program. Major construction is expected to begin towards the end of 2026. The first elements will be completed around 2029, at which point construction of the new head house will begin in 2029 and be completed by 2032.

Mayor Koomar inquired regarding the size of the current head house versus what is proposed and what that means to processing passengers and future growth. Mr. Bryant stated that the current head house is approximately 330,000 square feet and the new one will be well over twice that size. The structure will be designed with the ability for future expansion as needed.

Trustee Elder questioned how many jobs were anticipated to be created for the project. Mr. Bryant stated that several thousand jobs are expected to be created for the trades of the local community over a span of about seven years.

Mr. Bryant stated that the new RTA station will have a tunnel under the existing garage site which will become a construction site for the new headhouse and connect to the existing tunnel, which will grant customers access to the existing headhouse. During construction that access will be available underground. An element of the program will be to minimize disruption for customers during the transition to the newer facilities.

Trustee Elder asked whether any disruptions to service to the RTA station should be anticipated. Mr. Schipper stated that a closure will be necessary when the new tunnel under the garage connects to the existing tunnel; however, staff will work on the timing to minimize the impact and duration of the closure.

Trustee Love questioned what the GCRTA's structural role will be over the next four years of the project. Mr. Bryant stated the airport will continue close coordination from design through construction and opening.

CEO Terry stated that the GCRTA holds a series of meetings to make sure they meet the customers' needs. Public and rider engagement will be important throughout the design process.

Trustee Sleasman stated that from an economic standpoint, the easiest way to alleviate congestion and traffic is to have more people taking the train. Visitors' ability to spend locally would expand by taking a train rather than an Uber ride. This direct connection is not utilized as much as it could be.

II. West 25th Street Project -- an overview of the status of the MetroHealth Line BRT project. The MetroHealth project objective is to construct a four-mile Bus Rapid Transit line from Detroit Avenue south along W.25th Street to State/Pearl Road.

Presenter(s):
- Maribeth Feke, Director, Programming & Planning
- Joeseph Shaffer, Director, Engineering & Project Development

Mike Schipper stated that this is a transformative project that will assist with traffic congestion in the West 25th Street corridor and Clark-Fulton area.

Mr. Schaeffer stated that BRT was developed to give bus users a more rail-like experience. Project elements will include dedicated bus lines on the MetroHealth Line on West 25th Street, dedicated rights-of-way, transit signal priority for buses and enhanced curbside stations. The estimated total cost is approximately $52 million. The route is approximately 4 miles.

Planning began in April 2020 and included several open houses and meetings with riders, community development corporations, businesses and Ohio City stakeholders. Design work will begin in the fall of 2025 with construction to begin in 2027.

Features of the project include dedicated bus lanes, resurfacing the entire roadway, new pavement markings to provide a uniform look to the corridor, crosswalks markings and time-based signal traffic coordination with bus priority. The project will also include covered stations with security cameras, emergency call boxes and the informational kiosk with real-time arrival signs. There is enough space for bicycles to get by without interacting with the bus in the lanes.

A parking study conducted during Spring 2025 identified that the existing supply of almost 2,000 parking spaces in the immediate area of Ohio City is underutilized and will continue to serve demand after the removal of approximately 70 on-street parking along portions of West 25th Street. The peak use of parking is 70%.

Mike Schipper stated that the BRT project would drastically improve the ability of customers to reach their connections and destinations more reliably.

Ms. Walker Minor stated that an estimated $500,000 in safety measures were added to the project resulting from meeting with community stakeholders, Ohio City, Inc. and business owners.

Mr. Schipper stated that parked cars are causing a safety problem due to jaywalking. Removing that on-street parking provides better sightlines for auto users, and pedestrians probably will not be as likely to jaywalk. Additional safety enhancements will include bus stations with cameras and blue light phones.

CEO Terry stated that the EMS and EMT routing has come up in several conversations. The goal is to make this a safer and more expedient corridor for the current traffic patterns. Safety will be improved by EMS and emergency vehicle utilization of the corridor in addition to enhancing the reliability of the bus system. The BRT seeks to make the West 25th Street corridor less of a bottleneck for traffic and improve bus reliability.

Mr. Sleasman stated that the dedicated bus lanes are very important and elaborated that evidence is clear that businesses do better with this arrangement. That parking causes congestion with people circling trying to find a spot on the street. Removal of the on-street parking especially when there is a large parking lot behind the West Side Market will be beneficial for the corridor and safety.

III. Adjournment

There being no further business to bring before this Committee, Mayor Koomar moved to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Ms. Welch. The meeting was adjourned at 10:11 a.m.

Rajan D. Gautam
Secretary/Treasurer

Brent Charnigo
Board Administrator