



MEETING: EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS COMMITTEE

DATE: TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2022

TIME: 3:00 – 4:30 PM

LOCATION: COTA – WG PORTER BOARDROOM

MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mentel called the meeting of the External Stakeholder Relations Committee to order at 3:00PM.

2. ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present

Sean Mentel, Chair
Trudy Bartley

Committee Members Absent

Timothy Skinner

3. APPROVAL OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Trustee Bartley motioned to approve the January 11, 2022 External Stakeholder Relations Committee minutes. Chair Mentel seconded the motion. Motion carries.

4. NEW BUSINESS

Tanya Salyers, Community Relations Manager, presented a Non-Profit Organization (NPO) Engagement Update to the Committee. In the first quarter of 2022, Tanya held over 50 one on one meeting with NPOs and community leaders. These conversations centered on establishing relationships, fare management, the income assistance program and responding to requests. The most frequent requests were those seeking passes to meet new or lapsed needs. In regards to fare management, COTA held 11 pop-up events with libraries and NPOs in the first quarter to educate and train customers on the Transit app. Tanya informed the Committee that COTA is currently piloting the vendor portal with Ohio Means Jobs and will continue to recruit for additional pilot participants. The vendor portal is an online portal that allows NPOs to distribute fare to individuals Transit app accounts.

Q1: Trustee Bartley: Where do we stand on ensuring access to the Transit app and passes for those in underserved communities?





A1: Tanya Salyers: We are bringing COTA to meet people where they are. COTA is working for several partners, including the libraries, to be potential points of sale with the new fare management system.

Kim Sharp, Senior Director, Development presented to the Committee on the next steps with LinkUS. She noted the intergovernmental partnerships are strong, along with the guidance and support from the FTA. Kim briefly reviewed the recommendation set forth in the LinkUS Community Action Plan including: investing in our region's transportation system, take action and commit resources to advance the vision and rise together by aligning regional initiatives. So far in 2022, LinkUS staff met with 20 Central Ohio communities. The goal of these meetings is to educate the municipalities on what rapid transit means, align capital budgets and schedules, define the TSI process along with identifying how to aggressively capture and utilize IJA dollars. Next steps include continued regional engagement, briefings to the Columbus Partnership members on May 31st and potential action during the July Board of Trustees meeting.

Q1: Chair Mental: How are the community meetings going thus far?

A1: Kim Sharp: Generally, the communities are very excited. Many understand what LinkUS is really about. Most of the concerns come with the details, timing, look etc. that are all still being developed.

Q2: Trustee Bartley: With potentially only two more years of a Biden Administration's funding levels, what conversations are happening?

A2: Patrick Harris: We are working on several sources of funding including, CIG dollars and grants. Next level conversations are being held to develop solutions and identify additional funding opportunities.

Patrick Harris, Vice President, External Relations, updated the Committee on COTA's earmark requests. COTA submitted a \$5.75 million ask to both Congresswoman Beatty and Senator Brown's offices for the Rickenbacker Area Mobility Center. COTA is currently on Congresswoman Beatty's shortlist for \$3 million. The team continues to have conversations with Senator Brown's office and has received positive feedback. The team also submitted an earmark request of \$2 million to Congresswoman Beatty's office for the launch of a transit solution for individuals released from the two Franklin County Corrections Centers. This request was not selected; however, COTA is working with Franklin County and our federal lobbyists at Squire Patton Boggs to identify other funding opportunities.

COTA continues to identify grants to support our work in the Central Ohio region. Applications currently in process include:

- ODOT Project Based Funding Opportunities
- FTA's Low-No/Bus & Bus Facilities Grant

Applications submitted include:





- Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
- Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility
- Diesel Emission Reduction Grant

Q1: Chair Mentel: What is the timing on earmarks?

A1: Patrick Harris: We do not know for sure, but believe it will be between the election and end of year.

Q2: Trustee Bartley: In regards to the jail transportation, is this intended for people as they are released or to get to jobs within the jails?

A2: Aslyne Rodriguez: Both.

Elspeth Paige-Sack, CEO, Hunter Marketing (COTA's agency of record) and Jeff Pullin, COTA's Public & Media Relations Manager presented a Q1 Editorial Review. Across every social channel, engagements increased substantially from Q4 2021 to Q1 2022. Engagements on Facebook, COTA's channel with the highest volume of followers, increased by 61.5%. Instagram engagements were up 31.2%. Twitter engagements were up 6.7%. LinkedIn engagements were up 32%. The next frontier of editorial messaging for COTA will be to leverage local influencers through Instagram Reels and TikTok.

Jeff Pullin, COTA's Public & Media Relations Manager, updated the Committee on earned media. The overwhelming majority of COTA's earned media coverage was positive (66%) and neutral (30%) in Q1, with only 4% of stories identified as negative. COTA's top story for Q1 was about suspended fares for snow emergencies, with a potential reach of more than 500 million. The top local publication with COTA articles was the Columbus Dispatch with 49.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Mentel motioned to adjourn. Trustee Bartley seconded the motion. Chair Mentel adjourned the May 10, 2022 meeting of the External Stakeholder Relations Committee at 4:14 PM.

July 12, 2022

Adopted: _____

Signed:  _____
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Chair, External Stakeholder Relations Committee

DocuSigned by:

Joanna M. Pinkerton

Attest:

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President/CEO

