



Strategic and Operational Planning Committee Minutes

Wednesday, December 3, 2025 at 11:00 AM

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

1. Call to Order

Chair Trudy Bartley called the December 3, 2025 Strategic and Operational Planning Committee meeting to order at 11:04 am.

2. Roll Call

Board Members Present

Trudy Bartley, Chair

Jay Deis, Trustee

Stephen Sayre, Trustee

Board Member Excused

Mallory Donaldson, Trustee

Additional Board Members in attendance

Sean Mentel, Board Chair

3. Approval of Strategic and Operational Planning Committee Minutes

A. November 5, 2025 Strategic and Operational Planning Committee Minutes

Trustee Jay Deis moved to approve the November 5, 2025 Strategic and Operational Planning Committee meeting minutes, seconded by Trustee Stephen Sayre. Motion carried.

4. New Business

A. 2026-2030 Strategic Plan - Monica Téllez-Fowler, COTA President/CEO and Sophia Mohr, COTA Chief Innovation Technology Officer

COTA President/CEO Monica Téllez-Fowler and COTA Chief Innovation Technology Officer Sophia Mohr presented the proposed 2026-2030 Strategic Plan. President Téllez-Fowler provided background and expressed gratitude. Ms. Mohr reviewed the process that created the plan, and said measurable outcomes and work plans will activate the Strategic Plan, noting that divisions create tactics that form the workplan. Success outcomes for 2026 were outlined in the areas of customer experience, employee engagement, community value, and fiscal responsibility. They presented a scorecard to track impact and discussed next steps, which include establishing baseline metrics; launching an internal communications campaign to integrate mission, vision and values into COTA's daily work, and setting up an accountability process. Ms. Mohr presented the corresponding resolution, which was recommended for the regular agenda:

Resolution 2025-XX Adopting the Central Ohio Transit Authority's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan

B. 2026 Budget Recommendations - Earl Jackson, COTA Chief Financial Officer

Chief Financial Officer Earl Jackson presented the budget recommendations for 2026. Mr. Jackson noted that the 2025 operating budget is forecasted to be two percent below budget; 2026 operating expenses represent 49.5 percent of the proposed budget; the 2026 Capital Improvement Program and Transit Supportive Infrastructure expenses may up the balance of the budget. He also noted an increase in sales tax performance, compared to the same period in 2024, but that 2025 collections are forecasted to be about one percent lower than budgeted due to expanded sales tax holiday and timing differences. Mr. Jackson reviewed economic indicators in the areas of federal funds rates, inflation, GDP growth, and employment, and provided an outlook on each. He noted potential impacts at the federal level, including tariffs, tax and policy changes. He also reviewed COTA's priorities and areas of focus that are behind the 2026 budget, which include LinkUS initiatives as well as other key efforts such as activating the strategic plan. Mr. Jackson presented the corresponding resolutions, which were recommended for the regular agenda:

Resolution 2025-XX Authorizing Appropriations for the Expenditures of the Central Ohio Transit Authority for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2026

Resolution 2025-XX Authorizing the Adoption of the 2026-2030 Five-Year Capital Improvements Program

5. Other Business

No other business was brought before the Committee.

6. Adjournment

Trustee Sayre moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Trustee Deis. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 11:44 am.

Adopted:

January 13, 2026

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Signed:

Chair, Strategic and Operational Planning Committee

Signed by:



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Attest:

President/CEO