

MOVING FORWARD



REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



# COMMUNITY MESSAGE

A flurry of positive change struck TARTA in the last two years, and while that means a flurry of hard work waits for us in 2022, it is work we are thrilled to be able to do.

Our 50th year in operation was one of the busiest in our history, as a new leadership team worked diligently to change what customers and the public can expect from TARTA. We cannot begin to tell you how honored we are to lead this incredibly talented team of people, or how excited we are about what lies ahead.

Among the many highlights of 2021:

- After 11 years, several attempts and so much work by so many people, TARTA was able to shift its funding structure from a property tax to a sales tax when voters approved Issue 12 in November. This will allow TARTA to begin to recover from years of underfunding and stretch services countywide and into Rossford.
- TARTA kicked off TARTA Next, its first comprehensive redesign in decades. As part of this effort, TARTA personnel spoke with customers and community leaders to determine how people use TARTA and what they expect to see in the future. The information gathered from these sessions will be incredibly valuable as TARTA determines when and how to make changes.
- Community engagement ramped up for TARTA in 2021. In addition to events Team TARTA volunteers have always taken part in, like the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and *The Blade* Holiday Parade, TARTA served as a sponsor for one of Toledo's biggest events, Jeep Fest, and placed first in Keep Toledo/Lucas County Beautiful's Litter League.
- TARTA continued to be proactive when it came to the safety and health of its customers and team members during the coronavirus pandemic. TARTA delivered more than 1,300 free vaccinations through its Vaccine Mobile, continued to provide free masks to those who needed them and extended our fare-free policy through July 2022.

- Federal grants allowed TARTA to partner with the University of Toledo to raise awareness of human trafficking, plan for technological upgrades and give its fleet a badly needed update with new vehicles arriving in early 2022.

In addition to funding, the passage of Issue 12 brought pressure. All eyes are on us now, and what we do with the funding we fought so hard to get can and should be scrutinized.

In a year when the pandemic continued to throw up roadblocks and no fares were collected, TARTA still came in under budget in 2021, which demonstrates this leadership team's strong commitment to making the best use of public funds. We will strive to continue to be good stewards of the public's money and the public's trust.

TARTA owes a debt of thanks to the people of Lucas County and Rossford for their faith in public transportation. It is up to our team to show the wisdom of that decision by capitalizing on this opportunity. In 2022, we intend to show customers and community leaders that we are better than the TARTA they've known, and will continue building a mobility system the entire area can be proud of.

Team TARTA members have shown incredible resilience during a period of transition, and stand ready to meet the challenges in front of us. We look forward to a bright future for public transportation in northwest Ohio, and continuing to help people make connections.



Laura Koprowski  
Chief Executive Office



Kelsie Hoagland  
Board President

**MISSION** | Empowering people to make connections.

**VISION** | A trusted and reliable source of mobility and independence for the community.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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*President*

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**Mary Morrison**

*Vice President*

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**Michael Hart**

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### TOLEDO

**Heather Baker**

**Katherine Hunt Thomas**

**Pat McKinstry**

**Kendra Smith**

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

TARTA's recent transformation has been fueled by a leadership team with close to 170 years of combined transit industry experience. With a new leadership team has come new ideas and a determination to reform TARTA's operations and improve its public image. These dedicated professionals are excited to bring northwest Ohio a better public transportation system than what it's known and improve mobility in the community for decades to come.

### **Laura Koprowski**

*Chief Executive Officer*

[lkoprowski@tarta.com](mailto:lkoprowski@tarta.com)

### **Charles Odimgbe**

*Chief Operating Officer*

[codimgbe@tarta.com](mailto:codimgbe@tarta.com)

### **Sophie Giviyan**

*Chief Financial Officer*

[sgiviyan@tarta.com](mailto:sgiviyan@tarta.com)

### **Patty Talbott**

*Chief Customer Experience  
and Mobility Officer*

[ptalbott@tarta.com](mailto:ptalbott@tarta.com)

### **Jim Fight**

*Chief Human Resources Officer*

[jfight@tarta.com](mailto:jfight@tarta.com)

### **Sam Melden**

*Director of External Affairs  
and Communications*

[smelden@tarta.com](mailto:smelden@tarta.com)

### **Lucas Boehm**

*Director of Information Technology*

[lboehm@tarta.com](mailto:lboehm@tarta.com)

### **John Jones**

*Director of Maintenance*

[jojones@tarta.com](mailto:jojones@tarta.com)

### **Neil Greenberg**

*Director of Transit Service  
Development*

[ngreenberg@tarta.com](mailto:ngreenberg@tarta.com)

# TARTA RAMPS UP FLEET UPGRADES IN 2022

The thousands of northwest Ohioans who depend on public transportation to get them to and from work or the doctor each day may soon have a new ride, thanks to long-awaited upgrades to TARTA's fixed-route and paratransit fleets.

Three new RAM ProMaster TARPS vans arrived in March, representing the first in a wave of refreshments to TARTA's fleet in 2022. Before the end of 2022, TARTA expects the arrival of more than 30 vehicles as replacements for those that have been stretched beyond their useful life. These are improvements made possible by federal grants and by the voters of Lucas County and Rossford who passed Issue 12 in November.

The additions to the fleet will include 19 paratransit vehicles, in addition to new fixed-route and Call-A-Ride buses.

"We're happy to have put this in motion," said TARTA Director of Maintenance John Jones, about the new fixed-route vehicles that arrived in spring 2022. "No matter the age or the mileage on a vehicle, everything we have on the road is safe, and that's a testament to the hard work of the great mechanics we have here at TARTA and TARPS. It's no exaggeration to say

that I would let any of them work on anything I own, because they've shown the skill and dedication to keep us moving."

Through these and other improvements, TARPS and TARTA continue to provide a path to independence for customers, regardless of income or disability.

"It's been a great experience getting to know the people who depend on paratransit in northwest Ohio and learning how we can serve them better and build on those services," said TARTA Chief Customer Experience and Mobility Officer Patty Talbott said. "I'm very fortunate to work with a talented, dedicated team of professionals at TARTA, and I'm thrilled to continue working with them and see how improved customer service can play a role in TARTA's future."





# TAKING YOU PLACES... 7 DAYS A WEEK

As TARTA personnel began public outreach in the opening phases of the TARTA Next redesign, they considered hundreds of suggestions from customers, local leaders and others with a stake in public transit and paratransit.

One need, however, was far and away mentioned most frequently: The need for Sunday and holiday service.

TARTA delivered on a promise March 27, when it introduced Sunday and holiday service before even receiving the funds from Issue 12.

"Work on TARTA Next gave us a chance to hear from so many members of the community who depend on public transportation," TARTA CEO Laura Koprowski said. "They told us where and when they needed to go and how we could help get them there. The suggestion we heard most often from our customers was the desire for Sunday service.

"We're pleased to start this sooner than we had originally planned for customers looking to get to work, religious services or family gatherings, and in appreciation for the

voters of Lucas County and Rossford passing Issue 12.

One of TARTA's biggest steps forward in the last two years has been vastly improved customer service, and we see this as another component of that."

TARTA's fixed-route vehicles were rolling on Easter Sunday for the first time since budget cuts forced the removal of Sunday service in 2019. TARTA is moving forward with its redesign, with plans to have suggestions for additional improvements in front of the Board of Trustees in the coming months.

"A strong, sustainable, well-funded public transportation system is vitally important to this community," said Dr. Rev. Willie L. Perryman, President of Toledo's chapter of the NAACP and Pastor of Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church. "With the addition of Sunday service along with the vision that is being brought forth by TARTA Next, I believe Toledo and Lucas County can build one of the best public transportation systems in the country."



# NEW PLACES TO GO, NEW WAYS TO GET THERE

Businesses hanging “help wanted” signs in Lucas County and Rossford will soon have access to more of the area’s workforce than ever before, thanks in part to TARTA’s vision for public transportation’s future.

In 2021, TARTA embarked on TARTA Next, its first systemwide redesign in decades. Using input from customers, community leaders and team members, TARTA is going through a tip-to-tail evaluation of its routes and services to change them based on where and when people need to travel.

The passage of Issue 12 in November opened new possibilities for the redesign. TARTA and its partners at Nelson/Nygaard will continue outreach to help determine what the future of public transit will look like in northwest Ohio, and suggestions for widespread service improvements will be presented to TARTA’s Board of Trustees in late 2022 or early 2023.

“We’re in the phase now where we’re identifying some of those additional places we can go sooner rather than later,” said TARTA Director of Transit Service Development Neil Greenberg. “The passage of Issue 12 opens up a lot of possibilities for TARTA and the people who depend on it.

“We’re taking a fresh look at everything we do and evaluating what makes sense for our future. It’s a process, and I think when we get to the end of it, our customers are going to see the benefits of this work in the form of new places to go and new ways for us to get them there.”

TARTA Next will examine existing routes, ridership and performance on all modes of transport, with a goal to make taking public transit the easier part of the day for a customer.

Through better bus service, TARTA hopes to play its part in an equitable, sustainable region. Improvements generated through customer feedback will help the Authority continue to provide safe, reliable and affordable access to everything the area has to offer.

“Public transit has the power to be part of the solution to so many things, which is why it’s important that TARTA or any system be as efficient and user-friendly as it can be,” said Bethany Whitaker, Principal at Nelson\Nygaard. “It means greater access to education and health care and jobs, and can be an economic driver for the region.”

By redesigning routes and services, TARTA can:

- Make commuting easier and more reliable for those who use the system
- Greatly increase the number of people for whom public transit is an option
- Create a service that makes certain disadvantaged communities have access to everything northwest Ohio has to offer

View [tartanext.com](https://tartanext.com) and TARTA social sites in the coming months to learn more about changes coming to TARTA’s system in 2022 and beyond.









## TARTA BY THE NUMBERS

- 28** Routes
- 132** Square Mile Service Area
- 245** Employees
- 148** Operators (107 fixed-route, 41 paratransit)
- 13** Trustees

## OUR FLEET

- 72** Buses
- 12** Call-A-Ride
- 40** TARPS

## TARPS

Customer trips by purpose  
Jan. through Oct. 2021

Work	<b>9,378</b>
General	<b>7,273</b>
Medical/Dialysis	<b>3,553</b>
Education	<b>365</b>

## AGE RANGE, ACTIVE TARPS CUSTOMERS

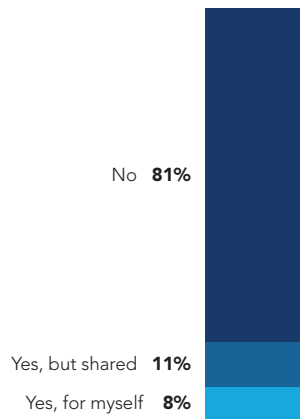
As of Feb. 2022

100 and over	<b>6</b>	40 to 49	<b>269</b>
90 to 99	<b>78</b>	30 to 39	<b>296</b>
80 to 89	<b>258</b>	20 to 29	<b>288</b>
70 to 79	<b>530</b>	10 to 19	<b>62</b>
60 to 69	<b>862</b>	Under 10	<b>3</b>
50 to 59	<b>515</b>		

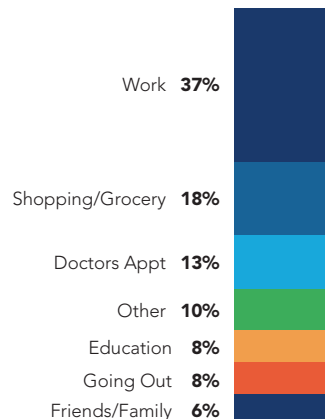




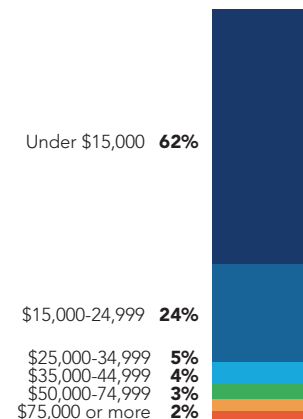
## VEHICLE AVAILABILITY AMONG TARTA RIDERS



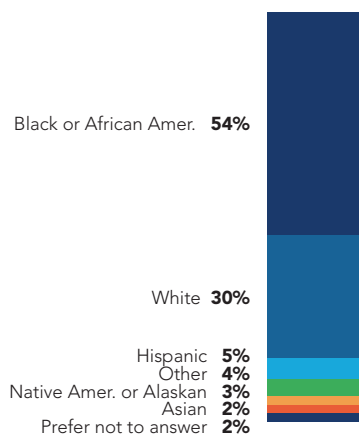
## TRIP PURPOSE



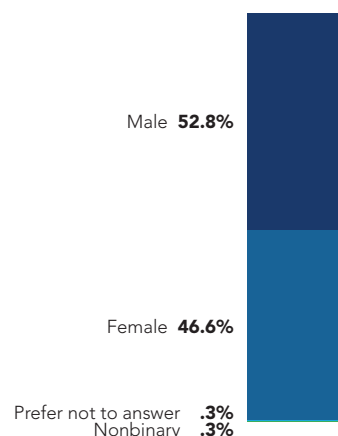
## INCOME LEVEL



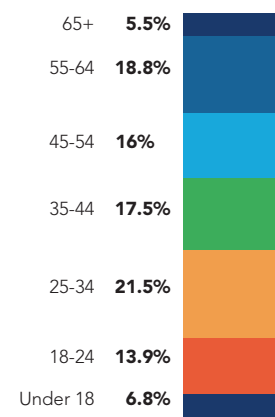
## RACE



## GENDER



## RIDER AGE



## TESTIMONIALS

*"TARPS and a strong public transportation system are so important because they take away barriers to pursuing employment, visiting friends, enjoying the Zoo and the Museum and everything else the area has to offer, and doing all those other things that people without disabilities might take for granted. It's easy to recognize the value in something that raises quality of life the way transportation does."*

**Nathan Turner, CATR, SALUT,**  
Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities

*"Over 80 percent of the people who use TARTA don't have access to an automobile. So how will those people be able to work a job and support their families and do all of the things that the American dream requires? They can't do it without a strong public transportation system."*

**Wade Kapszukiewicz, Mayor of Toledo**

*"TARTA shares Lucas Metropolitan Housing's drive to provide pathways to a better quality of life, and empower vibrant communities. Our partnership builds a strong foundation supporting an always dynamic process of comprehensive community development and growing investments to achieve economic sustainability in Toledo. Affordable transportation to jobs, health care providers, grocery stores, and many other essential destinations are crucial in our efforts to paving paths to financial self-sufficiency. TARTA is a key and valued community partner providing essential services every day."*

**Joaquin Cintrón Vega, President and CEO,**  
Lucas Metropolitan Housing

*"Every day, hundreds of TARTA operators, support staff, mechanics and more make sure we safely get to school, work, doctor's appointments and the grocery store. It's an honor to fight for investments in public transportation and to secure the vital Federal resources that bolster TARTA and uplift riders."*

**Rep. Marcy Kaptur**

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

As TARTA works to get the entire region moving forward together, it wants to be certain that it leaves no one behind by fostering a diverse and inclusive environment for both its customers and employees.

Early in 2022, TARTA joined a transit-specific pilot program for building a racial equity platform. The American Public Transit Association (APTA) Racial Equity Commitment Program recognizes the role that the transit industry can play in advancing racial equity and inclusion, and is designed to help agencies set up a framework for a comprehensive, sustainable diversity program.

"It's about having diversity and inclusion in the workplace and ingraining that in the culture, but it's about so much more than that," said TARTA's Director of Human Resources Jim Fight. "It's making decisions as an organization to make sure that we reflect the community we're privileged to serve."

"We're proud to have a workplace that fosters understanding of the importance of diversity. Participation in this program will help us to go above and beyond that, and to quantify what we've already been doing to find out where we can improve."

The program centers on five core principles, including:

1. Making racial equity a strategic priority
2. Conducting a yearly diversity, equity and inclusion climate assessment on the perceived employee experience of existing practices and policies
3. Reviewing and analyzing demographic data
4. Putting in place evidence-informed programs for creating and maintaining an inclusive and equitable environment for employees and customers
5. Establishing tools and dedicated resources to support the above

"APTA's program provides a roadmap for TARTA to set up, maintain and improve on these policies that we all take to heart," said TARTA CEO Laura Koprowski. "The transit industry has a long history of being involved in issues and opportunities to expand equity and access in communities."

"Our service should strive to put everyone in touch with the benefits of living in this area, not just by providing transportation, but by maintaining a culture of inclusion throughout our organization that our customers can recognize and appreciate."





# TARTA PRESENTS PLAN FOR CASHLESS FARE SYSTEM

As a safety measure to ensure the health of customers and Team TARTA personnel, and help community members recover from the financial effects of COVID-19, TARTA has not charged riders since March 2020.

As TARTA moves forward with plans for a massive update to its fare system, it is taking care not to leave behind any of the people who depend on public transit every day.

Plotting a course for its future, TARTA announced its intention to begin charging fares again on August 1, 2022, and go to a cashless fare system by 2024.

TARTA is still determining how fares will be structured when collection does resume. A cashless card system would be implemented 12 to 24 months later, with plans in motion to help customers make the transition.

Customers who wished to pay for rides without cash on TARTA and TARPS vehicles before the pandemic could already do so using the EZfare app. TARTA plans to continue accepting

payments through EZfare, and replace fare collection boxes on fixed-route vehicles with those capable of accepting both cash and virtual payments.

"Every change we have planned for our fare system is geared toward making TARTA faster and more efficient," said TARTA COO Charles Odingbe. "Eliminating cash fares will make every trip easier for customers and TARTA personnel alike, and we look forward to preparing all of our riders to make this change."

"Years of underfunding have left us behind the rest of the industry in terms of technological advancements, to the detriment of our customers. Going to a cashless fare system is something that public transit passengers have already seen the benefits of around the state and the nation. We are happy to put plans in motion to give our riders those benefits as well."

The plan approved by TARTA's board calls for the transit system to develop fare cards, which could be refilled with cash before boarding at TARTA facilities and other area stores and locations.



## COMMUNITY

From cleaning up the community to taking a stand for victims of crime and disease and everything in between, Team TARTA members continue to make their presence felt in the communities they serve.

Over the course of the past year, TARTA:

- Partnered with the University of Toledo to bring awareness to human trafficking and tell the stories of survivors
- Brought a strong contingent to community events, with over 10 team members volunteering to take part in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, Toledo Jeep Fest, Shop with a Hero, the Rossford Halloween Parade and *The Blade* Holiday Parade

- Teamed with the VProject and Toledo-Lucas County Health Department to deliver 1,300 shots of the coronavirus vaccine through the Vaccine Mobile
- Kicked off its Hub of Hope program, which brought community organizations to its downtown Toledo Transit Hub to help customers find answers to questions about health, food insecurity and more
- Picked up more than 151 bags of trash to place first in Keep Toledo/Lucas County Beautiful's Litter League

TARTA is honored to be a part of the community, and continues to strive to build the mobility system northwest Ohio needs and deserves.



M O V I N G  
F O R W A R D

TOGETHER

— M A Y 2 0 2 2 —

**TARTA**

**TAKING YOU PLACES**

1 1 2 7 W E S T C E N T R A L A V E N U E | P . O . B O X 7 9 2

T O L E D O , O H I O 4 3 6 9 7 - 0 7 9 2

P : 4 1 9 . 2 4 3 . 7 4 3 3

F : 4 1 9 . 2 4 3 . 8 5 8 8

**T A R T A . C O M**